

Last Two Slaves Sold in New Haven

By Neil C. Olsen, January 2012

The last two slaves sold in New Haven and possibly in Connecticut were to Trinity Church New Haven's Anthony P. Sanford on March 23, 1825. He purchased them at the last slave auction held in New Haven and perhaps Connecticut. It was held on the New Haven Green. The sheriff running the sale operated under an execution order issued on a judgment against their owner: it instructed him to sell human chattels as goods.

Lois Tritton age 40 and her daughter Lucy Tritton age 16, fearful at being separated, were displayed, auctioned, and sold to their new owner, Anthony B. Sanford, a shareholder of Trinity. Sanford paid \$10 for the two and immediately set them free. The Sanford had planned well, and by the price it is clear that other bidders were clearly warned off. The sheriff may have been in on it as well. The person who provoked the sale probably lost more on legal fees the price of the sale – which must have please the Abolitionist Sanford.

Death of "Aunt Lois."

WAS THE LAST SLAVE SOLD IN NEW HAVEN—A MUCH ESTEEMED OLD LADY.

In this city at No. 142 Starr Street recently occurred the death of Mrs. Lois Tritton, commonly know as "Aunt Lois," in whom centered some historical interest inasmuch as she was the last slave sold in New Haven, if not in Connecticut. The sale occurred on the 8th of March, 1825, at the old sign post on the green, where sheriffs' sales of that time were held. The sheriff held the sale under an execution issued against the former owner, and "Aunt Lois" was purchased by Anthony P. Sanford for \$10. He then set her free, and the deed of sale, together with the papers of manumission are now in the possession of ex-Governor Ingersoll. Mrs. Tritton was born in Halifax, N. S., in 1799, but had lived since 1825 in New Haven. Her first husband died nearly fifty years ago. She then married again, and her second husband has been dead many years. By her first marriage she had one son, Henry F. Tritton, who is the Chapel Street barber and a well-known citizen in the western part of the city.

"Aunt Lois" adopted the name of Tritton from the last family by which she was owned. Mrs. Tritton had always attended Trinity church up to the time that her health had been so poor as to prevent, and the Rev. Mr. Scoville of that church officiated at the funeral service.

This article to the left appears in *Beckwith's Almanac*.¹ "Aunt Lois" Tritton was born in Halifax, Canada in 1799, she died on June 11, 1894 at age 95, having survived slavery, seen the Civil War, the emancipation of slaves, and having outlived two husbands. She was a lifelong member of Trinity Church, and died in the faith of the man who conspired to free her.

¹ *Beckwith's Almanac*, Volumes 33-41, Authors George Beckwith, Martha Lewis Beckwith Lewis, Annie Ewell Russell, Peck, White & Peck, 1880, page 90.