

*Excerpt from:*

Pickering, Jeanne. (2018). *Suing Slavery: Essex County Freedom Suits, 1765 - 1783* [MA Thesis]. Salem State University, 67-68.

In 1777, Peter Osgood settled the suit filed against him by his slave, Timon, with an indenture agreement. Timon had been baptized, in 1748, as a child enslaved by Deacon Thomas Chadwick of Boxford.<sup>1</sup> In 1769, at the age of 25, Timon married Phillis enslaved by Captain Joseph Hale of Newbury.<sup>2</sup> In 1776, Chadwick sold Timon to Peter Osgood Jr. of Andover. The bill of sale, dated June 4, 1776, contains a remarkable statement:

I Thomas Chadwick of Boxford ... in consideration of the sum of sixty pounds ... Sell to Peter Osgood Junior of Andover ... a Certain Negro man servant of about Thirty two years of age Named Tymon (which said servant is now absent & the said Osgood is to take him wherever he can find him) to have & to hold the said Negro servant to him the said Osgood...<sup>3</sup>

Osgood must have found Timon for, in September 1777, Timon filed a writ of trespass for wrongful enslavement against Osgood. The two attorneys, Parsons for Timon and Pynchon for Osgood, complained with the standard language about the insufficiencies of the other's plea. The court ruled the defense's plea was "bad." Parsons, on behalf of Timon, waived the damages and costs. On October 3, 1777, Timon signed, with his mark, a two-year indenture agreement with Osgood as a "free negro" to "faithfully serve him...in...his lawful business" and "obey his lawful commands..." In return, Osgood would provide Timon "meat, drink, lodging, apparel, in

---

<sup>1</sup> "Boxford Births Negroes," *Vital Records of Boxford, MA to the end of the year 1849*, accessed April 15, 2018, <http://ma-vitalrecords.org/MA/Essex/Boxford/aBirthsOt.shtml#Negroes>.

<sup>2</sup> "Newbury Marriages Negroes," *Vital Records of Newbury, MA to the end of the year 1849*, accessed April 15, 2018, <http://ma-vitalrecords.org/MA/Essex/Newbury/aMarriagesOt.shtml#Negroes>.

<sup>3</sup> *Timon vs Osgood* September 1777 ECCP#18.

sickness and health” and, at the end of the agreement, six pounds and “a good strong suit of wearing apparels.”<sup>4</sup> Timon went on to have a child with Phillis who may not have survived childbirth as, in 1779, Timon married an Andover woman named Flora Dole.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> “Andover Marriages Negroes,” *Vital Records of Andover, MA to the end of the year 1849*, accessed April 14, 2018, <http://ma-vitalrecords.org/MA/Essex/Andover/cMarriagesOt.shtml> (hereafter “Marriages” *Andover Vital Records*.)