

**HISTORICAL CASE STUDIES OF
ALEXANDRIA'S
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES**

**HANNAH JACKSON: AN AFRICAN
AMERICAN WOMAN AND
FREEDOM**

**ARCHIVAL DATA PERTAINING TO
406-408 SOUTH ROYAL STREET**

Sara Revis



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Foreword

The Alexandria Archaeology Publications series is composed of papers on various aspects of research conducted under the auspices of Alexandria Archaeology, a division of the Office of Historic Alexandria, City of Alexandria, Virginia. The authors include professional staff members, university students and Alexandria Archaeology volunteers. Editing of the papers has been kept to a minimum. It should be understood that the papers vary in tone and level of technicality, since they were originally directed toward many different audiences.

We are pleased to offer the papers within this series and in so doing are opening our “manuscripts on file” - including professional conference papers, background documentary studies, student course papers, and volunteer research papers - to professionals and public alike.

Sara Revis has been researching and writing the history of Alexandria’s archaeological sites since 1980. She has produced many important outlines and summaries which have guided our investigations. By using deeds, tax, census and city directory sources Sara has been able to piece together the history of lots, streetfaces and blocks. By editing her work, Sara has produced fascinating histories of parts of Alexandria. They are case studies of urban life in Alexandria.

In this case study, Sara has compiled her research notes about Hannah Jackson. As archaeologists, we are interested in this free African American woman for several reasons. She purchased property at what became 406-408 South Royal Street in 1820, thus making her one of the earliest known African Americans to own property in Alexandria. Hannah Jackson has become a focal point in research into the first free block neighborhoods, particularly the 400 block of South Royal Street referred to as HAYTI. We have dug at several properties on this street-face, including: 404 S. Royal, the George Seaton Home, 44AX157; 418, 420, and 422 S. Royal, the Coleman Site, 44AX30; and 424 S. Royal, the Hamilton/Dudley/Credit Site, 44AX68.

This paper contributes to several other publications: T.B. McCord Jr., Across the Fence but a World Apart: The Coleman Site, 1796-1907. copyright 1985, edited by S.J. Shephard and P.J. Cressey, pages 24, 25, and 79 specifically dealing with Hannah Jackson; Pamela J. Cressey, The Alexandria, Virginia City-Site: Archaeology in an African-American Neighborhood, 1830-1910, copyright 1985, Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Anthropology, University of Iowa; and Edith Moore Sprouse, “Count De Lemonade,” Fireside Sentinel, Alexandria Lloyd House

Library, February 1991, Vol. 5, No. 2: pp. 13-28, specifically page 15.

Viewed together, these writings expand our knowledge about several facets of Alexandria's heritage: Hayti; free African-American actions, institutions and networks; women's lives and power; and relationships between African Americans and white citizens such as Mordecai Miller and merchant William Hepburn.

A traditional socio-economic study of Alexandria would assign Hannah Jackson to a "lower class" rank due to her occupation as washerwoman. Yet when her actions are examined, it is clear that Hannah Jackson was a significant person in the movement toward personal and legal freedom.

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Pamela J. Cressey, Ph.D.
City Archaeologist
1991

In April 1816, five actions were submitted by Hannah Jackson, a washerwoman, and approved for recording by the U.S. Circuit Court:

1. Affidavit of William Newton, dated September 11, 1809, that “the bearer, Emanuel, son of Johannah Weaver, formerly the property of the subscriber, is hereby entitled to his freedom.” A note was added that “The above boy is at this time between six and seven years of age” (Alexandria Deed [DB] Book BB, folio 343).
2. Samuel Carson’s affidavit of the sale of a “man Slave by the name of Solomon” to Hannah Jackson for \$135, on June 28, 1815 (DB BB:344).
3. The affidavit of Augusta Newton that for \$65 in hand and \$230 in receipts from her late husband, William Newton, she had sold Hannah Jackson a black girl named Ann Weaver, a grand-daughter of said Hannah Jackson, on October 4, 1815 (DB BB:345).
4. A deed of sale of five slaves to Hannah Jackson for \$1,000 by William Hepburn, on February 1, 1816. They were: Esther, about 45; and her children, Letty, about 11; Maria, about 8; Moses, about 4; and Julia Ann, about 1 year old (DB BB:346).
5. A deed of manumission by Hannah Jackson for her sister, Esther (also a washerwoman), and the four children above named, dated February 12 (DB BB:382).

In November 1820, Hannah bought a house and lot from Mordecai Miller for 5 shillings in hand and ground rent to be paid regularly. The property was on the east side of Royal Street between Wolfe and Wilkes, beginning 67 feet, 6 inches, south of Wolfe and extending east 110 feet, 10 inches. It had right of way over the alleys: an 8-foot-wide alley along the southern lot line, and one coming south from Wolfe which intersected at 134 feet east of Royal (DB K2:469).

Hannah left a will, dated February 1 1822, witnesses Robert J. Taylor and Thomas Smith, and probated July 9, 1827. It had the following provisions:

To her daughter, Johanna Weaver, the “front house” on Royal and one half the lot.

To her son Solomon, the “back house”, commonly called the “Cedar Post House”, and the other half of the lot, which on his death should go to Johanna and his heirs.

To Johanna Jackson and Hanson Jackson (possibly children of Solomon), \$25 each out of her personal estate, or if that was insufficient, out of the house and lot.

It was also her “desire to my son Solomon” that Nancy Fox not be permitted on the lot or to enter his house, a request made “solely from a regard to his Welfare,” and her “hope that it will be duly obeyed by him.”

Her daughter, Johanna, was appointed sole executor (Will Book [WB] 3, folio 291).

William Hepburn, a prosperous Alexandria merchant, died in the Spring of 1817. He left a will with some interesting provisions (WB 2:186, 250).

First, he referred to the sale of Esther (whom he had bought “some years ago” from Benjamin Dulany, Esq.) to Hannah Jackson on 1 Feb. 1816, along with Esther’s children, Moses, Letty, and Juliana Eliza. Hannah had freed them, but with Esther’s decease, William Hepburn had continued to support the children.

Hepburn requested that at his death his executors should put Letty and Juliana in Hannah’s care, to be brought up and educated out of a bequest from Hepburn until each reached the age of 18. He wished Moses to be sent to Philadelphia “or some other place where coloured children are carefully educated” and there boarded with a respectable person “who will pay due attention to his morals.” After completion of his education, Hepburn requested that Moses be “put to whatever occupation or profession he may select.”

Hepburn next made the following bequests:

To Moses, the houses and lots “where I now live,” together with my fishing shore...also the bond I hold of John McPherson for \$10,000,” the ground rent of \$110 from lot #124 at Queen and Pitt Streets, payable by Thomas Brocchus; and, finally, “my house and lot

on Princess Street now occupied by Frederick Green and John Smith, which lies on the west of Mrs. Dougherty's garden and on the east of a house now rented by Robert Anderson." This lot had a 36-foot frontage on Princess Street and a depth of 88 feet. Hepburn, further on, expressed a wish that "Jerry" should serve "his brother Moses" until the age of 21, at which time he would receive his freedom.

To Letty, "my house on King, now occupied by Robert Gray, with all back buildings and warehouses to Hooff's Alley."

To Juliana, "my corner brick house on King and Pitt" and the warehouse on Pitt and other houses back to Hooff's Alley.

To Letty and Juliana Eliza, jointly, "the lots bought of... the executors of Richard Conway, deceased."

All household furniture, horses, and cows, except what Hannah Jackson should need for Letty and Juliana, to be sold at public auction.

There were other bequests to William's grandchildren, William Hepburn and Eliza Dundass; Nancy Keene, wife of Newton; Sophie Peyton, wife of Thomas West Peyton, and to William's daughter, Agnes Dundass, wife of John Dundass.

Appendix I
Notes Relating to William Hepburn

1. Alexandria Will Book 2:186

Will of William Hepburn, dated 28 Feb 1817 and recorded 26 May 1817. (Paraphrase)

On February 1, 1816, I sold Esther, whom I bought some years ago of Benjamin Dulany, Esq., and her three children, Moses, Letty, and Juliana Eliza, to Hannah Jackson, and the said Hannah has since freed three children, who have been maintained and supported by me since the death of their mother, Esther, and are to be supported by me during my life." Hepburn requests his executors to give up Letty and Juliana to Hannah, "if she be alive, with a sufficiency out of what I have bequeathed to them" to support and educate them until 18 years of age. Moses, he wished to be sent to Philadelphia "or some other place where colored children are carefully educated" and there boarded with a respectable person, "who will pay due attention to his morals." After completion of his education, Hepburn desired him to be "put to whatever occupation or profession he may select."

Further -

To Moses, son of Esther, deceased, the houses and lots "where I now live" (one bought of William Herbert, Jr., and the other from Joseph Mandeville), together with "my fishing shore" for his natural life and to his children - if not, to William Hepburn's grandchildren if he should have lawful issue. Also the Bond I hold of John McPherson for \$10,000.

To Moses, my ground rent on the lot #124 of \$100 payable monthly by Thomas Brochus on Queen and Pitt streets. Also give him my house and lot on Princess St., now occupied by Frederick Green and John Smith, which lies on the west of Mrs. Dougherty's garden and on east of a house now rented by Robert Anderson which has a 36' front on Princess, running back 88' 3 1/2".

To Letty and Juliana Eliza, daughters of Esther, jointly, the lots bought of William Herbert, Sr., and other executors of Richard Conway, dec., to them for life and their heirs. If none, then to "my" grandchildren. Further, to Letty my houses on King, now occupied by Robert Gray, with all back buildings and warehouses to Hooff's Alley. To Juliana - my corner brick house on King and Pitt and the warehouse on Pitt and other houses back to Hooff's Alley.

To the three sons of Doll Bell--Daniel, John and Anderson (1860 U.S. Census - b. 1810)--my one-half of the 80 acres known as "Turkey Cock" now owned by the heirs of the late John Dundass and myself--my half to be the east side where Doll Bell now lives and where Hepburn had built a house. Also to them, the lot called "Dowdels town" with all the houses on it, lying on the north side of Princess and west of St. Asaph. To them and their heirs--otherwise to Hepburn's grandchildren . . . The mother, Doll, to get the proceeds of _____ for their education.

It is my desire that Jerry shall serve his brother Moses, until 21 years, then he is to be free -- manumission hereby recorded.

Household furniture, horses and cows to be sold at public auction -- except what Hannah Jackson shall need for Letty and Juliana.

Other bequests in latter part of will: (evidently follow-up to some earlier gifts?)

To William H. Dundass, grandson, the wharf and the warehouses, lot on the east side of Union and house and lots now occupied by Robert Anderson on Princess Street, west of Moses' lot and east of lot deeded previously to Eliza Dundass, his sister (of William H.) with all vacant ground between his and Eliza's lot, running back 88' 3 1/2 ", these and each of these pieces of property I give to William H., and his heirs -- out of which he should pay any demands coming out of the case regarding 6000 acres which U.S. court decreed to John Dunlop and Co.

To Nancy Keene, wife of Newton Keene - house and lot on Princess and Union.

To Sophia Peyton, wife of Thomas West Peyton - houses and lot north of Princess and west of Water, now occupied by Catherine Sheverlane.

To daughter Agnes Dundass - in addition to what was already given - Alexandria bank shares held in the name of Hepburn and Dundass.

Will Dated 28 February 1817 - Dec. a/o 26 May 1817

Witnesses:

John A. Steuart
John Johnston

James Johnston
John Ramsay

2. Gravestone transcription from Old First Presbyterian Church burying ground, Carrie Avery, p. 19

Erected in Memory of Agnes, the late wife of William Hepburn, who departed this life on the 7th of June 1811. She was distinguished for simplicity of manner and unfeigned piety. Having lived in the fear of God she died in peace, in her 87th year.

Appendix II
Notes Relating to Moses Hepburn, et al.

1. DB 2:250, Sept 15, 1818

Bond of Jonah Isabell, Archibald McClean, Jonathan C. May, Nathaniel Rouncevell, and John Gird in the sum of \$20,000 as guardians of Letitia, Moses, and Julia Ann Eliza Hepburn, orphans of William Hepburn, deceased.

2. WB 3:379, August 7, 1830

Bond of Robert H. and William H. Miller in the amount of \$4000 for Julia Ann Eliza Hepburn.

3. 1850 U.S. Census

1083/1132

| | | | | | |
|---------------|----|---------|--------|----------|----------|
| Moses Hepburn | 40 | mulatto | farmer | \$18,000 | literate |
| Emily Hepburn | 38 | mulatto | | | literate |
| Prudence C. | 16 | mulatto | | | |
| Moses G. | 14 | mulatto | | | |
| Thomas | 9 | mulatto | | | |
| Julia A. | 6 | mulatto | | | |
| Arthur W. | 1 | mulatto | | | |

4. DB V3:9, February 19, 1859

Moses Hepburn and Amelia R., his wife, of West Chester, Chester County, Pennsylvania; Thomas S. Braddock and Margaret, his wife, of Washington City, and Robert W. and Mary W. Braddock all grant to Louisa Custer B. Anderson, wife of Thomas, land devised to her by her father Thomas Braddock.

5. WB 8:50, December 12, 1860

Will of Moses Hepburn of the Borough of West Chester in County of Chester, Pennsylvania.

To wife, Amelia R. Hepburn - 1/3 of the estate

The rest to go to his five children:

Prudence C. Smith - wife of George W. Smith

Moses A. Hepburn

Thomas W. Hepburn

Juliana Eliza Hepburn - wife of John C. Bagot

Arthur W. Hepburn

6. DB X3:309, Nov 1865 (Paraphrase)

Francis L. Smith, commissioner, sold to Lewis Cooper of Philadelphia and Charles M. Taylor of Alexandria the following real estate for \$16,200 on behalf of: Moses Hepburn; Prudence C. Smith, wife of George W. Smith; Thomas W. Hepburn; Julia A. Hepburn; and Arthur Hepburn, only surviving children of Moses Hepburn, formerly of Alexandria but later of Chester County, Pennsylvania. This was pursuant to the decree of November 1849 in the suit of Moses Hepburn, guardian to Prudence, etal, in which Francis Smith was appointed commissioner for this sale. Further ratification in May 1853 set the terms at \$2000 in cash and the rest in Virginia State stock. The real estate was described as follows:

all that property near the city of Alexandria near the outlet of the Alexandria Canal, devised by William Hepburn, deceased, to Moses Hepburn under the following description: "the houses and lots where I now live (only the aforesaid lots I bought of William Herbert, Jr., trustee, for creditors of Robert Conway and the acre I bought of Joseph Mandeville) together with my fishing shore," the lot mentioned as having been bought of William Herbert, Jr. and being described on said deed as "BEGINNING at Pendleton's line on the east side of Fairfax Street, according to plan of the town until it intersects line of Charles Alexander, dec., then east along said line to Patrick Street, then north up said river to Pendleton's line to beginning -

Describes the rest of his land and all appurtenances and the lot mentioned as having been bought of Joseph Mandeville, described in the deed as "all that lot or parcel of ground . . . being in City of Alexandria adjacent to town and marked No. 4 . . . by Colonel Gilpin . . . : BEGINNING west of Fairfax at its intersection with the north side of the third street north of Montgomery, agreeably to the plan of Alexandria, extended - running north with Fairfax 100 feet to the north bound of Conway's land or adjacent to Pendleton's line - then south 85 degrees west with said line to 255 feet to Royal - then south with line of Royal and parallel to Fairfax 51 feet 39 inches to third street south of Montgomery - then with line of said street and parallel to Montgomery 246 feet 10 inches to the beginning - 1/2 acre.

Appendix III

Deeds Relating to Hepburn Heirs

| | | |
|--------|--------|--------|
| S2/467 | M2/305 | M2/557 |
| M2/560 | A3/389 | B3/26 |
| F3/47 | F3/288 | F3/305 |
| G3/292 | G3/447 | I3/48 |
| I3/66 | I3/451 | I3/480 |
| L3/575 | L3/577 | M3/178 |
| M3/207 | M3/352 | V2/20 |
| V2/22 | O3/589 | R3/387 |
| R3/390 | U3/9 | U3/196 |
| X3/309 | 3/282 | 4/185 |

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