

# Glossary

## **Apprentice**

Originally, a person learning a trade or skill. In an indenture contract, the word signals that a child is being indentured. It did not imply that the child would be learning a trade, like carpentry.

## **Colonization**

The process of creating a colony. The American Colonization Society was an organization founded by whites in 1817 to send free blacks to Africa. In 1822, the Society established a colony on the west coast of Africa that later became the independent nation of Liberia.

## **Creole**

An African who had extensive experience with the European world as a result of contact with European traders and goods. Creoles had strong attachments to their African languages, customs, and attitudes, but they might also learn Spanish or Portuguese, give their children European names, or practice Christianity.

## **Enslave**

To put into slavery.

## **Half-Freedom**

A limited form of freedom offered by the Dutch to some of the early enslaved people. Half-free slaves enjoyed new liberties, but they were required to remain in Manhattan, to pay a yearly tax, and to return to service when needed. The children of half-freed people remained enslaved.

## **Indenture**

A contract in which one person agrees to be a servant for another for a specific period of time, often in return for food, clothing, a place to live, and training in a skill. The work performed by indentured servants was often similar to the work done by slaves, but the servants were free when their contracted time was over. Adults of any age might sign an indenture contract. If a child was signing, he or she was referred to as an apprentice.

## **Journeyman**

A competent tradesman who has finished the training period of apprenticeship.

## **Land of the Blacks**

New York City's first black neighborhood, located near where Washington Square is today. Beginning in 1643 and continuing for more than 20 years, the Dutch West India Company gave newly freed blacks (see "half freedom") a land grant in this area, partly to protect New Amsterdam from attack. The total area was more than 130 acres, or about 100 city blocks. The sizes of the individual land grants varied, but most were from two to eight acres. During the British colonial period, blacks were forced by financial circumstance to sell this property. By the late 1720s, all the former land grants were owned by whites.

## **Manumit**

To free or emancipate a slave.

**Meal Market**

A site on the East River, at the foot of Wall Street. It was designated by the Common Council in 1711 as the place where slaves should be bought, sold, or hired out for day work.

**Osnaburg**

A rough, inexpensive fabric used in slaves' clothing, named for the north German city where it was made. There are many misspellings of the word, including ozenbrig and ozenburg.

**Patriot**

Any person who loves and supports his or her country. A Patriot, with the first letter capitalized, is a person who fought or argued against British control of the American colonies. People who supported the British were called Loyalists or Tories.

**Slave**

A person owned by another as property. In American slavery in the North and South, slaves were owned for their entire lives, and their children were born to slavery. The use of slaves dates back centuries and covers many parts of the world. The origin of the word is in the use of captured Slavs, a people of Central Europe, during the Middle Ages.