1639 Slaves arrive in CT
1660 CT legalizes slavery
1690 African Americans prohibited from serving in the military. This changed in times of war.
1712 First documented evidence of enslaved people in Glastonbury.
1774 Glastonbury had 79 African Americans (4% of the population). 64 were listed as slaves.
1777 CT law states that owners are no longer responsible for care of freed slaves — leads to more freeing of slaves to allow them to fight in the Revolutionary War.
1775-1783 Revolutionary War
Slaves & freed Blacks fight in war.
1784 CT passed The Act of Gradual Emancipation: children born of slaves after 1784 were freed at the age of 25.
1790 1st Federal Census
1790 Nat Turner’s Rebellion — A slave in VA leads a revolt that killed 55 whites.
1810-1820 Slavery virtually disappears in Glastonbury.
1818 CT only state in New England to bar all blacks from voting.
1833 Prudence Crandall starts an all-black female school but is forced to close because of violence against the school, students and Crandall’s family.
1837 Garrison speaks against slavery at the Smith’s house.
1839-1841 Amistad trial — Smith sisters visit the slaves in jail.
1840s Strong anti-slavery sentiment in Glastonbury, mostly against spread of slavery into US territories.
1848 Slavery abolished in CT, last state in New England to do so.
1848 Uncle Tom’s Cabin published by Harriet Beecher Stowe of CT
1850 Fugitive Slave Law passed. People required to aid in the capture of runaways.
1851 Connecticut Anti-slavery Association.
1852 Hannah Smith and her daughters send anti-slavery petitions to Congress.
1853 The Liberator newspaper published by William Lloyd Garrison.
1854 Republican Party formed to prevent the spread of slavery in the territories.
1856 Many men of Glastonbury join the Republican Party. Republican candidate for Governor, Buckingham, wins in Glastonbury.
1858 13th Amendment ratified Slavery abolished.
1860 Election of Abraham Lincoln. Landslide victory for Lincoln in CT. And in Glastonbury as well.
1861-1865 Civil War
13 Glastonbury men of color enlist
1865 13th Amendment ratified
Slavery abolished.
1868 14th Amendment ratified
Grants citizenship and equal protection under the law.
1869 15th Amendment ratified
Suffrage for African American males.
Glastonbury MLK Community Initiative (GMLKCI) in conjunction with the Historical Society of Glastonbury (HSG) presents a free webinar via Zoom on February 24, 2021.

The first enslaved people arrived in Connecticut in 1639. We don’t know exactly when citizens of Glastonbury began to own slaves, but as occurred in other New England towns, few townspersons became slaveholders. Among those who did, most owned one slave (or ‘servant’).

The February 24th webinar features Diane Hoover and Julie Thompson from the Historical Society of Glastonbury who will share the findings of their research into slavery and abolition in Glastonbury, from colonial times through the Civil War. As part of a soon-to-open (late spring 2021) exhibit on this subject created by curator Lin Scarduzio at the Historical Society’s Museum on the Green, Diane and Julie have spent countless hours researching the lives of the African American people who lived in the town from colonial times to the mid-19th century.

This story is far from complete, since the African American people who lived in Glastonbury from the early years into the 1800s left virtually no written record of their existence (as is true for women of any color, the poor, and most immigrants who settled in Glastonbury).

Researchers must turn to the documents kept by those who wrote them: white men. Records of town meetings, vital statistics, wills, accounts of births, baptisms and deaths kept by the churches, burial records and headstone carvings, articles and advertisements from local newspapers, diaries of daily activities and books kept by doctors and storekeepers all serve as source material. Towns charged fees for the costs of clothes or food, and all require careful examination to extract information about slaves and freed blacks written in the ornate script of the time or printed with antique type fonts.

These receipts provide additional details. All require human reading to understand the lives of the enslaved people. Towns charged fees for the costs of clothes or food, and all require careful examination to extract information about slaves and freed blacks written in the ornate script of the time or printed with antique type fonts.

GMLKCI is an all-volunteer, nonprofit organization, formed in 2001, under the auspices of the Glastonbury Human Relations Commission. GMLKCI’s mission is to increase knowledge about, and understanding of, the philosophy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and to provide leadership and active engagement to build an inclusive community. We believe that bringing people together discuss openly and honestly social justice issues will help build a more inclusive and tolerant community. As Dr. King noted “…whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly…” and “…the quality of a community is determined by how members of the community relate to one another.”

More information about Glastonbury MLK Community Initiative: glastonburymlkci.org

Thank you for attending today’s program. Your presence encourages the work we do as members of the Glastonbury MLK Community Initiative (GMLKCI) to make Glastonbury a more inclusive place to live and visit.

This project was accomplished by a handful of committed community members. Please consider joining as a volunteer; there is an opportunity to express interest on the electronic survey.

While all of our programs are free, we are dependent on the community for financial support. The Glastonbury MLK Community Initiative is an all-volunteer 501(c)(3) corporation and all donations are tax deductible. If you would like to support our efforts with a financial contribution, checks for any amount will be gratefully accepted; payable to GMLKCI, and mailed to:

GMLKCI Treasurer
62 Chimneysweep Hill Road
Glastonbury, Connecticut 06033

You may also donate online by using the DONATE button on our website: glastonburymlkci.org