

**NJS Presents****Museums, Archives, Artifacts, and Documents News****In this Issue:*****Free Man of Color Ben Moore Jailed for Opinions, 1755*****By Gary D. Saretzky****DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.14713/njs.v2i2.57>**

*The document featured in this edition of NJS comes to us from the Monmouth County Archives. The Archives, operated under the direction of Monmouth County Clerk, Christine G. Hanlon, Esq., preserves, organizes, and provides access to Monmouth County government records of enduring historic value that are retained on a permanent basis. These records include documents pertaining to deeds, court cases, naturalizations, and many other subjects. These records are used for legal, genealogical, historical, and other research purposes. The Archives team also works to educate the public about Monmouth County history through public programs and exhibits.*

*The Archives are open to the public for research Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The facility is located at 125 Symmes Drive (Lower Level), Manalapan, NJ 07726. Researchers can call ahead for an appointment: 732-308-3771 ext. 7. See more at <https://co.monmouth.nj.us/page.aspx?ID=126>*

***Free Man of Color Ben Moore Jailed for Opinions, 1755***

During and after the French and Indian War (1755-1763), many slaves expressed sympathy with France, believing that the French would help the slaves attain their independence and freedom. In 1788, La Société des Amis Noirs (Society of the Friends of the Blacks) was founded with the primary goals of equal rights and abolishing slavery. Influential figures such as General Lafayette and the Marquis de Condorcet were active supporters of the Society. For Ben Moore, a free man of

color, a statement expressing sympathy toward the French and resentment over whites being masters resulted in his imprisonment in 1755. More was released on bail in the amount of 20 pounds. No further action has been found in the records.

### **Transcripts<sup>1</sup>**

The Examination of Thos. [Thomas] James Son of Robert James Aged Between 16 & 17 years who Saith that about 3 or 4 Weeks ago his father Sent him to Mill & having an Errant [errand] to Aaron Mattison Jr there was some Negroes in Sd. [said] Matthisons kitchen among which was a Negro named Ben Moore who is free. Sd. Negro Ben asked Sd. Thomas James to treat him: the Said Thos. James Answered, who do you think will Treat Negroes, Sd. Negro answered when the French comes and takes you, you will be Negroes and we will be Gentlemen and Masters Over You and further saith not. Robert James Jr. was along with his brother Thomas and Saith the same. Examined February 18th 1755 before us.

Jon[athan] Forman

Justices

Th[omas] Henderson

Monmouth February 19th 1755

The said Ben Moore was brought before us the Subscribers. After considering the above examinations and other examinations came to the following judgment: That the said Ben Moore stand committed in close prison until he find sufficient security for the peace and good behavior and to attend the next Court of General Quarter Sessions of the Peace of the County and not depart

without the consent and that he pay the costs of this prosecution.

Jon[athan] Forman

[D\_\_\_]

We Ben More [sic] a free Negro and George Rhe in the County of Monmouth Yeoman Do Acknowledge our selves to be Indebted to our sovereign Lord the King his Heirs and Successors to witt, the sd. [said] Ben More [sic] the sum of Twenty Pounds and the sd. George Rhe in the sum of Twenty Pounds to be levied on our and each of our goods and chattels lands and tenements on failure of the following Condition

The Condition of the above recognizance is such that if the above bound [den?] Ben More shall personally appear at the next General Court of Quarter Sessions of the peace to be held for this County of Monmouth then and there to answer to such matters & things as shall be objected against him and not to depart without the Courts Leave and in the mean time to be of the peace & Good Behavior to all his Majesties Leige Subjects: then the above Recognizance to be Void and of None affect other wise in force.

Taken and Acknowledged this 19th day of February in the 28th year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord George the Second &c. Anno Domini 1755 Before me

Jn [Jonathan] Henderson Justice

### **The Document**

---

<sup>1</sup> Author's Note: The transcript includes a paragraph at the end that is not in the scan, as it is from a different page.

Monmouth Js. The Examination of Tho<sup>s</sup>. James son of Robert James Aged between 16 & 17 years who saith that about 3 or 4 Weeks ago his father sent him to Mill & having an Errand to Aaron Mattison Jun<sup>r</sup>. there was some Negroes in P<sup>r</sup>. Mattisons Kitchen among which was a Negro Named Ben Moore who is free P<sup>r</sup>. Negro ~~Ben~~ Ben. Asked P<sup>r</sup>. Thomas James to Treat him: The said Tho<sup>s</sup>. James Answered, who do <sup>you</sup> think will Treat Negroes, P<sup>r</sup>. Negro Answered when the French comes and takes you you will be Negroes & ~~the~~ and we will be Gentlemen and Masters Over you & further saith not Robert James Jun<sup>r</sup> was along with his Brother Thomas and saith the Same Examined February 18<sup>th</sup> 1755 Before us

Jon<sup>ts</sup>. Forman / Justices  
 [Signature]

Monmouth Js. February 19<sup>th</sup> 1755.

The said Ben Moore was brought before us the Subscribers. After considering the above Examinations & other Examinations Came to the following Judgment viz: That the said Ben Moore stand Committed in Close prison untill he find Sufficient Security for the peace and Good Behaviour & to Attend the Next Court of General Quarter Sessions of the Peace for this County & not Depart without the Court & that he pay the Costs of this prosecution.

Jon<sup>ts</sup>. [Signature]  
 D

*Gary D. Saretzky, archivist and photographer, taught the history of photography at Mercer County Community College from 1977 to 2012. He served as Coordinator, Internship Programs, Rutgers History Department, 1994-2016. Archivist of Monmouth County since 1994, Saretzky lectures regularly on photographic history and photographic conservation. His publications include, "Nineteenth Century New Jersey Photographers," New Jersey History, Fall/Winter 2004.*