

Annich and Enslavement at the Van Riper-Hopper House

On this day in 1817, the remaining property of Richard Van Riper's estate was sold at auction. The corresponding vendue book, which records all the purchases, survives in the Wayne Museum's collection. Amongst the sales of beds, mirrors, barrels and pots is a very human story; the purchase of "one Negro wench Annick" by Uriah Van Riper for \$125. (Figure 1)

Item	Price
Uriah Van Riper	
one cow bell	90
two Raisins strap & box	51
two pewter platters	27
two keels	25
one Churn	27
one half Barrel	3
one Negro wench Annick	125
Total	128 33

Figure 1- An excerpt from the Vendue Book of the Property of Richard Van Riper, deceased. This shows Uriah Van Riper's purchases, including Annick. From the Wayne Museum.

According to 19th century census records, Annich was born ca. 1782-1784.¹ Little is known about her parents or childhood, though she may have grown up on the farm of Richard Van Riper, father of Uriah Van Riper of the Van Riper-Hopper House. Though the property does not survive today, it featured the family's home- similar in construction to the Van Riper-Hopper House- and numerous outbuildings, surrounded by fields of grains and other produce. The farm, with its large quantity of livestock- cows, sheep, horses, pigs, and chickens- as well as crops- corn, wheat, grain, and more- was supported by the labor of Annich and at least five other enslaved people.²

Richard Van Riper died in 1807, and the estate inventory taken after his death includes six enslaved people; Harry, Prince, Mary, Annich, Hannah, and Dini.³ Listed alongside livestock, farming tools, textiles, and other items, Annich and the five others were given their own monetary value. Annich, around the age of twenty-five, was valued the second highest at \$125. The weeks following Richard's death would have been particularly harrowing for the enslaved community, as they faced the prospect of separation and sale. Despite their presence on the inventory, only two enslaved people appear in Richard's will; his widow, Elizabeth Mead, is granted "the Negro boy Harry and the Negro wench Annick," though it is noted that "it is my will and desire that after the decease of my beloved wife that the

¹ "Jacob B Van Riper, Wayne Township, Passaic County, NJ." Ancestry.com. 1850 United States Federal Census [database on-line]. Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2009.

² Estate Inventory of Richard Van Riper, May 12th, 1807. New Jersey Surrogate's Court (Bergen County). Copy accessed at the Wayne Museum, Wayne, NJ.

³ Ibid.

Negro wench Annick shall fall to the movable property and Harry to fall to my son Richard Van Riper.”⁴ We do not know what happened to Prince, Mary, Hannah, and Dini following Richard’s death; whether they were inherited by his surviving children or sold to pay off his debts. With further research, hopefully we can uncover their stories.



Figure 2- The kitchen of the Van Riper-Hopper House, constructed ca. 1786. Annick and her children likely labored in this space, cooking for the Van Riper family. From the Wayne Museum.

Movable property was meant to be used to meet outstanding debts owed by the deceased, and on September 29th, 1817, Annick was amongst the property of Richard Van Riper sold at auction. She was purchased by Richard’s eldest son, Uriah, and moved a mile away to the Van Riper-Hopper House. (Figure 2) However, surviving records suggest that she may have already been living on Uriah’s property. 13 years earlier, New Jersey passed the 1804 Act for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery, which stated that children born to enslaved mothers after July 4th, 1804 would be free but were forced to labor for their mother’s enslaver until age 25, if male, and until age 21, if female.⁵ Enslavers were required to record the births of any children after 1804. As per this law, on December 11th, 1824, Uriah Van Riper committed to paper, “two black children born at his house to offer on record, the mother of these children is named Annick.” (Figure 3) The elder, Dine, was born on October 12th, 1811- six years before Annick’s sale- and the younger, Cuff, was born on April 8th, 1818- meaning that Annick was likely in the early stages of

⁴ Will of Richard Van Riper, April 22nd, 1807. New Jersey Surrogate's Court (Bergen County). Ancestry.com. New Jersey, U.S., Wills and Probate Records, 1739-1991 [database on-line]. Ancestry.com Operations, Inc.

⁵ Gigantino, James J. *The Ragged Road to Abolition: Slavery and Freedom in New Jersey, 1775-1865*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014, 92.

pregnancy when sold.⁶ It is possible that Annich, still owned by Richard Van Riper's widow, Elizabeth Mead, was leased to Uriah, but was then sold following Elizabeth's death. The father of Annich's children is unknown, as are their ultimate fates. In the 1830 US census, Jacob B. Van Riper, Uriah's son, is listed as having a free man of color between the ages of 10 and 23 in his household.⁷ Is it possible that this could be Cuff, who would have been around 12 at the time? Perhaps. Despite the anticipation of freedom at either 21 or 25 for children born to enslaved mothers after 1804, this was no guarantee of stability. In *The Ragged Road to Abolition*, author James J. Gigantino states that "parents of slaves for a term [as Gigantino defines these children] had no legal standing to direct their children's future nor did slaves for a term have contracts because the gradual abolition law wholly governed their existence."⁸ Between 1804 and 1824, sale of children born post 1804 made up 17% of all enslaved African Americans advertised in New Jersey newspapers.⁹ It is possible that Annich's children were sold by the Van Ripers or died between the time that their births were recorded, in 1824 and their majority; 1832 for Dine and 1843 for Cuff. As always, with further research, we hope to learn more about their lives.

Nov. 26th. 1824.
 Uriah R. Van Riper of the State of New Jersey, Bergen County
 Saddle River Township a farmer has two black children born
 at his house to offer on record, the mother of those children
 is named Annich & the children names & births -
 Dine was born Oct. 12th. 1811.
 Cuff was born April 8. 1818.
 Uriah R. Van Riper
 Sec^y in the office and recorded 11th Dec^r. 1824.

Figure 3- The record of the births of Annich's two children, Dine and Cuff. From the Bergen County Administration Building. Accessed via FamilySearch.org.

At the Van Riper-Hopper House, Annich and her children were forced to labor on a variety of agricultural and domestic tasks. An advertisement for an enslaved woman dating to 1734 may give an idea of the expectations Annich's enslavers had of her- "to be sold, a Young Negro Woman, about 20 years old, she does all sorts of House Work; she can brew, bake, boyle [boil], roast, soap, wash, iron & starch; and she is a good darey [dairy] woman. She can card and spin at the wheel, cotton, lennen [linen] and wollen [woolen], she has another good property she neither drinks rum nor smoaks [smokes] tobacco, and she is

⁶ A microfilm of the original records, which are stored in the Bergen County Administration Building in Hackensack, NJ, was accessed; Black Births, 1804-1846. New Jersey County Court (Bergen County). FamilySearch.org. Page 134. [New Jersey, County Marriages, 1682-1956; https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:939Z-1ZSD-QM?cc=1803976&wc=9XRM-VZ3%3A146364601.](https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:939Z-1ZSD-QM?cc=1803976&wc=9XRM-VZ3%3A146364601)

⁷ "Jacob B. Van Riper, Saddle River, Bergen County, NJ." Ancestry.com. 1830 United States Federal Census [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2010.

⁸ Gigantino, 103.

⁹ Ibid, 101.

two other servants, Hagar and Sarah Ogden, mulatto women aged 47 and 21, respectively.¹⁶ Adriana does not appear in the 1870 US census, and she may have died over the course of the decade. It is unknown if she lived long enough to see the start of the Civil War or learn of New Jersey's 1866 ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment, which bans enslavement "except as punishment for crime."¹⁷

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ "13th Amendment." Interactive Constitution. National Constitution Center. Accessed September 25th, 2021. <https://constitutioncenter.org/interactive-constitution/amendment/amendment-xiii>.