

## THE VENDUE OF HENRICUS DUBOIS

**OBJECTIVES** - Students will :

- analyze and interpret a 19<sup>th</sup> century vendue;
- explain how a 1742 Law is exemplified in a document;
- make assumptions as to why certain laws dealing with slavery were passed.

**LEARNING STANDARDS** – See chart

### **MATERIALS**

- Copy of excerpts from the Vendue of Hendricus Dubois
- Transcription of excerpts from Vendue of Hendricus Dubois Sheet
- An Act to Prevent Aged and Deceprit Slaves from Becoming Burthensome Sheet
- Glossary of Terms Sheet
- Student Activity Sheet

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

A Vendue is essentially a public auction of items to be sold. Often times, after a person died, they would Will many of their valuables, the remainder of their estate being sold at a public Vendue to the highest bidder. This is the case for the vendue of Hendricus Dubois. This document shows the items sold, including one slave named Bett, her selling price, and the person who purchased her. It is important to note that this document helps to illustrate the practical application of a law that was passed March 8<sup>th</sup>, 1773. The Colony of New York, still under the dominion of British rule, passed an Act that required all Slave owners to feed, clothe, and maintain their slaves in order to keep them from begging for the necessities of life on the streets. As slaves were considered property like anything else, their masters were accountable for their behavior. In addition, this document also illustrates the rare practice of allowing a slave to choose her own master. In this document we learn that Bett is given the opportunity to choose not to be the property of Edward Lounsberry, but instead serve Peter Elting, certainly an atypical occurrence.

### **Information on Hendricus Dubois**

Hendricus Dubois was born in Kingston in 1710. He and his wife Jannetje settled in New Paltz in the hamlet Libertyville, once called Poughwoughtenock. Hendricus served as an ensign and Captain of the 4th Ulster County Militia at Newburgh, NY during the Revolutionary War. He died on June 6, 1780.



### **TEACHING SEQUENCE**

1. CLASS DISCUSSION
  - a. Give the students some background on Hendricus Dubois and his family.
2. INTERPRETING INFORMATION FROM A VENDUE
  - a. Arrange students in pairs or groups of four.

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- b. Explain that each group or pair of students will receive packet that includes a copy of the original Vendue of Hendricus Dubois, a transcription of this document, a Glossary of Term sheet, and an activity sheet.
  - c. Distribute the packet and allow approximately 30 minutes for the students to complete the sheet.
3. CLASS DISCUSSION
- a. Discuss the difference between an inventory and a vendue.
  - b. Call on students from each group to share their responses to the questions on their activity sheet to the class.
  - c. When you review question 5, read excerpts from **The Act to Prevent Aged and Decrepit Slaves from becoming Burthensome** to the class. Ask students to rethink the answer to the question. Did they change their mind? Ask students why they think this Law was passed?
  - d. Finish reviewing the answers to the all the questions with the class.