

Jupiter Hammon (1711-c. 1806)

Huntington Poet and Lloyd Family Slave

Jupiter Hammon was the first black poet published in America. He lived and worked on Lloyd Neck, Huntington as a slave for four generations of Lloyds. He was born in 1711 and was sold to the Lloyd family as a young boy. From the Lloyd family letters we know that he attended the Lloyd schoolhouse and learned to read and write from the Lloyd schoolmaster. He had his own garden and cash crop and at age 22 he bought his own bible from the Lloyds.

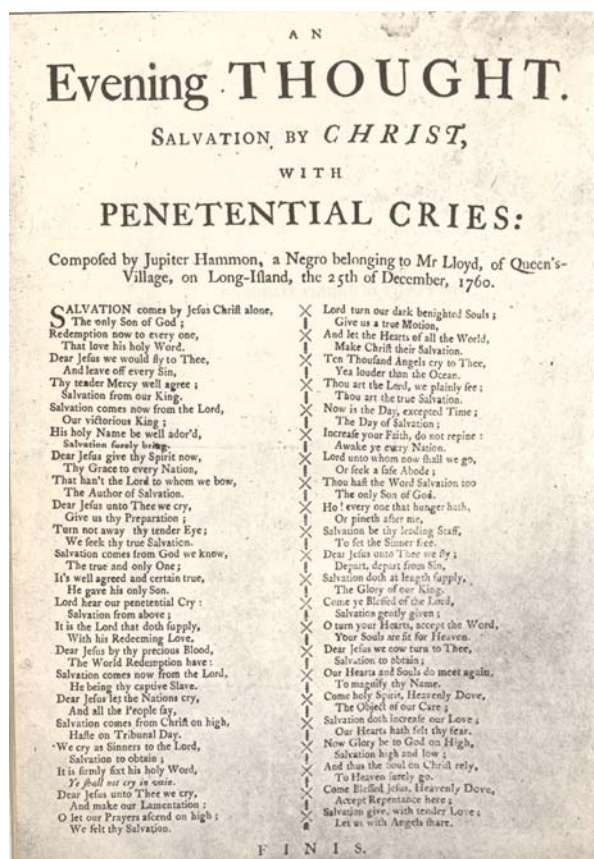
In 1761 Hammon's poem "Evening Thought" was published as a broadside. Composed on Christmas Day, 1760, the poem, subtitled "Salvation by Christ, with Penetential [*sic*] Cries," is emblematic of the religiously inspired content that was typical of all Hammon's work.

Upon the death of his owner, Henry Lloyd, two years later, Hammon became the slave of Henry's son, Joseph Lloyd, an American revolutionary. During the Revolution he accompanied Joseph Lloyd when Lloyd went into exile in Connecticut to escape the British occupation of Huntington. While in exile, additional works were published, including "An Address to Miss Phillis Wheatly [*sic*]" (1778), "An Essay on the Ten Virgins" (1779), and "A Winter Piece" (1782).

Hammon's final published work, "An Address to the Negroes of the State of New York" (1787), expresses his belief that younger slaves should seek their freedom but that for himself he believed that freedom would come in the next world, on judgment day. Five hundred copies of his address were re-printed by the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery.

The precise date of Hammon's death is not known, but occurred between 1790 and 1806. Langston Hughes described Jupiter Hammon as an intelligent and privileged slave, respected by his master for his skill with tools and by his fellow slaves for his power as a preacher.

The Joseph Lloyd Manor House Museum on Lloyd Neck in Huntington conducts school programs (for 4th, 5th, 7th and 11th graders) on Jupiter Hammon and the other slaves that lived and worked on Lloyd Neck.



For more information contact the

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