

The Biography of Mahommah Gardo Baquaqua: His Passage from Slavery to Freedom in Africa and America



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This is the only biography of an American slave who was born in Africa. Baquaqua was enslaved in northern Benin in the early 1840s when he was about 20. At the time he was a devout Muslim and worked as a bodyguard for the ruler of a small town. He was abducted and taken south to Togo and sold to a slave merchant who shipped him to Rio de Janeiro, then the world's largest slave market. Here he was sold again and brought to New York where he was convinced to jump ship by a little-known black group called the New York Vigilance Society. He escaped to Boston and later traveled to Haiti, the only free Black state, where he was picked up by the Free Baptist Mission and converted to Christianity. He later returned to the U.S. and attended college in Cortland, New York. Later Baquaqua moved to England.

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