

FIVE COLLEGE LEARNING IN RETIREMENT

PRESENTS

Slavery in the Connecticut Valley

A Lecture and Walking Tour

Tuesday, May 11, 2004 at 2:00 P.M.

"White Church" in Historic Deerfield
(Walking tour optional)

Robert Romer, emeritus professor of physics at Amherst College, frequent Five College Learning in Retirement participant, and Deerfield volunteer, has been spending a large part of his time during the past three years investigating 18th century slavery in "our neighborhood" - the Connecticut Valley of western Massachusetts.

Slavery here was much more common - and much more widely accepted - than most of us realize. Most of the ministers in the valley owned one or more black slaves, as did a great many of the other "important men", and less prominent citizens as well. Focusing on a particular time, two and a half centuries ago, and a particular location, the main street of what is now old Deerfield, Romer has created a "snapshot" of slavery on that street, a map showing where slaves lived and who they belonged to in 1753. Though as with any research, be it in physics or in history, there are some uncertainties in the results, his map shows 21 slaves on that street at that time, some 7% of a population of about 300. Similar numbers would probably apply in other towns such as Hatfield and Hadley; Deerfield is unusual simply in that more records have survived in Deerfield than in other towns in the valley.

Still, we know very little about the life of the slaves here in our neighborhood. Romer will discuss some of the sources for his results, as well as what we know - and what we do not know - about slave life in our community, and will distribute copies of his 1753 map.

We will meet at the "White Church" on the main street of old Deerfield, at the corner of Memorial Street. After the talk and discussion, there will be an optional walking tour of some of the Deerfield sites where the enslaved people of Deerfield lived in 1753.

Registration not required. Event is free and open to the public. For further information, call the Five College Learning in Retirement office:
413-585-3756