Appendix to "Justise Must Take Plase": Three African Americans Speak of Religion in Eighteenth-Century New England

The remainder of the documents deal with free and enslaved African Americans in Essex County, Massachusetts, home to Flora and Phillis. The records of John Cleaveland's New Light congregation in the Chebacco Parish of Ipswich reveal the sense of urgency that accompanied the founding of the church: some items are recorded on rogue scraps of paper. The following excerpts demonstrate that blacks made up a significant portion of the church's early members.

Loose sheet of temporary records, 1746, box 1, folder 3, John Cleaveland Papers, Phillips Library, Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Mass.

Negro Edward gave the Reasons of his hope to the new gathered Church of Christ in Chebacco on the 30th Day of May . . .

[same day] Hannah Choat the wife of Francis Choat in Like manner . . .

June 8: then the following Persons related there Expearence (viz) . . . Negro Cesar. Then voted that the above Named are Propounded to full Communion . . .

June 15: then the Neagro Binah Declar'd what God had Done for her Soul in Relating his various Dealings with her in Conviction & Consolation: voted that she be Propounded for full Communion . . . and Likewise Negro Flory.

[Thus four of the first twenty-two members were black.]

[Scrap in folder; see also box 4, p. 112, for a copy.]

November 6, 1748: after Sacrament the Church being stay'd appointed a Church meeting Tuesday the 8th Instant to be held immediately after Sun-Set, to do somthing respecting Flora Negro's Fall some Time since . . .

November 8: having meet according to appointment, Flora's Confession was read over once & again she being Present which been read before the Congregation and after asking of her several Questions upon her Confession the Church came to a vote, viz.

1. That Flora Negro having made a Satisfactory acknowledgement or Confession to the Church for her Folly is now restored to our Charity and Fellowship and to her Prevelidges in the Church again . . .