

# Boyrereau Brinch “Jeffrey Brace”

Georgia, Vermont

Applicant: Fr. Senator Carolyn Branagan

## CRITERIA:

1. The site is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past:
  - Burial place of a significant individual
  - Building or site associated with significant individual or group or business

- Brace lived in Georgia while dictating his memoir *The Blind African Slave* to St. Albans lawyer Benjamin Prentiss
- Fought for three years in Franklin County Court in St. Albans for veteran’s pension (1818-1821)
- He died in Georgia on April 20, 1827; location of burial site is not certain possibly near where he lived on Mill River Road
- Second marker honoring Brace in Poultney placed in 2008.

## SIDE ONE

### Boyrereau Brinch “Jeffrey Brace”

Born in 1742 in West Africa, Boyrereau Brinch was sold into slavery at age 16. Renamed Jeffrey Brace, he fought in the Seven Years War as an enslaved sailor and endured the cruelty of masters in Connecticut. About 1768 he is sold to Mary Stiles, who taught him to read. In 1783, Brace was manumitted for his service in the American Revolution. A freeman, Brace moved to Vermont in 1784, settling in 1804 in Georgia where he purchased 60 acres of land. Brace, now blind, committed the bible to memory and was baptized at the Baptist Church of Georgia. He filed in the Franklin County Court to receive the \$8 per month veteran’s pension; it was awarded in 1821. Brace died on April 20, 1827, at his home in Georgia.

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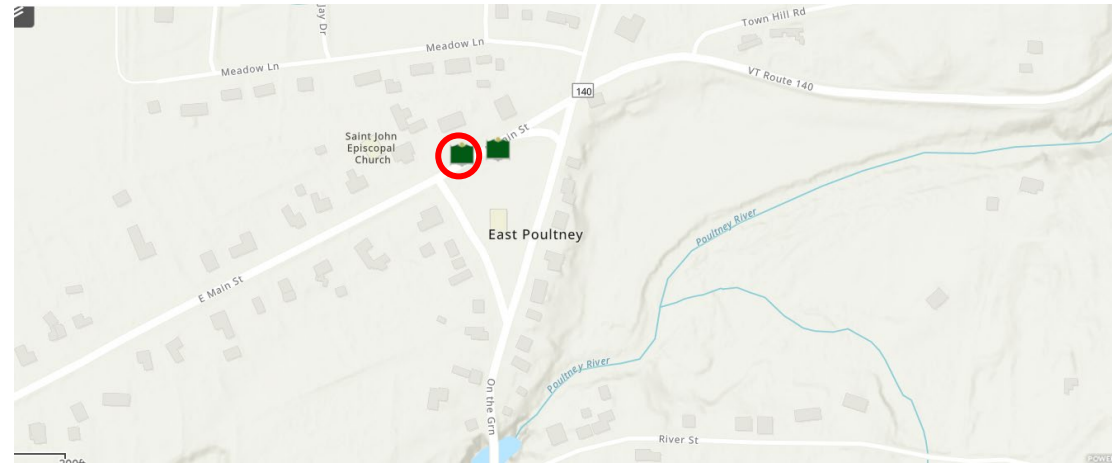
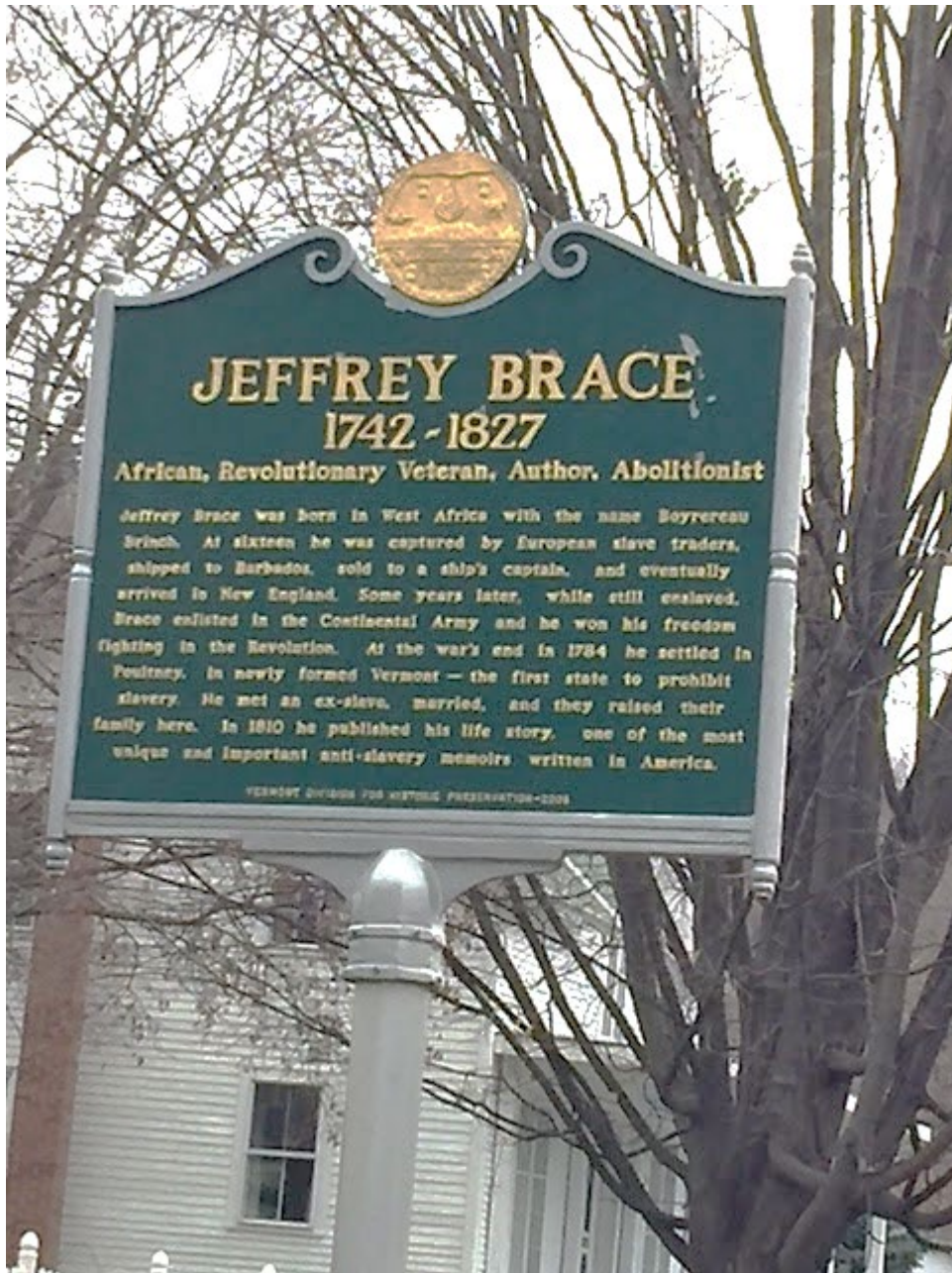
## SIDE TWO

### *The Blind African Slave* Memoirs of Boyrereau Brinch

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Jeffrey Brace dictated his story to lawyer Benjamin Prentiss, sensing a duty to recount “how poor Africans have been and perhaps now are abused.” The memoir begins in Africa, marking all of Brace’s “adventures in the British navy, travels, sufferings, sales, abuses, education, service in the American war, emancipation, conversion to the Christian religion, knowledge of the scriptures, memory, and blindness.” He wished it would open “the hearts of those who hold slaves and move them to consent to give them that freedom which they themselves enjoy, and which all mankind have an equal right to possess.” *The Blind African Slave* was issued in 1810, the first book published in St. Albans.

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## JEFFREY BRACE

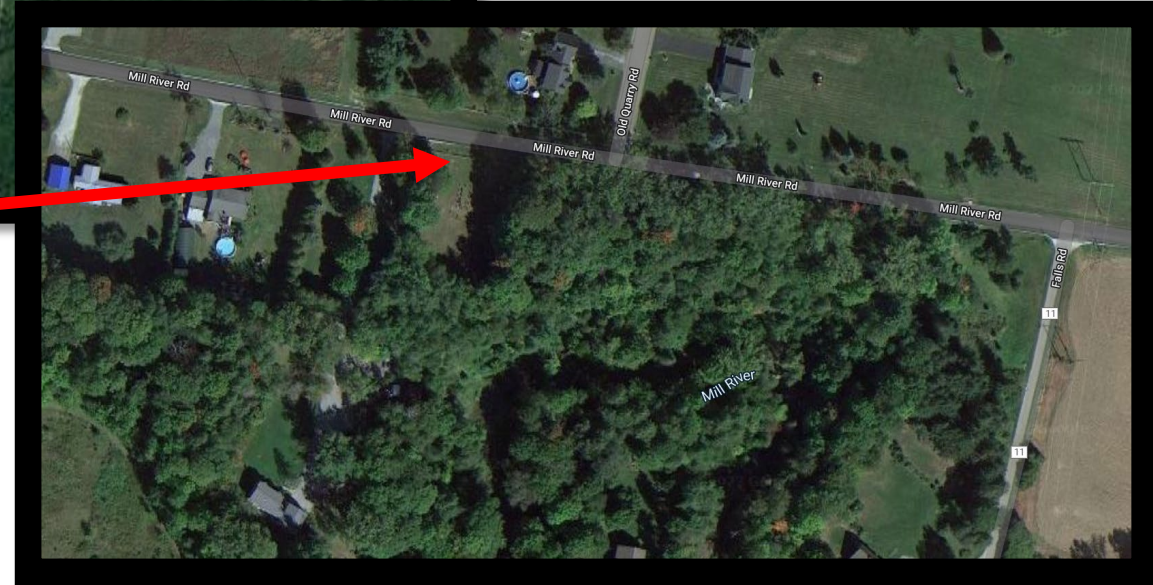
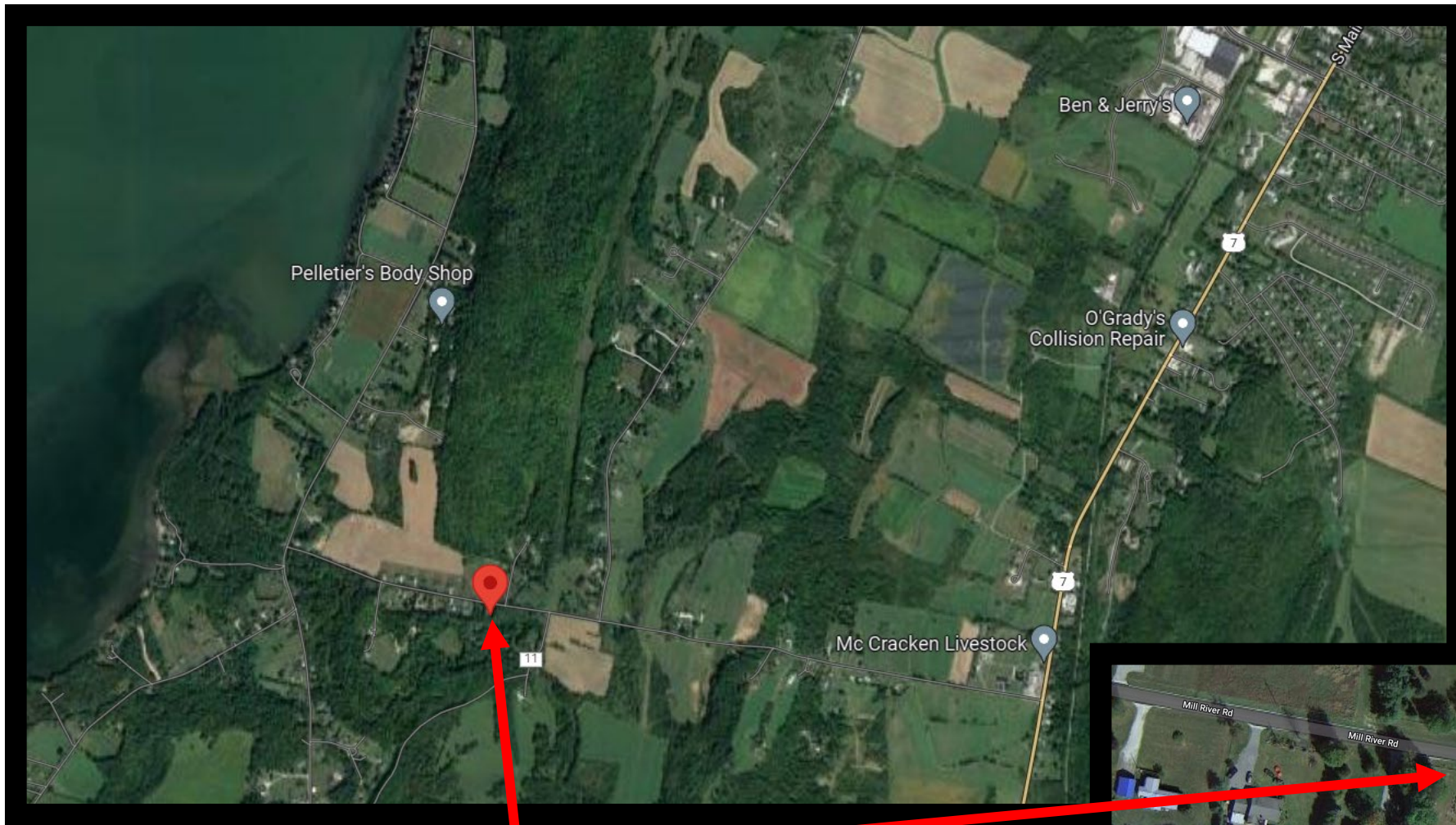
1742 – 1827

### African, Revolutionary Veteran, Author, Abolitionist

Jeffrey Brace was born in West Africa with the name Boyrereau Brinch. At sixteen he was captured by European slave traders, shipped to Barbados, sold to a ship's captain, and eventually arrived in New England. Some years later, while still enslaved, Brace enlisted in the Continental Army and he won his freedom fighting in the Revolution. At the war's end in 1784 he settled in Poultney, in newly formed Vermont—the first state to prohibit slavery. He met an ex-slave, married, and they raised their family here. In 1810 he published his life story, one of the most unique and important anti-slavery memoirs written in America.

Vermont Division for Historic Preservation - 2008





Proposed Marker Location  
In Area of Land Purchased  
by Jeffrey Brace in 1804/5