

THE TOWN OF BRISTOL IN RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS



"I know histhry isn't thru, Hinnessy, because it ain't like what I see ivry day in Halsted Street. If any wan comes along with a histhry iv Greece or Rome that'll show me th' people fightin', gettin' dhrunk, makin' love, gettin' married, owin' th' grocery man an' bein' without hard coal, I'll believe they was a Greece or Rome, but not befur."



— Dunne, Finley Peter,
OBSERVATIONS BY MR. DOOLEY,
New York, 1902



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1590

Ousamequin Yellow Feather, who would become the *Massasoit* of his people the [Wampanoag](#), was born in the village of [Pokanoket](#) near present-day [Bristol, Rhode Island](#).¹ This group of people were considered to be “Those of the Dawn” because –living as they were along the seaboard– they had gone the farthest in the direction of the sunrise.



1. *Massasoit* is not a personal name but a title, translating roughly as “Sachem of the Sachems,” as in “Shahanshah.” Like most native American men of the period, he had a number of personal names. Among these were *Ousamequin* or “Yellow Feather,” and *Wasamegin*. The above may arguably be –and may forever remain– the only statue erected by Massachusetts in honor of a politician from [Rhode Island](#)!

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1642

At Québec, [Father Jean de Brébeuf](#) was entrusted with the care of the native Americans at the reservation at Sillery.

Another Jesuit, [Father Isaac Jogues](#), was captured in an ambush. After being kept around as a [slave](#) for some time in an Iroquois village, he would be tortured and murdered and in 1646  his head would be impaled on the village's palisade. As a comparison situation to what has happened in regard to the memory of the martyred [Metacom](#), we place on record here that there is now a marble statue at the scene of this historic crime against a white man, in Auriesville, New York, a spot which wants to be known as the National Shrine of the North American Martyrs.

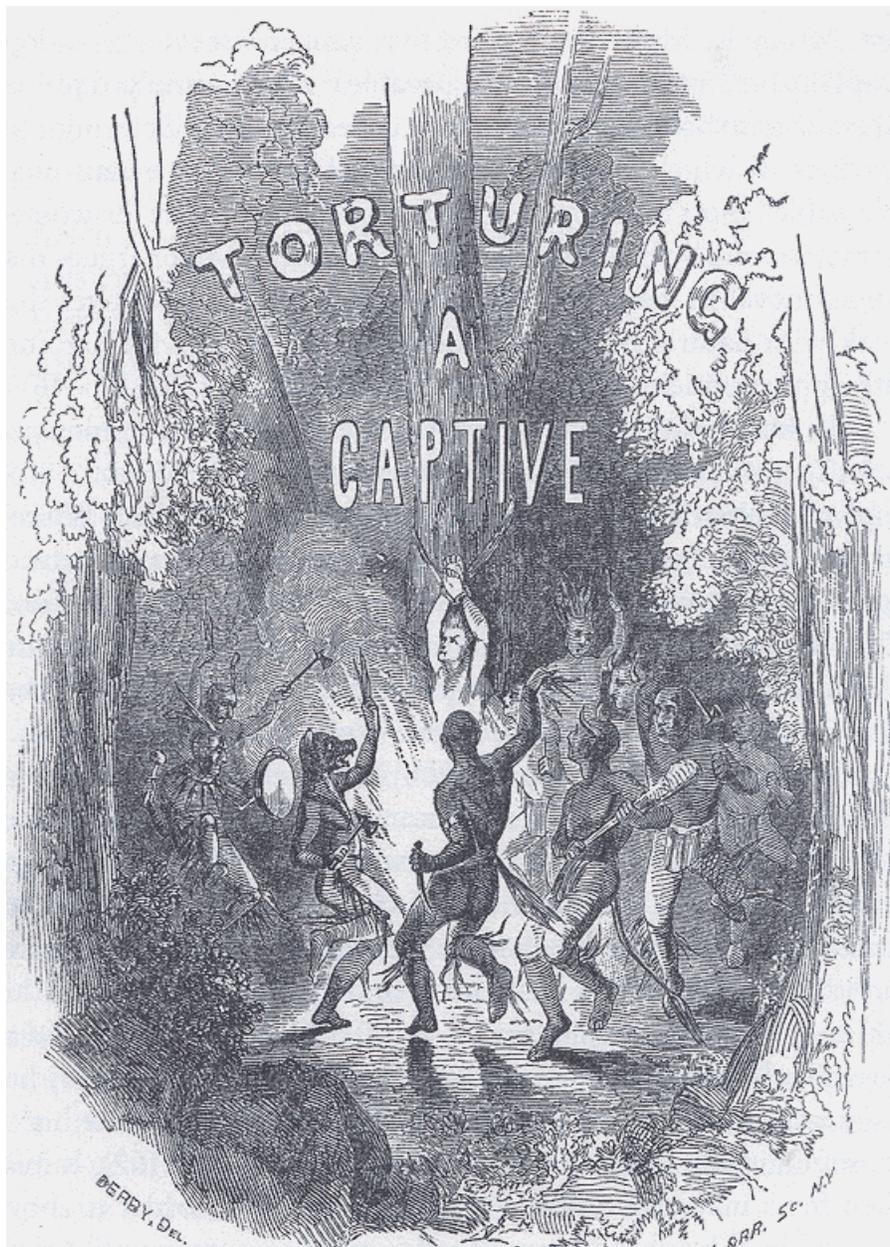
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The *memento mori* statue at the site depicts [Father Jogues](#), already missing parts of two fingers to the torture of the Iroquois, in the act of carving the name of Jesus into a tree. There is of course no comparable *memento mori* at [Mount Hope](#), reflecting the dismemberment of [Metacom](#) in 1676,  neither because this native religious leader would omit to carve the name of Jesus into a tree, nor because he fails to qualify as an authentic martyr — but because he utterly flunks our test of skin color. No proper commemorative plaque marks the spot in Salem at which that red martyr's head was impaled.

MARTYRDOM

THE MARKET FOR HUMAN BODY PARTS

After [Fathers Isaac Jogues and Bressani](#) had been captured during effort to reach the Huron country, [Father Jean de Brébeuf](#) was appointed to make a 3d attempt. He succeeded. With him on this journey were [Fathers Noel Chabanel and Garreau](#), both of whom would afterward be murdered. They reached St. Mary's on the Wye, which was the central station of the Huron Mission.

1646

A Jesuit, [Father Isaac Jogues](#), who had been captured in 1642  in an ambush, who had been being held by the Iroquois as a [slave](#), was at this point tortured and murdered, and his head was impaled on the palisade of the village. As a comparison situation to what has happened in regard to the memory of the martyred [Metacom](#), we place on record here that there is now a marble statue at the scene of this historic crime against a white man, in Auriesville, New York, a spot which wants to be known as the National Shrine of the North American Martyrs. The *memento mori* statue at the site depicts Father Jogues, already missing parts of two fingers to the torture of the Iroquois, in the act of carving the name of Jesus into a tree. There is of course no comparable *memento mori* at [Mount Hope](#), reflecting the dismemberment of Metacom in 1676,  neither because this native religious leader would omit to carve the name of Jesus into a tree, nor because he fails to qualify as an authentic martyr — but because he utterly flunks our primary test, which is that of skin color.



MARTYRDOM

THE MARKET FOR HUMAN BODY PARTS

1649

William Withington took half a share in the vessel *Beginning*, which sailed from [Rhode Island](#) via Barbados to the Guinea coast of Africa, then back via Barbados and Antigua to [Boston](#). What sort of cargo had this vessel conveyed from the Guinea coast to the West Indies islands? In the absence of records, we are obliged to suspect that it had been black [slaves](#).

INTERNATIONAL SLAVE TRADE

W.E. Burghardt Du Bois: The rigorous climate of New England, the character of her settlers, and their pronounced political views gave slavery an even slighter basis here than in the Middle colonies. The significance of New England in the African slave-trade does not therefore lie in the fact that she early discountenanced the system of slavery and stopped importation; but rather in the fact that her citizens, being the traders of



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the New World, early took part in the carrying slave-trade and furnished slaves to the other colonies. An inquiry, therefore, into the efforts of the New England colonies to suppress the slave-trade would fall naturally into two parts: first, and chiefly, an investigation of the efforts to stop the participation of citizens in the carrying slave-trade; secondly, an examination of the efforts made to banish the slave-trade from New England soil.

(Over the following two centuries, about half the American participation in the international slave trade would be sailing out of the harbors of 1st [Newport](#) and then [Bristol](#) — order of magnitude, that's about 1,000 out of about 2,000 middle passages.)

1667

Swansea (Swanzy) was established, much closer than any English settlement had been to Metacom's own village at Mount Hope. The English were hostile to Phillip's agenda to raise herds of pigs (for instance, they had told him to get his pigs the hell off of Pig Island in the Narragansett Bay, where they as well as he were keeping pigs in order to preserve them safe against forest predators); however, as James D. Drake has commented on his page 66, "The Indians in the region were openly angry with their English neighbors, probably because livestock owned by the English were allowed to trespass on native land."²



"History is better than prophecy. In fact, history 'is' prophecy. And history says that whenever a weak and ignorant people possess a thing which a strong and enlightened people want, it must be yielded up."



— Mark Twain

2. Drake bases this guess on the work of Virginia DeJohn Anderson, "King Philip's Herds: Indians, Colonists, and the Problem of Livestock in Early New England" (William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd Series, 51, October 1994).

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Metacom was again summoned to Plymouth Town, as had already occurred during 1664, to provide reassurances against their fear that he was plotting to war upon the English.

“KING PHILLIP’S WAR”

*Phillip alias, Mofacomb
his marks*



It was in this period that Deliverance Smith was born. Although we know that eventually John Smith of Plymouth and Dartmouth would come to be the father a total of thirteen children and although the initial five, Hassadiah, John, Josiah, Eliazer, and Hezekiah, were definitely born to his 1st wife, Friend Deborah Howland Smith, and although the will would make it clear that Hannah, Sarah, and Deborah had been born to the 2d wife, Friend Ruhamah Kirby Smith — about Judah, Gershom, Deliverance, Mehitabel, and Eliashib we can only infer that they would also pertain to this 2d Quaker woman, Ruhamah. As to how it was that a 2d Quaker wife was bearing children for this man across the water in Dartmouth while in Plymouth his 1st Quaker wife seems still to have been very much alive, and as to the details of the eventual relocation of this Smith family from Plymouth to Dartmouth, the genealogical record has preferred to remain silent. We notice a reticence in assigning the years of birth to the various children, as if these details would inform us of certain life patterns of which it would be better for the world at large to remain ignorant. We only know that this child, Deliverance, became a Friend.

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1668

Plymouth decreed that there was to be no “buying or receiving from the Indians any lands that appertain unto Mount hope, or Cawsumsett necke.” On this basis, we may infer that “Mount Hope” was the English name for the land which –either on account of the sharpness of the edges of the rocks in the vicinity, or on account of the usefulness of the rocks in the vicinity as whetstones for the sharpening of metal knifeblades– to the natives was known as *Cawsumsett*.

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This was, is “King Philip’s Seat” at Mount Hope:





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1672

July: Friend [George Fox](#) visited [Rhode Island](#), staying with Governor Nicholas Easton. [Quakers](#) were just becoming the dominant group in that colony's government. Governor Easton, 11 of the 16 assistants, and perhaps seven of the 20 deputies were members of the Religious Society of Friends. Friend Nicholas Easton was the primary political leader there at this point, and the Reverend [Roger Williams](#) the primary spiritual leader. Friend George recorded that:

In New England there was an Indian king that said he saw that there were many of their people of the Indians turned to the New England professors. He said they were worse since than they were before they left their own religion; and of all religions he said the Quakers were the best.

Commenting on this, Jill Lepore surmises that this may be more than merely the “Quaker party line,” that although there is no extant record of such a visit, Friend John Easton of [Rhode Island](#) may have taken Friend George along on a visit to the sachem [Metacom](#) at [Mount Hope](#). Alternatively, she offers, Friend George may simply have become aware somehow of the sachem Metacom's rejection of the Reverend [John Eliot](#)'s proselytizing.

The conclusion Friend [George Fox](#) arrived at in his New World travels was that all humans did experience Christ's light, however this experience might be conceptualized in a given culture:

Now Jews, and the Turks, and heathen, and Indians, that do not nor will not profess and own Christ in the flesh, to be the Savior; if one come to speak to them of their evil deeds and words, and ask them if there is something in them that tells them, they should not speak and do so, or so wickedly? (for the light of Christ troubles and condemns them if they do evil), here they will confess to the light of Christ though they know not what it is....

But Fox did not come to America during this period just prior to the outbreak of “[King Phillip's War](#)” only to



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interrogate the indigenes. As mentioned above, he also came to deal with the intrusives, in particular with one intrusive, a Boston one named John Perrot. Fox wanted to counter the influence that was being exercised by Friend Perrot in Boston.



At the time Friend Perrot evidently was attempting to develop the [Quaker](#) insistence, that in matters of worship we ought to dispense with any form which might divide worshipers into opposing groups contemptuous of and intolerant of each other, to the point at which even the regularity of showing up on time for a silent meeting of worship, on First Day, was to be regarded as a “form” and discarded. [George Fox](#) sought to drive away such individuals, whom he characterized as “disorderly walkers.” And indeed, those Quakers who distrusted the growing levels of group control over individual conduct began to walk in other paths.



1673

[William Hall](#) was for one last time Deputy from [Portsmouth](#) to the General Assembly of [Rhode Island](#). He was appointed on a committee for the purpose of “treating with the Indians about [drunkenness](#), and to seriously council them, and agree of Some way to prevent extreme excess of Indian drunkenness.” Five headmen were named with whom the committee should treat, among whom was [Metacom](#) of [Mount Hope](#), called King [Phillip](#).

“KING PHILLIP’S WAR”



1675

In the coming race war in New England, one or two hundred white colonists would be killed and hundreds of outlying pieces of property destroyed from a total white population probably at this point approaching 40,000.³



[The race war which we term King Philip’s War was] a war before television, before film, before photography ... even crude wood engravings were rare and printed books an uncommon commodity. When the English and Algonquian peoples of seventeenth-century New England went to war in 1675, they devastated one another. In proportion to population, their short, vicious war inflicted greater casualties than any other war in American history. Yet a single image of the fighting survives: half a dozen tiny, crouching figures shooting at one another along the creases of John Seller’s map of New England printed in an English atlas in 1675. It tells us precious little... [N]ot even Christian Indians loyal to the English were spared; in the fall of 1675 most were removed from their towns and imprisoned on barren

3. The total native American population of which they professed to be so fearful, including women and children, probably numbered at this point fewer than 20,000, and a very significant percentage of this native population was Christian or friendly or allied rather than in any way hostile.

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islands, where many died of cold or hunger during the long winter. Always brutal and everywhere fierce, King Phillip's War, as it came to be called, proved to be not only the most fatal war in all of American history but also one of the most merciless.



Actually, to speak very coldbloodedly about the matter, the statistics indicate that merely one person out of every 400 would die at best and one person out of every 200 would die at worst, and such statistics compare nicely with today's death rate due to peacetime automotive accidents! (A comparison statistic would be that four children die by having a heavy TV set fall on them in their home—perhaps while they are being thrilled by a videotape of "Jaws"—for every child that dies of a shark attack while swimming at the beach.) Face it, the genocide would turn out to be a really good deal from the standpoint of the white intrusives, despite what has been written about how "disastrous" "[King Phillip's War](#)" had been. In fact, if you believe that such population simplifications can solve problems (I happen not to believe this, myself), then this amounted to minimal losses with maximal gains.

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"The Whites, by law of conquest, by justice of civilization, are masters of the American continent, and the best safety of the frontier settlers will be secured by the total annihilation of the few remaining Indians."

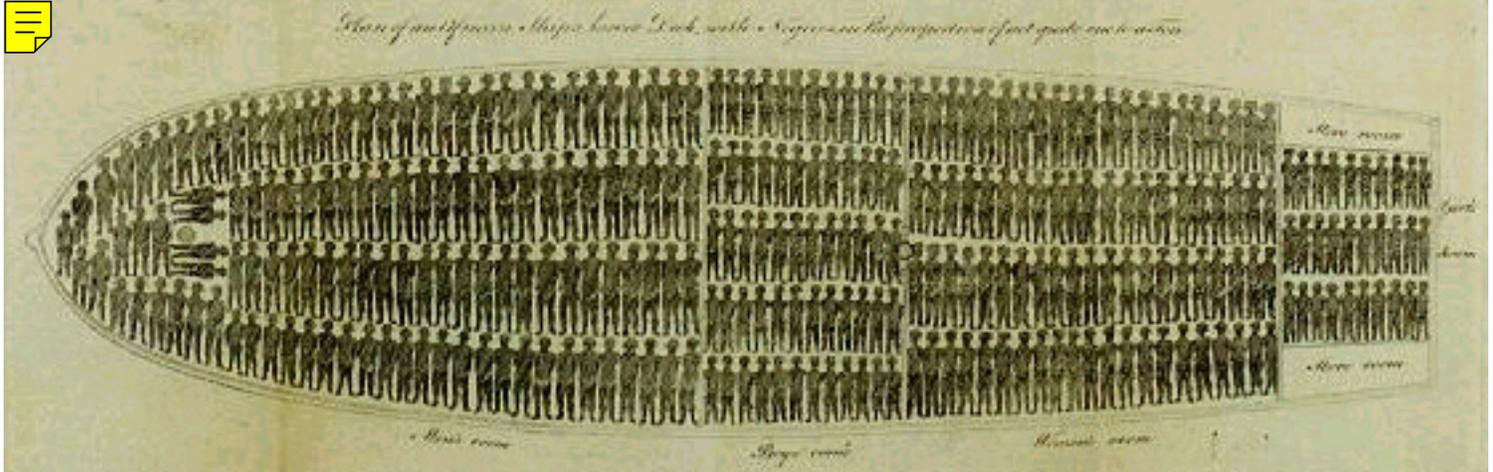
- L. Frank Baum, author of the Oz books



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The intrusive culture had reached critical mass and the native culture of the *Wampanoag* and *Narragansett*, with their “Welcome, Englishman, Welcome, Englishman,” and with their “What cheer, nehtop,” was at this point doomed to be virtually extinguished. Previously, they had been the white man’s valued allies against the Pequots, but the fact was, the English were white and delightsome and these people were red and unenlightened. Uncounted thousands of the red previous allies would be offed outright and then the remnants would become available to be sold into the [international slave trade](#) for foreign life slavery for approximately £3 per head after being transported in a vessel somewhat like this one, the *Brooke*:



Or, if young enough and congenial enough, they might avoid all this by being resituated into domestic indentured service to white families, or exiled to tribes farther toward the wilderness of the interior.

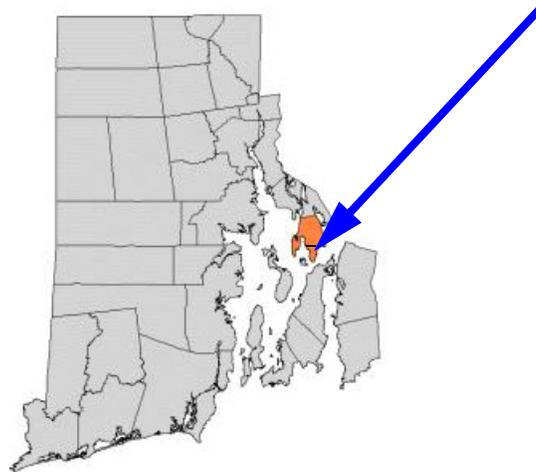
[Below appears the rotting hulk of the slave ship *Jem*, as of the Year of Our Lord 1891 at Fort Adams near [Newport](#) on [Aquidneck Island](#):]



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By this point in time the promontory known as [Mount Hope](#) in the bay of [Rhode Island](#) was amounting merely to a little strip of de facto reservation land, approximately two miles wide and six long. The whites of [Swansea](#) had even erected “a very substantial fence quite across the great neck,” Bristol Neck, which was virtually preventing land access by the [Narragansett](#) to their little peninsula between Narragansett Bay and Mount Hope bay.



AS THE SITUATION WOULD BE REPORTED IN

The Present State of New-England

with respect to the Indian War.

The place where this King *Philip* doth dwell, is on a parcel of Land, called in *Engliff*, *Mount-Hope*, about twelve Miles long, and judged to be the best Land in *New England* : And it was about thirty five Miles off of this Place to the Northward, that the first *Engliff* that ever came there, Landed ; and by degrees built Houfes, and called the name of the place *New-Plimouth*, (becaufe *Plimouth* in *Old England* was the laft place they were at there).

[hearsay offered by a Merchant of Boston]

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After the coming race war Captain Nathaniel Reynolds, ancestor of the [Concord](#) reverend who would officiate at [Henry Thoreau](#)'s funeral, would be taking possession of this one last little strip, renaming it [Bristol](#)



An attempt was made to separate the friendly Christian Indians from the wild savages, and some were brought in to Deer Island in Boston harbor. Others [primarily women and young children, and excluding any males of warrior age] were brought to [Concord](#) and entrusted to [John Hoar](#), who built a workshop and stockade for them next to his own house, which is now known as Orchard House. This caused a furor in Concord. Many considered the Christian Indians just spies and informers. The town defenses were in a precarious state [due to the fact that many of the white men were away, fighting in the race war].



As you might imagine, the sachem [Metacom](#)'s take on the situation differed considerably from the attitude of the English in Plymouth and Boston.



There are no authentic period depictions of this person.



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Here I think that the attitude expressed by the amateur historian Reverend [Grindall Reynolds](#) of [Concord](#) is considerably more accurate and cogent than the attitude expressed by any of the professional historians of this period:



Read Philip's pathetic story recorded in Arnold's history [Arnold's RHODE ISLAND, Volume I, page 394] and you will know how it looked to the conquered. Said he to John Borden of Rhode Island:-

"The English who came to this country were but a handful of people, forlorn, poor, and distressed. My father was then Sachem. He relieved their distresses. He gave them land to build and plant upon. He did all in his power to serve them. Their numbers rapidly increased. My father's counsellors became uneasy and alarmed. They advised him to destroy them before they should become too strong. But my father was also the father of the English. His advice prevailed. It was then concluded to give victuals to the English. Experience had taught that the fears of my father's counsellors were right. By various means they got possessed of a great part of his territory. My elder brother became Sachem. They pretended to suspect him of evil designs. He was seized and confined, and thrown into sickness and died. After I became Sachem they disarmed all my people. They tried them by their own laws, assessed damages which they could not pay, and their land was taken. Thus tract after tract is gone. But a small part of the dominion of my ancestors remains. **I am determined not to live till I have no country.**"

So it is evident that life and death grapple, called King Philip's War, had to come. I am with those who doubt the accepted theory about it. Our fathers excited by natural, and for the most part well founded fears, exaggerated both the capacity and plans of Philip. They believed that he had formed a gigantic Indian Confederacy. This theory rested on slender foundations. The King Philip of the annals is certainly a creature of the imagination. The real Philip had not head enough to plan such a confederacy, nor courage enough to carry it into effect. His commanding influence, if he ever had any, began with the attack on Swanzey and closed with his flight to the Nipmucks. From that moment as a great figure he disappears. Indeed, if we suppose the affair at Swanzey to be the culmination of years of plotting, what further proof of Philip's weakness is needed? There was no preparation whatever for defense. A few hundred hasty levies in forty-eight hours swept his tribe out of existence. There is very slight evidence that he was in command at any of the later undertakings. He certainly fled for a time to the Mohawks. Had not a certain Nemesis brought him back to die on his own hearthstone, and so lent pathos to life's close, he might almost have been forgotten.

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Mary McCarthy, writing in 1946, would term Hiroshima “a hole in human history.”

There is such a hole in human history, it would seem, at every point at which an atrocity has been committed by some group which then “won.” For instance, the hole in [Concord](#) history which resulted from the racial mass murder on Mount Misery at the watershed of Walden Pond as of the Massachusetts race war in 1675-1676, and the hole in human history which would result from the use of the Christian Dakota as hostages during the race war of 1863.

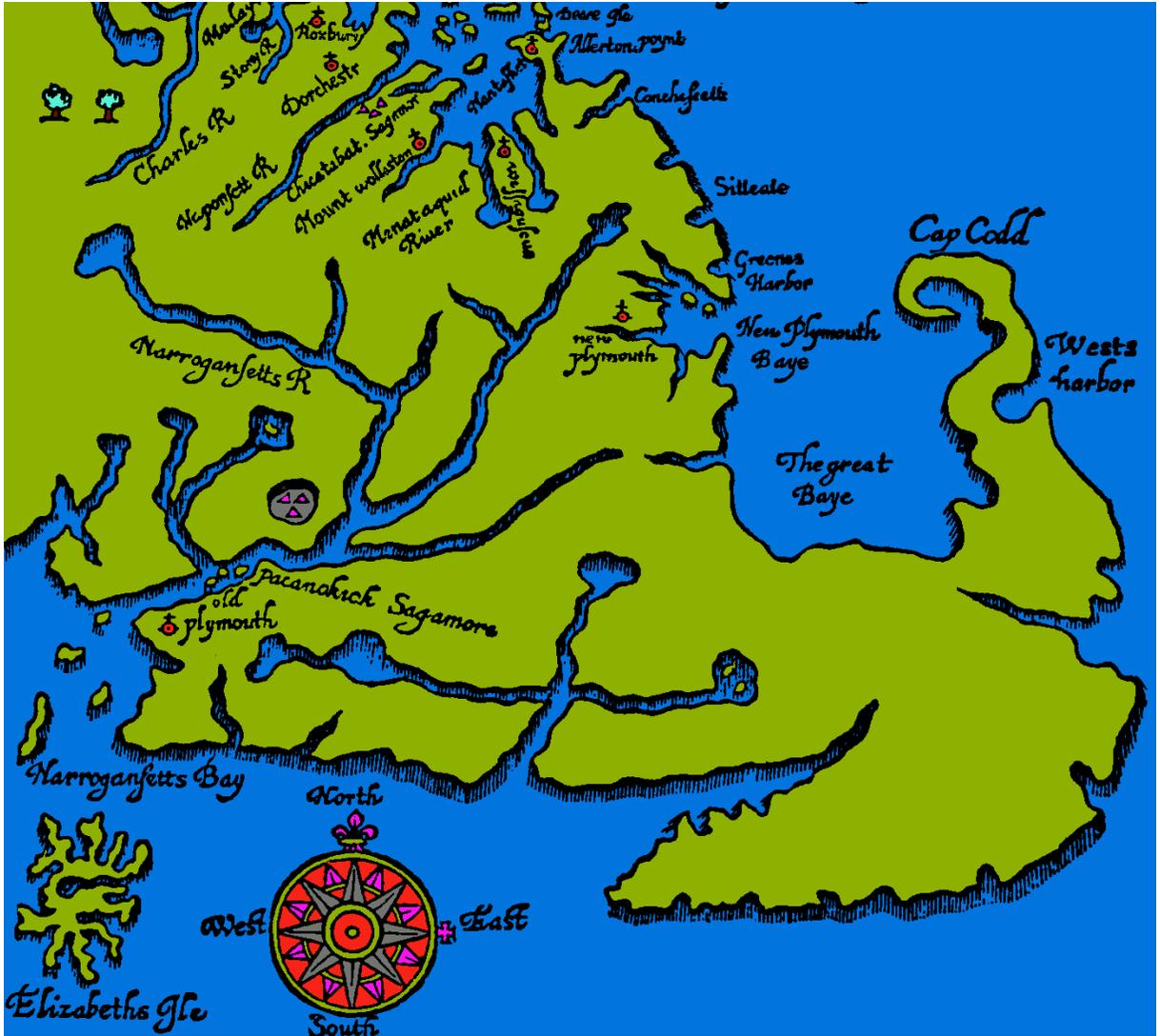


Writing thirty years after the fact of [Hiroshima](#) and [Nagasaki](#), Ralph Lapp, who had worked on the [A-bomb](#), would ask “If the memory of things is to deter, where is that memory?” He would add that “Hiroshima has been taken out of the American conscience, eviscerated, extirpated.”

With much of their territory sold or “mortgaged,” the sachems of the [Narragansett](#) became embroiled in the conflict that was intensifying between the English of Plymouth Colony and the [Wampanoag](#) sachem [Metacom](#) of [Mount Hope](#). However, when the United Colonies demanded Wampanoag women and children as hostages, they attempted to refuse.

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The following is the manner in which this sad history of hostaging is reflected in [Henry Thoreau's A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS](#):

[Daniel Gookin](#), who, in his Epistle Dedicatory to Robert Boyle, apologizes for presenting his

matter clothed in a wilderness dress,

says that on the breaking out of Philip's war in 1675, there were taken up by the Christian Indians and the English in Marlborough, and sent to Cambridge, seven

Indians belonging to Narragansett, Long Island, and Pequod, who had all been at work about seven weeks with one Mr. Jonathan Tyng, of Dunstable, upon Merrimack River; and, hearing of the war, they reckoned with their master, and getting their wages, conveyed themselves away without his privity, and, being afraid, marched secretly through the woods, designing to go to their own country.

However, they were released soon after. Such were the hired men in those days.

(Bear in mind, in excuse for [Henry Thoreau](#) here, that he did not have the objective, unbiased, culture-independent historical materials available to him which we wonderful people have made so freely available today. All he had available were such materials as above, which he was able to cite and pay proper attention to despite their subjective, biased, culturally determined nature.)

At some point during this year, Peter Folger's poem "A Looking Glasse for the Times," of which no printed copy has survived, would comment upon the hostilities.

The Massachusetts Bay Colony enacted a special levy of the towns, to pay for the general race war. There were 49 towns. The tax for "Mendham," for instance, was £16 6s. 2d.



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June 17, Monday: On this day Friend John Easton, a high government official of the [Rhode Island](#) Plantation who was also something of a mediator, this [Quaker](#) who only a few years before had had personal interaction with Friend [George Fox](#) during his visit to the New World, decided to try to prevent the coming race war in a traditional Quaker way “by removing the occasion for it.” He and four other unarmed white men rowed across Narragansett Bay to [Metacom](#)’s ceremonial center on the [Mount Hope](#) promontory, and walked up the path to the top of the hill. Metacom had put aside his arms although the approximately 40 other warriors who were present did not, and so they all sat around talking about how to arrange a conciliation of grievances by agreed impartial third parties, red and white. As Easton later reconstructed the conversation:⁴



*We sat veri friendly together. We told him our bisness was to indever that they might not receve or do rong. ... We told them that our desire was that the quarrel might be rightly decided in the best way, not as dogs decide their quarrels. ... [The Native Americans] owned that fighting was the worst way, but they inquired how right might take place without fighting. **We said by arbitration.** They said that by arbitration the English agreed against them, and so by arbitration they had much rong. ... We said they might chuse a Indian King and the English might chuse the Governor of New Yorke, that neither had case to say that either wear parties to the difference. They said they had not heard of this way. We were persuaded that if this way had been tendered they would have accepted. ... [[Metacom](#) pointed out that his father the [Massasoit](#),] when the English first came, was a great man and the English as a littill child. He constrained the other Indians from ronging the English, and gave them corn and shewed them how to plant it and was free to do them ani good. ... But their King’s brother [[Metacom](#)/[Phillip](#)’s brother “Allexander”], when he was King came miserably to dy, being forced to court, and as they judged poysoned. ... Another Greavance was, if 20 of their onest Indiands testified that an Englishman had dun them rong it was nothing, but if one of their worst Indians testified against any Indian, or their King, when it pleased the English, it was suficiant. ... [The English were so] eager to sell the Indians lickers that most Indians spent all in drynknes and then raved upon the sober Indians! ... I am persuaded of New England Prists they are so blinded by the spirit of Persecution and to maintain their hyer that they have been the case that the law of Nations and the Law of Arems have been violated in this war. The war would not have been if ther had not bine hyerlings.*

“KING PHILLIP’S WAR”

According to the Reverend [Grindall Reynolds](#)’s KING PHILIP’S WAR IN HISTORICAL SKETCHES:

4. Hough edition of Deputy-Governor John Easton’s NARRATIVE, pages 7-31 passim.

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My ancestor, Captain Nathaniel Reynolds, was one of the original settlers, who after the war took possession of Mount Hope, the home of the Wampanoags, and named it [Bristol](#).... The whole of Plymouth County was then [1681] settled, except this territory, which was the only spot left uncovered in the western march of English population.... Of this great tract all they [the [Wampanoag](#)] retained in 1675 was a little strip, called then [Mount Hope](#), scarcely six miles long and two miles wide. The southern line of English possession had been drawn right across Bristol Neck, enclosing, and almost imprisoning, the tribe in a little peninsula, washed on all sides, except the north, by the waters of Narragansett and Mount Hope bays. As if to emphasize this fact, their neighbors, the people of Swanzy [sic], "set up a very substantial fence quite across the great neck."

At this point [Metacom](#) had a little more than a year to live. Before the fall of the next year his wife and son would have been captured for sale into foreign slavery,

My heart breaks; now I am ready to die.



he would have been hunted down and shot in a nearby swamp, his body would have been cut in quarters and hung in a tree there, his withered hand would have been severed and carried around to be displayed as a curiosity in bars, his skull would have been installed for display atop a pole in Salem, and eventually his jawbone would wind up in the personal collection of the Reverend [Cotton Mather](#) (all in all, not a whole lot to

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look forward to, I suppose you'd agree).

“KING PHILLIP’S WAR”





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June 17, Monday: On this day Friend John Easton, a high government official of the [Rhode Island](#) Plantation who was also something of a mediator, this [Quaker](#) who only a few years before had had personal interaction with Friend [George Fox](#) during his visit to the New World, decided to try to prevent the coming race war in a traditional Quaker way “by removing the occasion for it.” He and four other unarmed white men rowed across Narragansett Bay to [Metacom](#)’s ceremonial center on the [Mount Hope](#) promontory, and walked up the path to the top of the hill. Metacom had put aside his arms although the approximately 40 other warriors who were present did not, and so they all sat around talking about how to arrange a conciliation of grievances by agreed impartial third parties, red and white. As Easton later reconstructed the conversation:⁵



*We sat veri friendly together. We told him our bisness was to indever that they might not receve or do rong. ... We told them that our desire was that the quarrel might be rightly decided in the best way, not as dogs decide their quarrels. ... [The Native Americans] owned that fighting was the worst way, but they inquired how right might take place without fighting. **We said by arbitration.** They said that by arbitration the English agreed against them, and so by arbitration they had much rong. ... We said they might chuse a Indian King and the English might chuse the Governor of New Yorke, that neither had case to say that either wear parties to the difference. They said they had not heard of this way. We were persuaded that if this way had been tendered they would have accepted. ... [[Metacom](#) pointed out that his father the [Massasoit](#),] when the English first came, was a great man and the English as a littill child. He constrained the other Indians from ronging the English, and gave them corn and shewed them how to plant it and was free to do them ani good. ... But their King’s brother [[Metacom](#)/[Phillip](#)’s brother “Allexander”], when he was King came miserably to dy, being forced to court, and as they judged poysoned. ... Another Greavance was, if 20 of their onest Indiands testified that an Englishman had dun them rong it was nothing, but if one of their worst Indians testified against any Indian, or their King, when it pleased the English, it was suficiant. ... [The English were so] eager to sell the Indians lickers that most Indians spent all in drynknes and then raved upon the sober Indians! ... I am persuaded of New England Prists they are so blinded by the spirit of Persecution and to maintain their hyer that they have been the case that the law of Nations and the Law of Arems have been violated in this war. The war would not have been if ther had not bine hyerlings.*

“KING PHILLIP’S WAR”

According to the Reverend [Grindall Reynolds](#)’s KING PHILIP’S WAR IN HISTORICAL SKETCHES:

5. Hough edition of Deputy-Governor John Easton’s NARRATIVE, pages 7-31 passim.

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My ancestor, Captain Nathaniel Reynolds, was one of the original settlers, who after the war took possession of Mount Hope, the home of the Wampanoags, and named it [Bristol](#).... The whole of Plymouth County was then [1681] settled, except this territory, which was the only spot left uncovered in the western march of English population.... Of this great tract all they [the [Wampanoag](#)] retained in 1675 was a little strip, called then [Mount Hope](#), scarcely six miles long and two miles wide. The southern line of English possession had been drawn right across Bristol Neck, enclosing, and almost imprisoning, the tribe in a little peninsula, washed on all sides, except the north, by the waters of Narragansett and Mount Hope bays. As if to emphasize this fact, their neighbors, the people of Swanzy [sic], "set up a very substantial fence quite across the great neck."

At this point [Metacom](#) had a little more than a year to live. Before the fall of the next year his wife and son would have been captured for sale into foreign slavery,

My heart breaks; now I am ready to die.



he would have been hunted down and shot in a nearby swamp, his body would have been cut in quarters and hung in a tree there, his withered hand would have been severed and carried around to be displayed as a curiosity in bars, his skull would have been installed for display atop a pole in Salem, and eventually his jawbone would wind up in the personal collection of the Reverend [Cotton Mather](#) (all in all, not a whole lot to

BRISTOL, RHODE ISLAND

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look forward to, I suppose you'd agree).

"KING PHILLIP'S WAR"



June 23, Sunday: A white boy shot and killed a red native who was looting one of the abandoned Swansea homes. The trap, if it was a trap, was sprung. The next day after that offing, the escalation would be on its merry way, with one white being offed at Swansea, two being offed at Miles' Garrison, two being offed at Rehoboth, and six being offed at Mattapoiset.⁶

"KING PHILLIP'S WAR"

At some point in this timeframe, Friend John Easton would relate, a letter had been received in Rhode Island from the governor of the Plymouth colony, John Winslow, requesting "our help with sum boats if thay had such ocaation and for us to looke to our selfs." Captain James Cudworth communicated that the Governor's intention in making this request was to "Cum upon the indians" by land, down the neck of the Mount Hope peninsula, and that the Rhode Island boats were "to atend," blockading the Mount Hope peninsula so that the Wampanoag would not be able to escape the Plymouth troops simply by taking to their canoes. On this day Governor William Coddington of Rhode Island, a Quaker, agreed to do this: "I intend (God willing) to get our boats and watch the shore to oppose the common enemy, all of us being Englishmen and subjects of our King and proposing to serve one and the same end." One may infer from this pledge that the Quaker Peace Testimony was not seen as applying to interracial conflicts — that blood was thicker than principle.

THE QUAKER PEACE TESTIMONY

6. The "score" at this point: 8 out of 10 Commandments still operational.

BRISTOL, RHODE ISLAND

BRISTOL, RHODE ISLAND



June 26-29: Attacks were made by the [Wampanoag](#) upon [Rehoboth](#) and [Taunton](#).

It proved to be possible to evade the approaching colonial troops and evacuate [Mount Hope](#) in favor of [Pocasset](#) (now [Tiverton, Rhode Island](#)). The Mohegan sent an embassy to Boston with an offer to fight alongside the English against the Wampanoag.

Here again however, I suppose the attitude expressed by the amateur historian Reverend [Grindall Reynolds](#) of [Concord](#) to be considerably more accurate and cogent than the attitude expressed by any of the professional historians of this period:



The first act of the war closed with Philip's flight from Mount Hope. At the seat of what, we are asked to believe, was a long conceived, subtle, and powerful confederacy, almost literally no resistance was made. In forty-eight hours after the appearance of the hastily gathered English soldiery, the chief was a fugitive, and his tribe, as such, swept out of existence.

“KING PHILLIP’S WAR”

June 28, Friday: Benjamin Batten, a Boston merchant, reported to the Navy Office in London that “thaire was 300 of the English of Plimoth & Road Iland besides our forces which ware just gott up” to the Wampanoag settlement at [Mount Hope](#).

“KING PHILLIP’S WAR”
RHODE ISLAND

BRISTOL, RHODE ISLAND

BRISTOL, RHODE ISLAND

→ June 30, Sunday: Benjamin Batten, Boston merchant, added to his report of the [Rhode Island](#) goings-on to the Navy Office in London that “they of Road Iland had newly sent a hundred quakers men well apointed with Carnall weapons to fight the Infidells, most of them and Road Iland being such.”

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

Some 300 white men had come together at [Swansea](#) and, after having been delayed by storms, on this day they marched onto the [Mount Hope](#) peninsula, only to discover that it had been abandoned (the [Wampanoag](#) had several days before gone into hiding in a swamp in the Pocasset country). The white men withdrew to Swansea where they would content themselves with more or less ineffective patrol duty.

“KING PHILLIP’S WAR”

1676

August 12, Saturday:⁷ The word was out early that morning that King [Phillip](#), with his wife Wootonekanuske and child having been taken captive, and with all his efforts to obtain help from other native tribes having proven to be totally fruitless, had given up and gone home to [Pokanoket](#) to await his fate:



The next news we hear of Philip was that he had gotten back to Mount Hope, now like to become Mount Misery to him and his vagabond crew.



“As the star of the Indian descended,
that of the Puritans rose ever higher.”

– Tourtellot, Arthur Bernon, THE CHARLES,
NY: Farrar & Rinehart, 1941, page 63



After a year’s absence Philip, reduced to a miserable condition,
7. On this date William Harris wrote again to Sir Joseph Williamson, a letter which is a useful source of information.

BRISTOL, RHODE ISLAND

BRISTOL, RHODE ISLAND



returned to his native place, near which he was killed, Aug. 12, 1676. One of his own men, whom he had offended, and who had deserted to the English, shot him through the heart. His death put an end to this most horrid and distressing war. About 3000 warriors were combined for the destruction of New England, and the war terminated with their entire defeat, and almost total extinction. About 600 of the English inhabitants, the greatest part of whom were the flower and strength of the country, either fell in battle or were murdered by the enemy. Twelve or thirteen towns were destroyed [according to Trumbell, vol. i, page 350, and Holmes's Annals of America, i., page 384] and about 600 houses burned.⁸

“KING PHILLIP’S WAR”

8. [Lemuel Shattuck's 1835 A HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF CONCORD:...](#) Boston MA: Russell, Odiorne, and Company; Concord MA: John Stacy, 1835 (On or about November 11, 1837 [Thoreau](#) would indicate a familiarity with the contents of at least pages 2-3 and 6-9 of this historical study.)

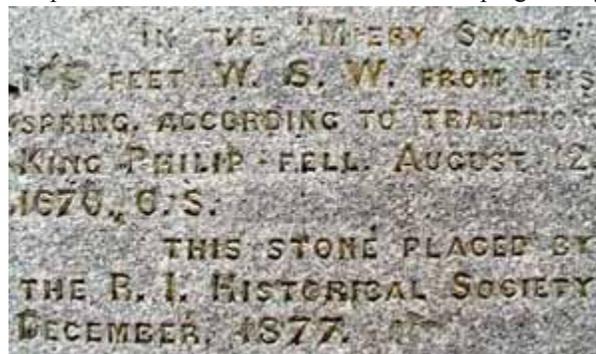
BRISTOL, RHODE ISLAND

BRISTOL, RHODE ISLAND

The warriors under Captain Benjamin Church,⁹ white and red, crept up during the previous night and in the dawn they assaulted [Metacom](#)'s hilltop ceremonial center at [Mount Hope](#) on [Rhode Island](#)'s Narragansett Bay.



Surprise was achieved. An English-allied native informant named Alderman hunted down and shot the fleeing leader in the nearby swamps where in better times he had been keeping his royal herds of pigs.



The first shot through the upper chest put Metacom on his face in the mud and water on top of his gun. Alderman apparently then poured more powder down the barrel of his gun, rammed down another ball, charged his pan –a process requiring a certain amount of time– and then shot Metacom again, this time delivering the *coup de grace* directly through the heart. Some five or six persons who were with Metacom also were killed while attempting to escape. The white army gave “three loud huzzas.” As the Reverend Increase Mather would later characterize the accomplishment,¹⁰ the grand result had been brought about by a combination of the white people’s righteous prayers to their God, and the red people’s wicked remarks in disregard of God’s wrath: the white warriors, he claimed, had prayed the bullet into Metacom’s heart, whereas there was an unnamed “chief” present who had been a sneerer at the Christian religion, who “withal, added a

9. Benjamin Church would later be paid the going rate for [Metacom](#)'s head, 30 shillings, “scant reward, and poor encouragement,” when it was mounted atop a pole in Plymouth common.

10. Reverend Increase Mather. A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE WARR WITH THE INDIANS IN NEW-ENGLAND (1676).

BRISTOL, RHODE ISLAND

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most hideous blasphemy, immediately upon which a bullet took him in the head, and dashed out his brains, sending his cursed soul in a moment among the devils, and blasphemers, in hell forever.”¹¹



There are no authentic period depictions of this person.



The corpse of Metacom was “pulled out of the mire to the upland,” some tugging it by the stockings and others by the breechclout, the body being otherwise unclathed “and a doleful, great, naked, dirty beast he looked like,” was quartered and **hanged** in four separate trees and the head and his trademark crippled hand were carried away.¹²No mention was made at the time, or later, about any pipe, any war club, or any wampum

THE MARKET FOR HUMAN BODY PARTS

belt associated with Metacom that had been sequestered either by Alderman or by Church as souvenirs of the event.

11. Since the Reverend Increase Mather’s PREVALENCY OF PRAYER was well known, and since this is from page 7 in the front of the book, we may suppose that the initial audience for WALDEN well understood that Thoreau was taking an actual slap at the memory of the Reverend on page 182, where he made his preposterous remark that “this vice is one of which the Indians were never guilty.”

WALDEN: Some have been puzzled to tell how the shore became so regularly paved. My townsmen have all heard the tradition, the oldest people tell me that they heard it in their youth, that anciently the Indians were holding a pow-wow upon a hill here, which rose as high into the heavens as the pond now sinks deep into the earth, and they used much profanity, as the story goes, though this vice is one of which the Indians were never guilty, and while they were thus engaged the hill shook and suddenly sank, and only one old squaw, named Walden, escaped, and from her the pond was named.

BRISTOL, RHODE ISLAND

BRISTOL, RHODE ISLAND

Samuel Sewall lettered neatly alongside this date in his [almanac](#): *Philippus exit.*

“KING PHILLIP’S WAR”

12. Note: The head would be mounted atop a pole in Plymouth and would remain there for a quarter of a century. The hand, recognizable as King Phillip’s because crippled (evidently a pistol had split while being fired), would be preserved by Alderman in a bucket of rum and displayed for pennies in taverns for many years. The horrible death and mutilation of the person who supposedly had caused these hostilities, however, would do little to bring these hostilities to an end. In western New England, and in Maine, this race war, which in actuality had always been an unplanned leaderless struggle between mutually antagonistic and intolerant groups, would continue unabated. The Abenaki of Maine (Penobscot) would be attacking the settlements of the English along the coastline well into 1677. The *Iroquois* and the Algonquian would be attacking in the inland regions for the next three generations, right up into the period of the French and Indian Wars.





BRISTOL, RHODE ISLAND

BRISTOL, RHODE ISLAND

Here is how the scene would be depicted, from 1829 to 1887, on the American stage:



META. Embrace me, Nahmeokee – 'twas like the first you gave me in the days of our strength and joy – they are gone. [*Places his ear to the ground*] Hark! In the distant wood I faintly hear the cautious tread of men! They are upon us, Nahmeokee – the home of the happy is made ready for thee. [*Stabs her, she dies*] She felt no white man's bondage – free as the air she lived – pure as the snow she died! In smiles she died! Let me taste it, ere her lips are cold as the ice. [*Loud shouts. Roll of drums. Kaweshine leads Church and Soldiers on bridge, R.*]

CHURCH. He is found! Philip is our prisoner.

META. No! He lives – last of his race – but still your enemy – lives to defy you still. Though numbers overpower me and treachery surround me, though friends desert me, I defy you still! Come to me – come singly to me! And this true knife that has tasted the foul blood of your nation and now is red with the purest of mine, will feel a grasp as strong as when it flashed in the blaze of your burning dwellings, or was lifted terribly over the fallen in battle.

CHURCH. Fire upon him!

META. Do so, I am weary of the world for ye are dwellers in it; I would not turn upon my heel to save my life.

CHURCH. Your duty, soldiers. [*They fire. [Metamora](#) falls. Enter Walter, Oceana, Wolfe, Sir Arthur, Errington, Goodenough, Tramp and Peasants. Roll of drums and trumpet till all on.*]

META. My curses on you, white men! May the Great Spirit curse you when he speaks in his war voice from the clouds! Murderers! The last of the Wampanoags' curse be on you! May your graves and the graves of your children be in the path the red man shall trace! And may the wolf and panther howl o'er your fleshless bones, fit banquet for the destroyers! Spirits of the grave, I come! But the curse of Metamora stays with the white man! I die! My wife! My queen! My Nahmeokee! [*Falls and dies; a tableau is formed. Drums and trumpet sound a retreat till curtain. Slow curtain*]

BRISTOL, RHODE ISLAND

BRISTOL, RHODE ISLAND

1679

King Phillip being very very dead, King Charles II sold Metacom's 7,000 acres in Bristol and Warren to the Plymouth colony — which in turn would sell the land to four investors for £1,100 sterling.

“KING PHILLIP’S WAR”





BRISTOL, RHODE ISLAND

BRISTOL, RHODE ISLAND

1681

King [Phillip](#)'s head had been rotting atop a pole in Plymouth for about five years (and would remain there for approximately another fifteen). His teenage son, the next in line to be sachem of the [Wampanoag](#) –this grandson of the *Massasoit Ousamequin* Yellow Feather¹³ whose name we seldom even bother to record– was serving the duration of his life in overseas slavery.¹⁴ “[King Phillip’s War](#)” was a matter of memory. At this point the paths of two persons of differing race and culture passed in the forest of [Rhode Island](#), and one discharged his weapon at the other.

In her *THE NAME OF WAR: KING PHILIP’S WAR AND THE ORIGINS OF AMERICAN IDENTITY* (NY: Knopf, 1998, pages 182-3), Jill Lepore takes most seriously the warning issued by the Reverend [Cotton Mather](#) in 1692,  “...Our Indian wars are not over yet,” and is willing to deal at length with materials that for instance contemporary Quakers may use in their ruminations on 20th-Century renditions of their Peace Testimony:

[THE QUAKER PEACE TESTIMONY](#)

13. *Massasoit* is not a name, but a hereditary title, like *sachem*. Its meaning is approximately equivalent to *Shahanshah*.

14. In all likelihood the teenager had been sold in the West Indies for approximately £3.



BRISTOL, RHODE ISLAND

BRISTOL, RHODE ISLAND



In 1681, five years after King Philip's War had ended, two men met in the woods outside Providence. One was English, the other Indian. Both carried guns. When the Englishman, Benjamin Henden, saw the Indian (whose name was never mentioned), he ordered him to halt, but the Indian "would not obey his word, and stand at his Command." Furious, Henden raised his gun and fired, "with an Intent to have killed him." Luckily for the Indian, Henden was a lousy shot and missed his target entirely. And luckily for Henden, the Indian was not a vengeful man. "Notwithstanding the said violence to him offered did not seek to revenge himselfe by the like return ; although he alsoe had a gunn and might have shott at Henden againe if he had been minded soe to have done." Instead of shooting Henden, the Indian man "went peaceably away," stopping only long enough to use "some words by way of Reproof ; unto the said Hernden [sic] blaming him for that his Violence and Cruelty, and wondering that English men should offer soe to shoot at him and such as he was without cause."

Had these same two men met in the same woods five or six years earlier, when King Philip's War was still raging, it is unlikely that both would have survived the encounter unharmed. Henden, if he had traveled at all in Massachusetts, was probably familiar with the law passed in that colony in 1675 dictating that "it shall be lawful for any person, whether English or Indian, that shall finde any Indian travelling or skulking in any of our Towns or Woods ... to command them under their Guard and Examination, or to kill and destroy them as they best may or can." But that law was, of course, no longer in effect (and never was in Rhode Island), and for his anachronistic and misplaced aggression, Henden landed himself in court, condemned for his "late rash turbulent and violent behavior." The case even led the Rhode Island General Assembly to pass "an act to prevent outrages against the Indians, precipitated by a rhode islander shooting an indian in the woods." In the first place, as the Assembly declared, agreeing with Henden's intended victim, Henden had "noe Authority nor just cause" to command the Indian to halt. "Noe person," the Assembly proclaimed, "shall presume to doe any such unlawfull acts of violence against the Indians upon their perills." And more importantly, Henden and others like him must learn to "behave themselves peaceably towards the Indians, in like maner as before the ware."

PROVIDENCE

I very much appreciate this because it so well illustrates the influence of testimony. One person's moderation, one person's individual lived example—to wit, the unnamed native's declining to return fire after an aggressor had discharged his firearm (and thus effectively for a period of about a minute disarmed himself), this anonymous person's having contented himself with a verbal reproach after his life had been so unnecessarily endangered—became magnified in [Rhode Island](#) into a movement toward de-escalation of the race violence.

A model for us all!

During this same year, at [Mount Hope](#) one day, a man was held down and the brand **P** burned into his forehead. This was not the mark of



BRISTOL, RHODE ISLAND

BRISTOL, RHODE ISLAND

Phillip

the sachem [Metacom](#) of Mount Hope, but stood instead, curiously, for the term of art

Pollution¹⁵

— because this white man, named Thomas Saddeler, had been observed to have been taking his mare to “a certaine obscure and woodey place, on Mount Hope,” and to have there been engaging in sexual intercourse with her.¹⁶



“As the star of the Indian descended,
that of the Puritans rose ever higher.”
— Tourtellot, Arthur Bernon, *THE CHARLES*,
NY: Farrar & Rinehart, 1941, page 63



15. Bear in mind in regard to this term **pollution** that the concept **perversion** would not formally enter out medical terminology until 1842, when it would be defined in DUNGLISON’S *MEDICAL LEXICON* as one of the four modifications of function in disease, the other three modifications of function being **augmentation**, **diminution**, and **abolition**.

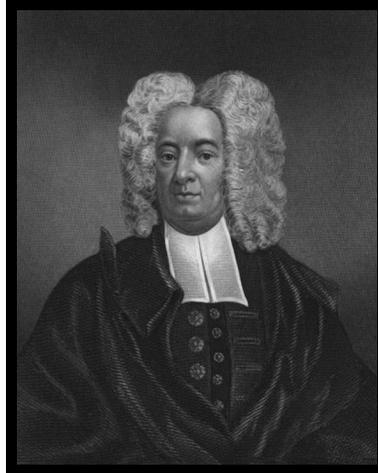
16. Although we don’t have a record of what happened to the mare, in such cases we know the abused animal was always offed. No way would they have left the mare to the mercy of this Tommy and, also, no way would any other white man have been willing to take charge of it.

BRISTOL, RHODE ISLAND

BRISTOL, RHODE ISLAND

As the Reverend [Cotton Mather](#) would put the matter in 1692, 

We have shamefully Indianized in all these abominable things.... Our Indian wars are not over yet.



As Jill Lepore has more recently phrased the matter, relying upon a heightened level of sarcasm and self-awareness,

After fourteen months of bloodshed, followed by three years of intermittent fighting, the colonists were right back where they started, as "Heathenish," as Indian, as ever. Philip's death was only a hollow victory. Depravity still soiled New England.... Tempted by the devil, corrupted by the Indian wilderness, Englishmen were still degenerating into beasts.



What was a poor white man to do?

Here, then, was the solution to the colonists' dilemma ... wage the war, and win it, by whatever means necessary, and then write about it, to win it again. The first would be a victory of wounds, the second a victory of words.



BRISTOL, RHODE ISLAND

BRISTOL, RHODE ISLAND

September 1, Monday: The white settlement at [Mount Hope](#) was designated as "[Bristol](#)."

[RHODE ISLAND](#)



1699

[Rhode Island](#) had become the only New England colony to make extensive use of black [slaves](#) both for labor and as a commodity in trade. The major [international slave trade](#) markets in the American colonies were located (now hear this) at [Newport](#) and at [Bristol](#). This factoid has been so heavily papered over by the revisionist-history industry that we don't now have any idea where they had positioned their slave barracoons. At least a few of the slave importers (now hear this) and at least a few of the [privateers](#) were [Quakers](#).

W.E. Burghardt Du Bois: The rigorous climate of New England, the character of her settlers, and their pronounced political views gave slavery an even slighter basis here than in the Middle colonies. The significance of New England in the African slave-trade does not therefore lie in the fact that she early discountenanced the system of slavery and stopped importation; but rather in the fact that her citizens, being the traders of the New World, early took part in the carrying slave-trade and furnished slaves to the other colonies. An inquiry, therefore, into the efforts of the New England colonies to suppress the slave-trade would fall naturally into two parts: first, and chiefly, an investigation of the efforts to stop the participation of citizens in the carrying slave-trade; secondly, an examination of the efforts made to banish the slave-trade from New England soil.



BRISTOL, RHODE ISLAND

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1726

November 8, Friday: [Mark Anthony DeWolf](#), son of Charles DeWolf and Margaret Potter DeWolf, was born on the Island of Guadeloupe in the French Indies. He would be educated in a French school there and, at about 17 years of age, conveyed in the employ of Captain Simeon Potter to [Bristol, Rhode Island](#).

1729

January 7, Wednesday: Burial of Samuel Sewall in the Hull/Sewall family tomb in Granary Burying-Ground, [Boston](#).

Some [Rehoboth](#) residents were jailed at [Bristol, Rhode Island](#) on account of their refusal to pay “ye Ministers Rate....”

1739

The description that follows, A NEW ACCOUNT OF SOME PARTS OF GUINEA, AND THE SLAVE TRADE, is by Captain William Snelgrave of [Bristol, Rhode Island](#), who considered himself a humanitarian and supposed he was transporting his cargo of [slaves](#) to a better life through imposing the civilizing influence of white Christians over their savage and unenlightened existences. That is, Captain Snelgrave supposed himself to be doing good while doing well (the punishments he instances actually are more moderate than those instanced in some other accounts):

I come now to give an Account of the Mutinies that have happened on board the Ships where I have been.

These Mutinies are generally occasioned by the Sailors ill usage of these poor People, when on board the Ship wherein they are transported to our Plantations. Wherever therefore I have commanded, it has been my principal Care, to have the Negroes on board my Ship kindly used; and I have always strictly charged my white People to treat them with Humanity and Tenderness; In which I have usually found my Account, both in keeping them from mutinying, and preserving them in health.

And whereas it may seem strange to those that are unacquainted with the method of managing them, how we can carry so many hundreds together in a small Ship, and keep them in order, I shall just mention what is generally practiced. When we purchase grown People, I acquaint them by the Interpreter, “That, now they are become my Property, I think fit to let them know what they are bought for, that they may be easy in their Minds: (For these poor People are generally under terrible Apprehensions upon their being bought by white Men, many being afraid that we design to eat them; which, I have been told, is a story much credited by the inland Negroes;) So after informing them, That they are bought to till the Ground in our Country, with several



BRISTOL, RHODE ISLAND

BRISTOL, RHODE ISLAND

a good Watch. But sometimes we meet with stout stubborn People amongst them, who are never to be made easy; and these are generally some of the Cormantines, a Nation of the Gold Coast. I went in the year 1721, in the *Henry* of London, a Voyage to that part of the Coast, and bought a good many of these People. We were obliged to secure them very well in Irons, and watch them narrowly: Yet they nevertheless mutinied, tho' they had little prospect of succeeding. I lay at that time near a place called Mumfort on the Gold-Coast, having near five hundred Negroes on board, three hundred of which were Men. Our Ship's Company consisted of fifty white People, all in health: And I had very good Officers; so that I was very easy in all respects. After we had secured these People, I called the Linguists, and ordered them to bid the Men-Negroes between Decks be quiet; (for there was a great noise amongst them.) On their being silent, I asked, "What had induced them to mutiny?" They answered, "I was a great Rogue to buy them, in order to carry them away from their own Country, and that they were resolved to regain their Liberty if possible." I replied, "That they had forfeited their Freedom before I bought them, either by Crimes or by being taken in War, according to the Custom of their Country; and they being now my Property, I was resolved to let them feel my Resentment, if they abused my Kindness: Asking at the same time, Whether they had been ill used by the white Men, or had wanted for any thing the Ship afforded?" To this they replied, "They had nothing to complain of." Then I observed to them, "That if they should gain their Point and escape to the Shore, it would be no Advantage to them, because their Countrymen would catch them, and sell them to other Ships." This served my purpose, and they seemed to be convinced of their Fault, begging, "I would forgive them, and promising for the future to be obedient, and never mutiny again, if I would not punish them this time." This I readily granted, and so they went to sleep. When Daylight came we called the Men Negroes up on Deck, and examining their Irons, found them all secure. So this Affair happily ended, which I was very glad of; for these People are the stoutest and most sensible Negroes on the Coast: Neither are they so weak as to imagine as others do, that we buy them to eat them; being satisfied we carry them to work in our Plantations, as they do in their own Country. However, a few days after this, we discovered they were plotting again, and preparing to mutiny. For some of the Ringleaders proposed to one of our Linguists, If he could procure them an Ax, they would cut the Cables the Ship rid by in the night; and so on her driving (as they imagined) ashore, they should get out of our hands, and then would become his Servants as long as they lived.

For the better understanding of this I must observe here, that these Linguists are Natives and Freemen of the Country, whom we hire on account of their speaking good English, during the time we remain trading on the Coast; and they are likewise Brokers between us and the black Merchants.

This Linguist was so honest as to acquaint me with what had been proposed to him; and advised me to keep a strict Watch over the Slaves: For tho' he had represented to them the same as I had done on their mutinying before, That they would all be catch'd again, and sold to other Ships, in case they could carry their



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Point, and get on Shore, yet it had no effect upon them. This gave me a good deal of Uneasiness. For I knew several Voyages had proved unsuccessful by Mutinies; as they occasioned either the total loss of the Ships and the white Mens Lives; or at least by rendring it absolutely necessary to kill or wound a great number of the Slaves, in order to prevent a total Destruction. Moreover, I knew many of these Cormantine Negroes despised Punishment, and even Death it self: It having often happened at Barbadoes and other Islands, that on their being any ways hardly dealt with, to break them of their Stubbornness in refusing to work, twenty or more have hang'd themselves at a time in a Plantation. However, about a Month after this, a sad Accident happened, that brought our Slaves to be more orderly, and put them in a better Temper: And it was this. On our going from Mumfort to Anna-maboe, which is the principal part on the Gold Coast, I met there with another of my Owner's Ships, called the *Elizabeth*. One Captain Thompson that commanded her was dead; as also his chief Mate: Moreover the Ship had afterwards been taken to Cape Lahoe on the windward Coast, by Roberts the Pirate [[Bartholomew Roberts](#) AKA "[Black Bart](#)"] with whom several of the Sailors belonging to her had entered. However, some of the Pirates had hindered the Cargoe's being plundered, and obtained that the Ship should be restored to the second Mate: Telling him, "They did it out of respect to the generous Character his Owner bore, in doing good to poor Sailors." When I met with this Vessel I had almost disposed of my Ship's Cargoe; and the *Elizabeth* being under my Direction, I acquainted the second Mate, who then commanded her, That I thought it for our Owner's Interest, to take the Slaves from on board him, being about 120, into my Ship; and then go off the Coast; and that I would deliver him at the same time the Remains of my Cargoe, for him to dispose of with his own after I was sailed. This he readily complied with, but told me, "He feared his Ship's Company would mutiny, and oppose my taking the Slaves from him!" And indeed, they came at that instant in a Body on the Quarter-deck; where one spoke for the rest, telling me plainly, "they would not allow the Slaves to be taken out by me." I found by this they had lost all respect for their present Commander, who indeed was a weak Man. However, I calmly asked the reason, "Why they offered to oppose my taking the Slaves?" To which they answered, "I had no business with them." On this I desired the Captain to send to his Scrutore, for the Book of Instructions Captain Thompson had received from our Owner; and he read to them, at my request, that Part, in which their former Captain, or his Successor (in case of Death) was to follow my Orders. Hereupon they all cried out, "they should remain a great while longer on the Coast to purchase more Slaves, if I took these from them, which they were resolved to oppose." I answered, "That such of the Ship's Company as desired it, I would receive on board my own; where they should have the same Wages they had at present on board the *Elizabeth*, and I would send some of my own People to supply their Places." This so reasonable an Offer was refused, one of the Men who was the Ship's Cooper telling me, that the Slaves had been on board a long time, and they had great Friendship with them: therefore they would keep them. I asked him, "Whether he had ever been on the Coast of Guinea



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before? He replied no. Then I told him, "I supposed he had not by his way of talking, and advised him not to rely on the Friendship of the Slaves, which he might have reason to repent of when too late." And 'tis remarkable this very person was killed by them the next Night, as shall be presently related. So finding that reasoning with these Men was to no Purpose, I told them, "When I came with my Boats to fetch the Slaves, they should find me as resolute to chastise such of them as should dare to oppose me, as I had been condescending to convince them by arguing calmly." So I took my leave of their Captain, telling him, "I would come the next Morning to finish the Affair." But that very Night, which was near a month after the Mutiny on board of us at Mumfort, the Moon shining now very bright, as it did then, we heard, about ten a Clock, two or three Musquets fired on board the *Elizabeth*. Upon that I ordered all our Boats to be manned, and having secured every thing in our Ship, to prevent our Slaves from mutinying, I went my self in our Pinnace, (the other Boats following me) on board the *Elizabeth*. In our way we saw two Negroes swimming from her, but before we could reach them with our Boats, some Sharks rose from the bottom, and tore them in Pieces. We came presently along the side of the Ship, where we found two Men-Negroes holding by a Rope, with their heads just above water; they were afraid, it seems, to swim from the Ship's side, having seen their Companions devoured just before by the Sharks. These two Slaves we took into our Boat, and then went into the Ship, where we found the Negroes very quiet, and all under Deck; but the Ship's Company was on the Quarter-deck, in a great Confusion, saying, "The Cooper, who had been placed centry at the Fore-hatch way, over the Men-Negroes, was, they believed, kill'd by them." I was surprized to hear this, wondring that these cowardly fellows, who had so vigorously opposed my taking the Slaves out, a few hours before, had not Courage enough to venture forward, to save their Shipmate; but had secured themselves by shutting the Quarter-deck door, where they all stood with Arms in their Hands. So I went to the fore-part of the Ship with some of my People, and there we found the Cooper lying on his back quite dead, his Scull being cleft asunder with a Hatchet that lay by him. At the sight of this I called for the Linguist, and bid him ask the Negroes between Decks, "Who had killed the white Man?" They answered, "They knew nothing of the matter; for there had been no design of mutinying among them:" Which upon Examination we found true; for above one hundred of the Negroes then on board, being bought to the Windward, did not understand a word of the Gold-Coast Language, and so had not been in the Plot. But this Mutiny was contrived by a few Cormantee-Negroes, who had been purchased about two or three days before. At last, one of the two Men-Negroes we had taken up along the Ship side, impeached his Companion, and he readily confessed he had kill'd the Cooper, with no other View, but that he and his Countrymen might escape undiscovered by swimming on Shore. For on their coming upon Deck, they observed, that all the white Men set to watch were asleep; and having found the Cook's Hatchet by the Fire-place, he took it up, not designing then to do any Mischief with it; but passing by the Cooper, who was centry, and he beginning to awake, the Negroe rashly struck him on the head with it, and



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then jump'd overboard. Upon this frank Confession, the white Men would have cut him to Pieces; but I prevented it, and carried him to my own Ship. Early the next morning, I went on board the *Elizabeth* with my Boats, and sent away all the Negroes then in her, into my own Ship: not one of the other Ship's Company offering to oppose it. Two of them, the Carpenter and Steward, desired to go with me, which I readily granted; and by way of Security for the future success of the Voyage, I put my chief Mate, and four of my under Officers (with their own Consent,) on board the *Elizabeth*; and they arrived, about five Months after this, at Jamaica, having disposed of most part of the Cargoe.

After having sent the Slaves out of the *Elizabeth*, as I have just now mentioned, I went on board my own Ship; and there being then in the Road of Anamaboe, eight sail of Ships besides us, I sent an Officer in my Boat to the Commanders of them, "To desire their Company on board my Ship, because I had an Affair of great Consequence to communicate to them." Soon after, most of them were pleased to come; and I having acquainted them with the whole Matter, and they having also heard the Negroe's Confession, "That he had killed the white Man;" They unanimously advised me to put him to death; arguing, "That Blood required Blood, by all Laws both divine and human; especially as there was in this Case the clearest Proof, namely the Murderer's Confession: Moreover this would in all probability prevent future Mischiefs; for by publicly executing this Person at the Ship's Fore-yard Arm, the Negroes on board their Ships would see it; and as they were very much disposed to mutiny, it might prevent them from attempting it." These Reasons, with my being in the same Circumstances, made me comply.

Accordingly we acquainted the Negroe, that he was to die in an hour's time for murdering the white Man. He answered, "He must confess it was a rash Action in him to kill him; but he desired me to consider, that if I put him to death, I should lose all the Money I had paid for him." To this I bid the Interpreter reply, "That tho' I knew it was customary in his Country to commute for Murder by a Sum of Money, yet it was not so with us; and he should find that I had no regard to my Profit in this respect: For as soon as an Hour-Glass, just then turned, was run out, he should be put to death;" At which I observed he shewed no Concern.

Hereupon the other Commanders went on board their respective Ships, in order to have all their Negroes upon Deck at the time of Execution, and to inform them of the occasion of it. The Hour-Glass being run out, the Murderer was carried on the Ship's Forecastle, where he had a Rope fastened under his Arms, in order to be hoisted up to the Fore-yard Arm, to be shot to death. This some of his Countrymen observing, told him, (as the Linguist informed me afterwards) "That they would not have him to be frightened; for it was plain I did not design to put him to death, otherwise the Rope would have been put about his neck, to hang him." For it seems they had no thought of his being shot; judging he was only to be hoisted up to the Yard-arm, in order to scare him: But they immediately saw the contrary; for as soon as he was hoisted up, ten white Men who were placed behind the Barricado on the Quarter-deck fired their Musquets, and



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instantly killed him. This struck a sudden Damp upon our Negroe-Men, who thought, that, on account of my Profit, I would not have executed him.

The Body being cut down upon the Deck, the Head was cut off, and thrown overboard. This last part was done, to let our Negroes see, that all who offended thus, should be served in the same manner. For many of the Blacks believe, that if they are put to death and not dismembered, they shall return again to their own Country, after they are thrown overboard. But neither the Person that was executed, nor his Countrymen of Cormantee (as I understood afterwards,) were so weak as to believe any such thing; tho' many I had on board from other Countries had that Opinion.

When the Execution was over, I ordered the Linguist to acquaint the Men-Negroes, "That now they might judge, no one that killed a white Man should be spared:" And I thought proper now to acquaint them once for all, "That if they attempted to mutiny again, I should be obliged to punish the Ringleaders with death, in order to prevent further Mischief." Upon this they all promised to be obedient, and I assured them they should be kindly used, if they kept their Promise: which they faithfully did. For we sailed, two days after, from Anamaboe for Jamaica; and tho' they were on board near four Months, from our going off the Coast, till they were sold at that Island, they never gave us the least reason to be jealous of them; which doubtless was owing to the execution of the white Man's Murderer.

After the Captain [Messervy, of *Ferrers* galley] had told me this story, he desired me to spare him some Rice, having heard, I had purchased a great many Tuns to the Windward; where he had bought little, not expecting to meet with so many Slaves. This request I could not comply with, having provided no more than was necessary for my self, and for another of my Owner's Ships, which I quickly expected. And understanding from him, that he had never been on the Coast of Guinea before, I took the liberty to observe to him, "That as he had on board so many Negroes of one Town and Language, it required the utmost Care and Management to keep them from mutinying; and that I was sorry he had so little Rice for them: For I had experienced that the Windward Slaves are always very fond of it, it being their usual Food in their own Country; and he might certainly expect dissatisfactions and Uneasiness amongst them for want of a sufficient quantity."

This he took kindly, and having asked my Advice about other Matters, took his leave, inviting me to come next day to see him. I went accordingly on board his Ship, about three a clock in the afternoon. At four a clock the Negroes went to Supper, and Captain Messervy desired me to excuse him for a quarter of an hour, whilst he went forward to see the Men-Negroes served with Victuals. I observed from the Quarter-Deck, that he himself put Pepper and Palm Oyl amongst the Rice they were going to eat. When he came back to me, I could not forbear observing to him, "How imprudent it was in him to do so: For tho' it was proper for a Commander sometimes to go forward, and observe how things were managed; yet he ought to take a proper time, and have a good many of his white People in Arms when he went; or else the having him so much in their Power, might incourage the Slaves



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to mutiny: For he might depend upon it, they always aim at the chief Person in the Ship, whom they soon distinguish by the respect shown him by the rest of the People."

He thanked me for this Advice, but did not seem to relish it; saying, "He thought the old Proverb good, that "The Master's Eye makes the Horse fat." We then fell into other Discourse, and among other things he told me, "He designed to go away in a few days:" Accordingly he sailed three days after for Jamaica. Some Months after I went for that place, where at my arrival I found his Ship, and had the following melancholy account of his Death, which happened about ten days after he left the Coast of Guinea in this manner.

Being on the Forecastle of the Ship, amongst the Men-Negroes, when they were eating their Victuals, they laid hold on him, and beat out his Brains with the little Tubs, out of which they eat their boiled Rice. This Mutiny having been plotted amongst all the grown Negroes on board, they run to the forepart of the Ship in a body, and endeavoured to force the Barricado on the Quarter-Deck, not regarding the Musquets or Half Pikes, that were presented to their Breasts by the white Men, through the Loop-holes. So that at last the chief Mate was obliged to order one of the Quarter-deck Guns laden with Partridge-Shot, to be fired amongst them; which Occasioned a terrible Destruction: For there were near eighty Negroes kill'd and drowned, many jumping overboard when the Gun was fired. This indeed put an end to the Mutiny, but most of the Slaves that remained alive grew so sullen, that several of them were starved to death, obstinately refusing to take any Sustenance: And after the Ship was arrived at Jamaica, they attempted twice to mutiny, before the Sale of them began. This with their former Misbehaviour coming to be publicly known, none of the Planters cared to buy them, tho' offered at a low Price. So that this proved a very unsuccessful Voyage, for the Ship was detained many Months at Jamaica on that account, and at last was lost there in a Hurricane.

According to the Transatlantic Slave Trade database, between 1701 and 1727 this William Snelgrave of [Bristol, Rhode Island](#) captained one dozen slave-trading voyages, redeeming many, many black souls for Christ.

THE MIDDLE PASSAGE

1744

At the beginning of King George's War between Britain and France, eleven [privateer](#) vessels were in operation against Spanish shipping out of [Newport, Rhode Island](#) and the number was still increasing, while by way of contrast, at this point Massachusetts had seven commissioned privateers at sea, New York seven, and Pennsylvania eight. For example, in this year Captain Simeon Potter of [Bristol](#) sailed out from [Newport](#) in his sloop *Prince Charles of Lorraine* with a commission as a [privateer](#) against the vessels of France and Spain, but instead raided a Jesuit mission at the mouth of the Oyapoc River of Guiana, torching a Catholic school there, capturing its priest, looting its silver and vestments, and pillaging houses of the settlement. In privateering, which amounted to a sanctioned form of high-seas [piracy](#), Rogue Island always led the way!

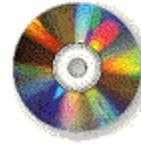
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"In the United States, every possible encouragement should be given to [privateering](#) in time of war with a commercial nation ... to distress and harass the enemy and compel him to peace."

– [Thomas Jefferson](#), 1812



"If [privateering](#) had not been already well established in the British Empire when [Rhode Island](#) first took to the sea, Rhode Islanders would have had to invent it. It suited them well.

– Hawes, Alexander Boyd, page 65¹⁸



August 26, Wednesday: Mark Anthony [DeWolf](#) got married with Abigail Potter, daughter of Hopestill Potter and Lydia Potter and sister of Captain Simeon Potter, who had been born on February 2, 1726 in [Bristol, Rhode Island](#).

December: A few months after getting married, Mark Anthony [DeWolf](#) sailed from [Bristol, Rhode Island](#) as first officer of Captain Simeon Potter's privateer *Prince Charles of Lorraine*.

December 22, Tuesday: The [Bristol, Rhode Island](#) privateer *Prince Charles of Lorraine* surprised and captured the French settlement of Oyapoc in French Guiana.

1746

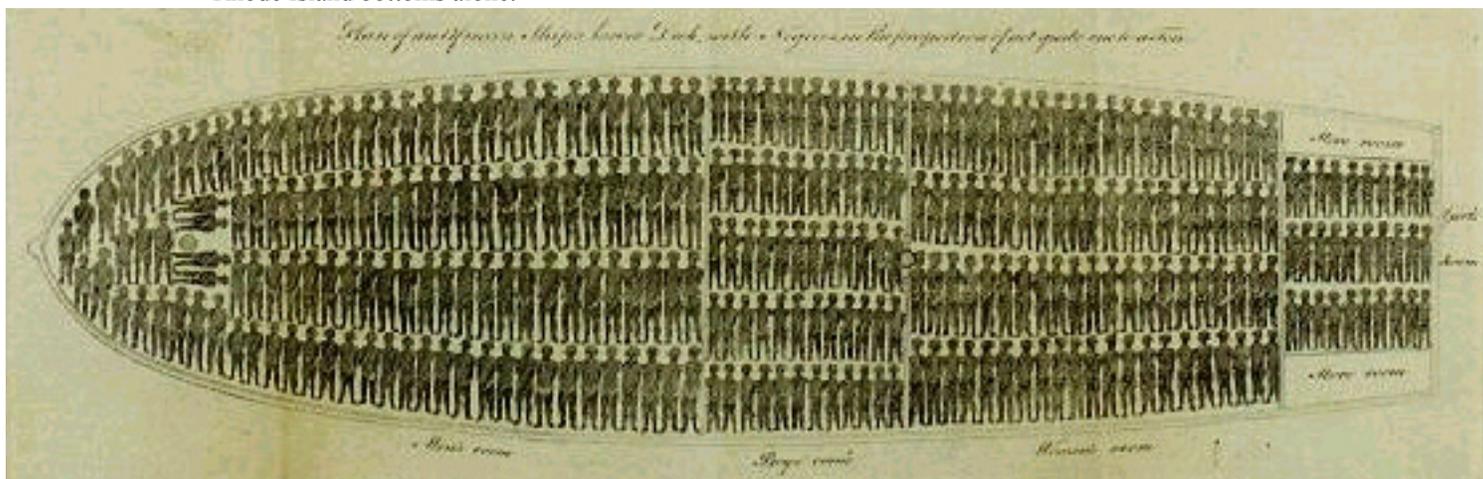
During this year and the next, an agreement between [Rhode Island](#) and Massachusetts would result in Rhode Island and Providence Plantation's annexation of [Cumberland](#) and several East Bay towns such as [Tiverton](#), Little Compton, [Warren](#) (which then included Barrington), and the [international slave trade](#) port of [Bristol](#).

18. Hawes, Alexander Boyd. OFF SOUNDINGS: ASPECTS OF THE MARITIME HISTORY OF [RHODE ISLAND](#). Chevy Chase MD: Posterity Press, 1999

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In [Rhode Island](#) harbors alone, during this year alone, it has been estimated by Alexander Boyd Hawes, only one vessel was being fitted out for the [international slave trade](#). I don't know whether this vessel was being fitted out in Providence harbor, or in Bristol harbor, or in Newport harbor, but if an average cargo of [slaves](#) was 109 –as we have estimated on the basis of a number of known cargos– then what this means is that more than a hundred souls would have been being transported over the dreadful [Middle Passage](#) during this year in Rhode Island bottoms alone.



(It was on January 7, 1746 that Captain Pollipus Hammond of the sloop *Anstis* received his sailing orders.)

The DeWolf Family of Bristol RI

- Captain Mark Anthony DeWolf, father (1726-1792)
- Senator James DeWolf, son (1764-1837)
- John DeWolf, brother (1760-1841)
- “Northwest” John DeWolf, ??? (1760-1841)
- George DeWolf, ??? (1779-1844)

1747

The *Prince Charles of Lorraine* of Captain Simeon Potter of [Bristol, Rhode Island](#) sank during a snowstorm off Sakonnet.

(This winter there would be a total of 30 snowstorms from December 25th until April. An unprecedented amount of snow cover would pile up, making travel exceedingly difficult: 5.5 feet covering Portland, Maine, 4 to 5 feet covering Cambridge, Massachusetts. This snow cover would, however, prevent the ground from freezing, so in the spring as the snow melted, it would sink into the unfrozen soils without producing any serious flooding due to runoff.)



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1750

November 14, Saturday: According to the [Maryland](#) Gazette (Green), published in Annapolis, the [Bristol, Rhode Island](#) ship *King David* had encountered some difficulties from an unruly cargo:



By Capt. Tarr who arrived a few days ago from St. Kitts, we have the following account that was sent him by Hamilton Montgomery, belonging to the ship King David of [Bristol](#), bound from the coast of Guinea, viz. That on the 8th day of May last, the [slaves](#) on board the said ship rose about 5 o'clock in the morning, none of them being in irons on board.—The insurrection was contrived and begun by 15 that had for a considerable time been treated with the same freedom as the white men; and a great many of the latter dying, encouraged them to the design.—As the chief of these slaves spoke very good English, he often convers'd with the captain in his cabin, where all the arms were loaded.—and consulting with his comrades, knowing the small strength of the white men, they at once flew into the cabin, and secured the arms in a few minutes, kill'd the captain and five of the people, thereby putting it out of the power of the remainder of the ship's crew to make any resistance, so that they got down the hold to save themselves. But the head of the Negroes call'd to them, and told them, if they would come upon deck and surrender, he would save all their lives; which they soon did, except the chief mate, who remain'd in the hold for some hours after; but sending down a white boy to acquaint him, if he did not come upon deck, they would come down and cut him to pieces; he thereupon came up, and they directly put him in irons, as they had all the others before: About eight of the clock the same evening, they threw overboard nine of the white men alive, with their irons on: The chief mate was also brought on the gunnel, to be serv'd in the same manner; but one of the head Negroes interposed, and said, Who must take care of the ship? and withal declared, that if they destroy'd him, he would kill the first man that attempted it; whereupon they saved his life.—Having let the ship drive with wind and tide for 24 hours, they at last insisted to have her carried to the Gold Coast, or Calabar, or St. Thomas's, an isle near the coast of Guiney; but the head Negro being a fellow of more sense than common, being persuaded there was no possibility of getting there, it was agreed upon to go where no white man liv'd; and Desiada was pitch'd upon, which they made on the 14th of May; and at 6 in the evening the Negroes obliged the chief mate to hoist out the boat, and they then put two white men and four Negroes on board to go for the isle; and if there were any Whites liv'd there, they were to return and kill the remainder of the crew.—But as the relator writes, he afterwards



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heard that they did not reach the island, and that he heard nothing of them 'til he got the ship to an anchor at Grand tier point, in Teage, a French island, on the 10th.—Where the French, upon giving some small assistance, not so much as venturing their lives, or anything like it, charged the expences to 3000 l. currency.—What further was done with the ship, or the Negroes, he does not write.

SERVILE INSURRECTION

1755

The population of [Providence, Rhode Island](#) amounted to, in the categories of the day: 747 men, 741 women, 655 boys, 754 girls, 262 blacks, 275 men able to bear arms, and 406 enlisted soldiers.

John Green's Map of the Most Inhabited Part of New England was based largely upon the previously published map by Dr. William Douglass. Dr. Douglass (1700-1752) had been a Scottish physician practicing in Boston who had studied in Edinburgh, Leyden, and Paris. Here are two details from his earlier map:



- EAST GREENWICH RI
- MOUNT HOPE
- PORTSMOUTH
- TIVERTON
- WARWICK RI
- REHOOTH
- BRISTOL
- WARREN
- SWANSEA

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CONCORD

(In the lower right corner of this new 1855 offering we are offered the First Comers at Plymouth — being met on the shore by an Indian holding a pole with a liberty cap atop it!)

CARTOGRAPHY

Also in this year, a map by Jean Baptiste Bourguignon d’Anville:

HDT

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merely refusing to free but one slave, who was perhaps a woman in a special situation, clearly per this census data amounts to no more than that, a present Quaker conceit), [Esek Hopkins](#) owned four, Daniel Jenckes owned four, Jabez Bowen owned one (Prince, who would in 1784 cut a deal for his achieving his freedom as of 1787), and the editor of the Providence [Gazette](#), John Carter, owned one or more.

THE BROWN BROTHERS

During this year Mrs. Ann Smith Hopkins, the Quaker wife of the [Rhode Island](#) Governor Stephen Hopkins who had in the previous year been disowned by the Religious Society of Friends, herself a “birthright Friend,” applied to her Quaker fellows for a routine letter of introduction to be used during her travels in Pennsylvania—a letter stating her to be in good standing in her home worship group—and the Quaker monthly meeting in [Smithfield](#), after duly considering her request, declined to provide this First Lady of Rhode Island with any such routine endorsement.

The Connecticut and [Rhode Island](#) colonies prohibited further importation of [slaves](#). When New Jersey’s assembly, however, proposed a prohibitive duty, its Council refused to go along.¹⁹

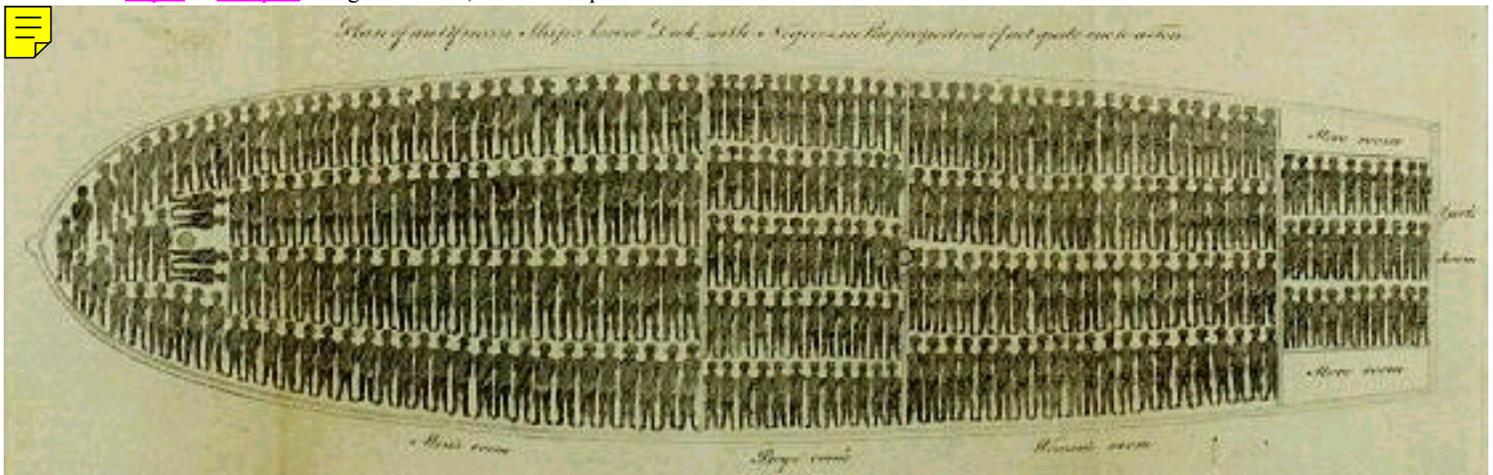
“A Bill for laying a Duty on Indian, Negroe and Molatto Slaves, imported into this Colony.” Passed the Assembly, and was rejected by the Council as “plainly” intending “an intire Prohibition,” etc. N.J. ARCHIVES, 1st Series, VI. 222.

INTERNATIONAL SLAVE TRADE

W.E. Burghardt Du Bois: Connecticut, in common with the other

19. In this year, it has been estimated by Alexander Boyd Hawes, 24 ships sailed from [Rhode Island](#) for the coast of the continent of Africa to obtain fresh bodies for the international slave trade. If an average cargo of slaves was 109—as we have estimated on the basis of a number of known cargos— then a total of more than 2,600 souls were being transported in Rhode Island bottoms alone. This, in fact, was nearly a record, as it was exceeded only in the year 1772 when 28 such Rhode Island vessels had been engaging in the [triangular trade](#).

Examples would be the [Rhode Island](#) brig *Othello*, which in this year is known to have transported a cargo of 52 souls, and [Aaron Lopez](#) of [Newport](#)’s brigantine *Ann*, which transported 112.



To be quite legal, after 1774 a Rhode Island vessel engaged in the international slave trade would need to dispose of all its cargo of new African slaves in the West Indies and along the American coastline, and be entirely clear of that business before coming to anchor in its home port. (However, until 1820, there would be no real need to be quite legal or to be entirely clear of that business before sailing into a Rhode Island port, as through the manipulations of John Brown of Providence and President Thomas Jefferson, the US Customs House in beautiful downtown [Bristol](#) would remain safely under the control of a DeWolf in-law who had significant investments in the illicit trade.)



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colonies of this section, had a trade for many years with the West Indian slave markets; and though this trade was much smaller than that of the neighboring colonies, yet many of her citizens were engaged in it. A map of Middletown at the time of the Revolution gives, among one hundred families, three slave captains and "three notables" designated as "slave-dealers."²⁰ The actual importation was small,²¹ and almost entirely unrestricted before the Revolution, save by a few light, general duty acts. In 1774 the further importation of slaves was prohibited, because "the increase of slaves in this Colony is injurious to the poor and inconvenient." The law prohibited importation under any pretext by a penalty of £100 per slave.²² This was re-enacted in 1784, and provisions were made for the abolition of slavery.²³ In 1788 participation in the trade was forbidden, and the penalty placed at £50 for each slave and £500 for each ship engaged.²⁴

W.E. Burghardt Du Bois: In 1652 Rhode Island passed a law designed to prohibit life slavery in the colony. It declared that "Whereas, there is a common course practised amongst English men to buy negers, to that end they may have them for service or slaves forever; for the preventinge of such practices among us, let it be ordered, that no blacke mankind or white being forced by covenant bond, or otherwise, to serve any man or his assignes longer than ten yeares, or untill they come to bee twentie four yeares of age, if they bee taken in under fourteen, from the time of their cominge within the liberties of this Collonie. And at the end or terme of ten yeares to sett them free, as the manner is with the English servants. And that man that will not let them goe free, or shall sell them away elsewhere, to that end that they may bee enslaved to others for a long time, hee or they shall forfeit to the Collonie forty pounds."²⁵

This law was for a time enforced,²⁶ but by the beginning of the eighteenth century it had either been repealed or become a dead letter; for the Act of 1708 recognized perpetual slavery, and laid an impost of £3 on Negroes imported.²⁷ This duty was really a tax on the transport trade, and produced a steady income for twenty years.²⁸ From the year 1700 on, the citizens of this State

20. Fowler, LOCAL LAW, etc., page 124.

21. The number of slaves in Connecticut has been estimated as follows: —

In 1680, 30. CONNECTICUT COLONIAL RECORD, III. 298.

In 1730, 700. Williams, HISTORY OF THE NEGRO RACE IN AMERICA, I. 259.

In 1756, 3,636. Fowler, LOCAL LAW, etc., page 140.

In 1762, 4,590. Williams, HISTORY OF THE NEGRO RACE IN AMERICA, I. 260.

In 1774, 6,562. Fowler, LOCAL LAW, etc., page 140.

In 1782, 6,281. Fowler, LOCAL LAW, etc., page 140.

In 1800, 5,281. Fowler, LOCAL LAW, etc., page 141.

22. CONNECTICUT COLONIAL RECORD, XIV 329. Fowler (pages 125-6) says that the law was passed in 1769, as does Sanford (page 252). I find no proof of this. There was in Connecticut the same Biblical legislation on the trade as in Massachusetts. Cf. LAWS OF CONNECTICUT (repr. 1865), page 9; also COLONIAL RECORD, I. 77. For general duty acts, see COLONIAL RECORD, V 405; VIII. 22; IX. 283; XIII. 72, 125.

23. ACTS AND LAWS OF CONNECTICUT (ed. 1784), pages 233-4.

24. ACTS AND LAWS OF CONNECTICUT (ed. 1784), pages 368, 369, 388.

25. RHODE ISLAND COLONIAL RECORD, I. 240.

26. Cf. letter written in 1681: NEW ENGLAND REGISTER, XXXI. 75-6. Cf. also Arnold, HISTORY OF RHODE ISLAND, I. 240.

27. The text of this act is lost (COLONIAL RECORD, IV. 34; Arnold, HISTORY OF RHODE ISLAND, II. 31). The Acts of Rhode Island were not well preserved, the first being published in Boston in 1719. Perhaps other whole acts are lost.

28. E.g., it was expended to pave the streets of Newport, to build bridges, etc.: RHODE ISLAND COLONIAL RECORD, IV. 191-3, 225.



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engaged more and more in the carrying trade, until Rhode Island became the greatest slave-trader in America. Although she did not import many slaves for her own use, she became the clearing-house for the trade of other colonies. Governor Cranston, as early as 1708, reported that between 1698 and 1708 one hundred and three vessels were built in the State, all of which were trading to the West Indies and the Southern colonies.²⁹ They took out lumber and brought back molasses, in most cases making a slave voyage in between. From this, the trade grew. Samuel Hopkins, about 1770, was shocked at the state of the trade: more than thirty distilleries were running in the colony, and one hundred and fifty vessels were in the slave-trade.³⁰ "Rhode Island," said he, "has been more deeply interested in the slave-trade, and has enslaved more Africans than any other colony in New England." Later, in 1787, he wrote: "The inhabitants of Rhode Island, especially those of Newport, have had by far the greater share in this traffic, of all these United States. This trade in human species has been the first wheel of commerce in Newport, on which every other movement in business has chiefly depended. That town has been built up, and flourished in times past, at the expense of the blood, the liberty, and happiness of the poor Africans; and the inhabitants have lived on this, and by it have gotten most of their wealth and riches."³¹

The Act of 1708 was poorly enforced. The "good intentions" of its framers "were wholly frustrated" by the clandestine "hiding and conveying said negroes out of the town [Newport] into the country, where they lie concealed."³² The act was accordingly strengthened by the Acts of 1712 and 1715, and made to apply to importations by land as well as by sea.³³ The Act of 1715, however, favored the trade by admitting African Negroes free of duty. The chaotic state of Rhode Island did not allow England often to review her legislation; but as soon as the Act of 1712 came to notice it was disallowed, and accordingly repealed in 1732.³⁴ Whether the Act of 1715 remained, or whether any other duty act was passed, is not clear.

While the foreign trade was flourishing, the influence of the Friends and of other causes eventually led to a movement against slavery as a local institution. Abolition societies multiplied, and in 1770 an abolition bill was ordered by the Assembly, but it was never passed.³⁵ Four years later the city of Providence resolved that "as personal liberty is an essential part of the natural rights of mankind," the importation of slaves and the system of slavery should cease in the colony.³⁶ This movement finally resulted, in 1774, in an act "prohibiting the importation of Negroes into this Colony," – a law which curiously illustrated the attitude of Rhode Island toward the slave-trade. The preamble of the act declared: "Whereas, the

29. RHODE ISLAND COLONIAL RECORD, IV. 55-60.

30. Patten, REMINISCENCES OF SAMUEL HOPKINS (1843), page 80.

31. Hopkins, WORKS (1854), II. 615.

32. Preamble of the Act of 1712.

33. RHODE ISLAND COLONIAL RECORD, IV. 131-5, 138, 143, 191-3.

34. RHODE ISLAND COLONIAL RECORD, IV. 471.

35. Arnold, HISTORY OF RHODE ISLAND, II. 304, 321, 337. For a probable copy of the bill, see NARRAGANSETT HISTORICAL REGISTER, II. 299.

36. A man dying intestate left slaves, who became thus the property of the city; they were freed, and the town made the above resolve, May 17, 1774, in town meeting: Staples, ANNALS OF PROVIDENCE (1843), page 236.



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inhabitants of America are generally engaged in the preservation of their own rights and liberties, among which, that of personal freedom must be considered as the greatest; as those who are desirous of enjoying all the advantages of liberty themselves, should be willing to extend personal liberty to others; – Therefore,” etc. The statute then proceeded to enact “that for the future, no negro or mulatto slave shall be brought into this colony; and in case any slave shall hereafter be brought in, he or she shall be, and are hereby, rendered immediately free....” The logical ending of such an act would have been a clause prohibiting the participation of Rhode Island citizens in the slave-trade. Not only was such a clause omitted, but the following was inserted instead: “Provided, also, that nothing in this act shall extend, or be deemed to extend, to any negro or mulatto slave brought from the coast of Africa, into the West Indies, on board any vessel belonging to this colony, and which negro or mulatto slave could not be disposed of in the West Indies, but shall be brought into this colony. Provided, that the owner of such negro or mulatto slave give bond ... that such negro or mulatto slave shall be exported out of the colony, within one year from the date of such bond; if such negro or mulatto be alive, and in a condition to be removed.”³⁷ In 1779 an act to prevent the sale of slaves out of the State was passed,³⁸ and in 1784, an act gradually to abolish slavery.³⁹ Not until 1787 did an act pass to forbid participation in the slave-trade. This law laid a penalty of £100 for every slave transported and £1000 for every vessel so engaged.⁴⁰

37. RHODE ISLAND COLONIAL RECORD, VII. 251-2.

38. BARTLETT'S INDEX, page 329; Arnold, HISTORY OF RHODE ISLAND, II. 444; RHODE ISLAND COLONIAL RECORD, VIII. 618.

39. RHODE ISLAND COLONIAL RECORD, X. 7-8; Arnold, HISTORY OF RHODE ISLAND, II. 506.

40. BARTLETT'S INDEX, page 333; NARRAGANSETT HISTORICAL REGISTER, II. 298-9. The number of slaves in Rhode Island has been estimated as follows: –

In 1708, 426. RHODE ISLAND COLONIAL RECORD, IV. 59.

In 1730, 1,648. RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL TRACTS, No. 19, pt. 2, page 99.

In 1749, 3,077. Williams, HISTORY OF THE NEGRO RACE IN AMERICA, I. 281.

In 1756, 4,697. Williams, HISTORY OF THE NEGRO RACE IN AMERICA, I. 281.

In 1774, 3,761. RHODE ISLAND COLONIAL RECORD, VII. 253.

1775

October 7, Saturday: Captain James Wallace made a demand upon the town of [Bristol](#) for livestock with which to feed his soldiers and sailors and the colonials took their time about responding. To encourage the [Rhode Islanders](#) to be prompt in satisfying his requisition, he drew his ships into battle line and proceeded with the cannonading of a number of the town buildings.



October 23, Monday: Captain James Wallace reported to his superiors that on October 7th he had made a demand upon the town of [Bristol](#) for livestock with which to feed his soldiers and sailors and the colonials had taken their time about responding. To encourage the [Rhode Islanders](#) to be prompt in satisfying his requisition, he had drawn his ships into battle line and proceeded with the cannonading of a number of the town buildings.

1778

May 25, Sunday: A British force of 500 men, including Hessian troops, marched through Warren and down the main street of Bristol, Rhode Island (now known as Hope Street), setting fire to many buildings and taking several citizens as prisoners to Newport. The home of the family of Captain Mark Anthony DeWolf at the south corner of Burton and Hope streets was one of the 19 torched. (The DeWolfs had fled to a farm in Swansea.) Most of the houses burnt were the barracks of American troops or homes of prominent "rebels." (Bristol now boasts the oldest continuous 4th-of-July celebration in America. First staged in 1785, it was begun by Bristolians who had taken part in the revolution.)

CELEBRATING OUR B-DAY

After the failure of the American drive to recapture Newport, Rhode Island, Jemimah Wilkinson, who had become known as "The Universal Friend," and some of her associates, obtained General John Sullivan's permission and the British commander's permission to pass through the military lines and pay a visit to England. It has been suspected that her agenda was to pay an evangelical visit to King George III.



This agenda would fail of accomplishment, but she would succeed in winning over Judge William Potter of South Kingstown, Rhode Island. He would in 1780 create a sanctuary for her and her little group of admirers on his estate at Little Rest (now Kingston).

Universal Friend would be going on preaching trips escorted by her father. Eventually her father would be replaced at her side, first by Judge Potter and then by her cadre of women friends. Her caravan—usually 12, riding two by two behind her spirited horse with her seated on a stunning white leather and blue velvet saddle—would find its way to Philadelphia and Worcester in Pennsylvania. Meetinghouses would be established, initially in South Kingston at the home of Judge Potter and then also in New Milford, Connecticut.⁴¹

41. We are tempted to disrespect such a person as a mere self-deluded religious poseur — but in all fairness, if we do so there are any number of posturing males, cut from the same broadcloth, even today on the tube, whom we should also "diss."

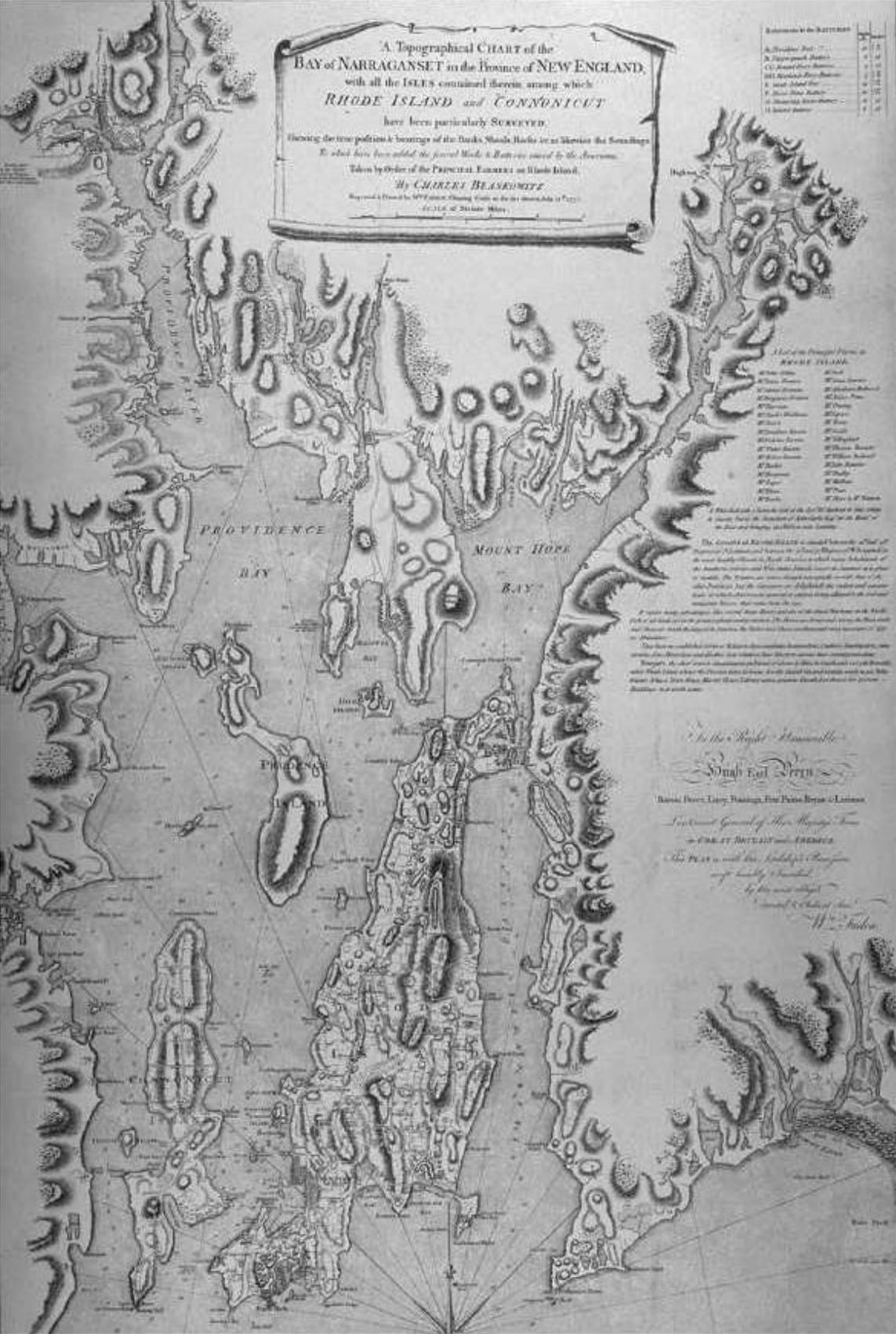
HDT

WHAT?

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The town of Acton was keeping tabs on how much the revolution was costing them:

4 men	Rhode Island	2¼ months	May and June	at £6=£24
4 men	Northern Army	4 months	Aug. to Dec.	at £24=£96
4 men	Northern Army	1½ months	Oct. and Nov.	at £9=£36
4 men	Cambridge	5 months	Nov. to April	at £12=£48
6 men	Cambridge	3 months	April to July	at £7¼=£43½

A full estimate of the services cannot be made. This town had the honor of furnishing several officers during the revolutionary war. Lieutenant Colonel Francis Faulkner and Captain Simon Hunt were in the battle at White Plains, and at other times were also engaged in actual service. The constitution was adopted by more than two thirds of the votes of the town.⁴²

29th, 8th Month: Although the “Battle of Rhode Island” was taking place on the “Quaker Hill” of [Aquidneck Island](#), it is interesting to note that this event so significant to other Rhode Islanders would go entirely unmentioned in any local [Quaker](#) meeting minutes. What would be mentioned about this day, however, would be the sad fact that during the build-up for this “Battle of Rhode Island,” a Tory home near [Bristol, Rhode Island](#) had had to be abandoned — and later Friend Sarah Trask, wife of Ebenezer Trask, was found to have in her possession some objects from that home. When Friend Sarah would prove to be unwilling to express contrition for her conduct she would be [disowned](#) by her [Friends](#) meeting.

(Battles we could put up with –they having nothing to do with us– but theft was a no-no.)

42. [Lemuel Shattuck](#)’s 1835 [A HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF CONCORD:....](#). Boston: Russell, Odiorne, and Company; Concord MA: [John Stacy](#)
(On or about November 11, 1837 Henry David Thoreau would indicate a familiarity with the contents of at least pages 2-3 and 6-9 of this historical study.)

1781

April 2, Monday: Joseph Bucklin of [Providence](#) sold One Certain Negro Man Servant or [slave](#) named London who was Twenty Years old, to the brothers Elkanah Wilmarth and Moses Wilmarth of Attleborough in the County of [Bristol, Rhode Island](#), and these new owners of London Bucklin Covenanted and Promised to and with the said London on page 345 in Volume 19 of the Deeds and Mortgages records at the Town Hall that if he enlisted into the Army of the United States of America in their place, and served faithfully and truly for a Term of Three Years (or, if discharged before the three years were up, faithfully served them until the expiration of that period), that after the Expiration of that Term He the said London should and would be declared to be [manumitted](#) and Set Free and should have all the Liberties and Privileges of a Freeman in the most full and ample Manner:

Know all Men by these Presents that Whereas We Elkanah Wilmarth and Moses Wilmarth both of Attleborough in the County of Bristol, in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts [sic], have this [sic] purchased of M. Joseph Bucklin of Providence in the State of Rhode Island &c. One Certain Negro Man Servant or Slave named London who was Twenty Years old, in the Month of March last past and as the said London hath now agreed to enlist [sic] and serve as a Soldier in the Army of the United States of America for the Seventh Class of the Town of Attleborough aforesaid to w^{ch} Class We the said Elkanah and Moses belong.

These Presents Therefore Witness That We the said Elkanah and Moses Wilmarth for ourselves our Heirs Executors and Administrators Do hereby Covenant and Promise to and with the said London That Provided and upon Condition he shall enlist into the Army of the United States of America for the said Class as aforesaid and shall faithfully and truly serve therein for the Term of Three Years agreeable to his Enlistment if the War shall continue so long or in Case of his being discharged from the Army before the Expiration of Three Years shall faithfully serve us till the Expiration of Three Years from the Date hereof We in that Case Do hereby Covenant and Engage That after the Expiration of that Term He the said London shall and he is hereby declared to be Manumitted and Set free and Shall have all the Liberties and Privileges of a Freeman in the most full and ample Manner We hereby promising never to call upon him for any other Service. --- In Witness whereof We the said Elkanah Wilmarth and Moses Wilmarth have hereunto set our Hands and Seals this Second Day of April A.D. 1781

Signed Sealed and Delivered in Presence of.

Joseph Bucklin
Theodore Foster.

Elkanah Wilmarth
Moses Wilmarth..

Providence ye in Providence April 2^d 1781 Then the above named Elkanah Wilmarth and Moses Wilmarth personally appeared and acknowledged the Foregoing Instrument [sic] Free and Voluntary Act and Deed Before Me Theodore Foster Jus. Peace

The Foregoing is a True Copy Recorded this 4th Day of June A.D. 1781
Witness Theodore Foster Town Clerk

1783

The family of Captain Mark Anthony [DeWolf](#) returned from Swansea to [Bristol, Rhode Island](#).



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1785

In 1774 there had been sixteen native Americans still alive in [Bristol, Rhode Island](#). By this point the group had dwindled to two survivors.

During this year, according to the 1822 revision to the PUBLIC LAWS OF RHODE ISLAND, page 441, the legislature of Rhode Island enacted some sort of restrictive measure either in regard to [slavery](#) or in regard to the [international slave trade](#). Unfortunately, neither the title nor the text of this enactment have so far been located. What we do know is that in this year [William Ellery](#) joined the abolitionist movement. This son of an [international slave trader](#) would become one of the leading advocates of the abolition of slavery.

1789

July 31, Friday: The federal Congress created the United States Custom Service, as a new branch of the Treasury Department.

1790

June 14, Monday: The federal Congress created the [Rhode Island](#) custom districts of [Providence](#) and [Newport](#). These two districts handled all ship traffic connecting with nine Rhode Island ports, in the Providence district, [Providence](#) and [Pawtuxet](#), and, in the Newport district, [Newport](#), [North Kingstown](#), [East Greenwich](#), [Westerly](#), [Bristol](#), [Warren](#), and Barrington.

READ EDWARD FIELD TEXT

BRISTOL, RHODE ISLAND

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July 14, Wednesday: In France this was, of course, the 1st anniversary of Bastille Day. [Alexander von Humboldt](#) and Georg Forster were in Paris for the celebration. Humboldt would return to his studies. Forster would join the revolution and, four years later, die in disgrace and misery.



At some point during this year a federal grand jury, in its first session, returned an indictment of murder against [James DeWolf](#) (1764-1837) of [Bristol](#), son of Captain Mark Anthony DeWolf (1726-1792), for having thrown



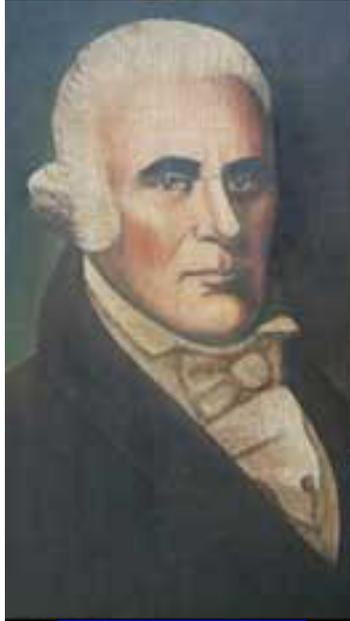
The Family Crest

a woman overboard when she exhibited symptoms of the [small pox](#). The indictment read “James DeWolf, not having the fear of God before his eyes, but being moved and seduced by the instigation of the Devil ... did feloniously, willfully and of his malice aforethought, with his hands clinch and seize in and upon the body of said Negro woman ... and did push, cast and throw her from out of said vessel into the Sea and waters of the Ocean, whereupon she then and there instantly sank, drowned and died.”

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(The murderous James DeWolf, protected of course by his influential uncle Simeon Potter and other family members, would never be required to answer to this indictment.)



TRIANGULAR TRADER

In Providence, Rhode Island, per Volume 22, page 290 of the town records, John T. Clark on behalf of the firm of Clark & Nightingale, distillers engaged in the Triangular Trade, manumitted “Quam a Negro Man late a Servant to us for life”:

Know all Men to who these Presents shall come that We Clarke & Nightingale of Providence in the County of Providence Merchants for & in Consideration of the Sum of Fifty Spanish Milled Dollars to us in Hand paid by Quam a Negro Man late a Servant to us for life & for divers other good Considerations us thereunto moving, have manumitted & set free, the said Negro Man named Quam hereby for us & our Heirs, Relinquishing all Claim or Title to the said Negro Man his services or Labour forever hereafter. In Witness whereof We have hereunto subscribed our Names as the Firm of our House this fourteenth Day of July, in the year of our Lord One thousand Seven hundred & Ninety - -

Clark & Nightingale

Witness Sam. Arnold

SLAVERY

We wonder at the magnificent gentility of these white folks engaged in the Triangular Trade, in setting free this man of color who was their servant for life, and we also wonder — **how old** might Quam have been at the point at which he was thus made free?

1791

During this year and the following one, the *Sally*, at this point owned by the DeWolf family of Bristol, Rhode Island, was making yet another slaving voyage to the coast of Africa.



TRIANGULAR TRADER

W.E. Burghardt Du Bois: Meantime, in spite of the prohibitory State laws, the African slave-trade to the United States continued to flourish. It was notorious that New England traders carried on a large traffic.⁴³ Members stated on the floor of the House that "it was much to be regretted that the severe and pointed statute against the slave trade had been so little regarded. In defiance of its forbiddance and its penalties, it was well known that citizens and vessels of the United States were still engaged in that traffic.... In various parts of the nation, outfits were made for slave-voyages, without secrecy, shame, or apprehension.... Countenanced by their fellow-citizens at home, who were as ready to buy as they themselves were to collect and to bring to market, they approached our Southern harbors and inlets, and clandestinely disembarked the sooty offspring of the Eastern, upon the ill fated soil of the Western hemisphere. In this way, it had been computed that, during the last twelve months, twenty thousand enslaved negroes had been transported from Guinea, and, by smuggling, added to the plantation stock of Georgia and South Carolina. So little respect seems to have been paid to the existing prohibitory statute, that it may almost be considered as disregarded by common consent."⁴⁴

These voyages were generally made under the flag of a foreign nation, and often the vessel was sold in a foreign port to escape confiscation. South Carolina's own Congressman confessed that although the State had prohibited the trade since 1788, she "was unable to enforce" her laws. "With navigable rivers running into the heart of it," said he, "it was impossible, with our means,

43. Cf. Fowler, LOCAL LAW IN MASSACHUSETTS AND CONNECTICUT, etc., page 126.

44. Speech of S.L. Mitchell of New York, Feb. 14, 1804: ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 8th Congress, 1st Session, page 1000. Cf. also speech of Bedinger: ANNALS OF CONGRESS, pages 997-8.



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to prevent our Eastern brethren, who, in some parts of the Union, in defiance of the authority of the General Government, have been engaged in this trade, from introducing them into the country. The law was completely evaded, and, for the last year or two [1802-3], Africans were introduced into the country in numbers little short, I believe, of what they would have been had the trade been a legal one."⁴⁵ The same tale undoubtedly might have been told of Georgia.

1792

During this year and the following one, the [Sally](#) of [Bristol, Rhode Island](#) was making its final slaving voyage to the coast of Africa.

TRIANGULAR TRADE

W.E. Burghardt Du Bois: Meantime, in spite of the prohibitory State laws, the African slave-trade to the United States continued to flourish. It was notorious that New England traders carried on a large traffic.⁴⁶ Members stated on the floor of the House that "it was much to be regretted that the severe and pointed statute against the slave trade had been so little regarded. In defiance of its forbiddance and its penalties, it was well known that citizens and vessels of the United States were still engaged in that traffic.... In various parts of the nation, outfits were made for slave-voyages, without secrecy, shame, or apprehension.... Countenanced by their fellow-citizens at home, who were as ready to buy as they themselves were to collect and to bring to market, they approached our Southern harbors and inlets, and clandestinely disembarked the sooty offspring of the Eastern, upon the ill fated soil of the Western hemisphere. In this way, it had been computed that, during the last twelve months, twenty thousand [enslaved](#) negroes had been transported from Guinea, and, by smuggling, added to the plantation stock of Georgia and South Carolina. So little respect seems to have been paid to the existing prohibitory statute, that it may almost be considered as disregarded by common consent."⁴⁷

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45. Speech of Lowndes in the House, Feb. 14, 1804: ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 8th Congress, 1st Session, page 992. Cf. Stanton's speech later: ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 9th Congress, 2d Session, page 240.

46. Cf. Fowler, LOCAL LAW IN MASSACHUSETTS AND CONNECTICUT, etc., page 126.

47. Speech of S.L. Mitchell of New York, Feb. 14, 1804: ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 8th Congress, 1st Session, page 1000. Cf. also speech of Bedinger: ANNALS OF CONGRESS, pages 997-8.

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numbers little short, I believe, of what they would have been had the trade been a legal one.”⁴⁸ The same tale undoubtedly might have been told of Georgia.

1794

[Friend Moses Brown](#) and [Friend Samuel Rodman](#) presented to President George Washington and Vice-President John Adams a memorial in opposition to the [international slave trade](#). The federal Congress passed an act prohibiting the trans-Atlantic trade. (When officials of the [Newport](#) customs district would begin to enforce this law in the subsidiary port of [Bristol](#), this would interfere with the nefarious activities of [Rhode Island](#) slavetraders [James DeWolf](#) and Shearjashub Bourne. The [slavetraders](#) would lobby the government for the establishment of Bristol as a separate customs district and no longer subject to these out-of-control officials of the Newport customs district — who were actually daring to enforce this new law.)

W.E. Burghardt Du Bois: Of the twenty years from 1787 to 1807 it can only be said that they were, on the whole, a period of disappointment so far as the suppression of the slave-trade was concerned. Fear, interest, and philanthropy united for a time in an effort which bade fair to suppress the trade; then the real weakness of the constitutional compromise appeared, and the interests of the few overcame the fears and the humanity of the many.



The DeWolf Crest

48. Speech of Lowndes in the House, Feb. 14, 1804: ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 8th Congress,, 1st Session, page 992. Cf. Stanton’s speech later: ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 9th Congress, 2d Session, page 240.

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1795

December 4, Friday: In Bristol, Rhode Island, the cargo of the *Juno*, new slaves from the coast of Africa, were auctioned.

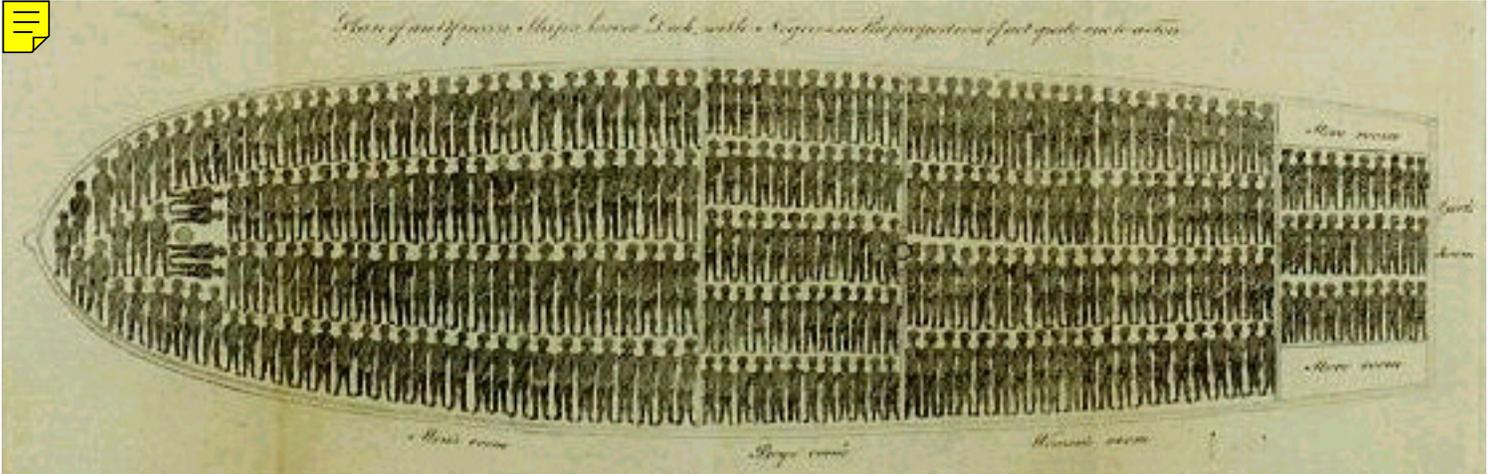
NEGREROS

TRIANGULAR TRADE



1796

The Rhode Island ship *Liberty* brought 104 slaves from Africa. The Rhode Island sloop *General Greene* brought 88 slaves from Africa.



In Bristol, Rhode Island, new slaves brought over from the coast of Africa by another voyage of the *Juno* were auctioned.

THE MIDDLE PASSAGE



"It is simply crazy that there should ever have come into being a world with such a sin in it, in which a man is set apart because of his color – the superficial fact about a human being. Who could **want** such a world? For an American fighting for his love of country, that the last hope of earth should from its beginning have swallowed slavery, is an irony so withering, a justice so intimate in its rebuke of pride, as to measure only with God."



– Stanley Cavell, *MUST WE MEAN WHAT WE SAY?*
1976, page 141

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BRISTOL, RHODE ISLAND

BRISTOL, RHODE ISLAND

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1797

August 5, Monday: There was a preliminary appearance in federal court in [Providence, Rhode Island](#) on this day, in preparation for the trial of [John Brown](#) on charge of being engaged in the [international slave trade](#).

Per Jay Coughtry, Associate Professor of History at the University of Nevada in Las Vegas:

On August 5, 1797, [John Brown](#), the premier merchant and first citizen of [Providence, Rhode Island](#), reluctantly entered federal district court in his hometown and became the first American to be tried under the U.S. Slave Trade Act of 1794. After months of out-of-court wrangling with the plaintiffs, officers of a state abolition society, it appeared that Brown would now stand trial for fitting out his ship *Hope* for the African [slave trade](#). The voyage had concluded profitably in Havana, Cuba, with the sale of 229 [slaves](#) a year earlier.⁴⁹

Brown's accusers included his younger brother, [Moses](#), a tireless opponent of both slavery and the slave trade since his conversion, on the eve of the American Revolution, from the family's [Baptist](#) faith to the [Society of Friends](#). A founding member and officer of the Abolition Society, chartered in 1789, [Moses Brown](#) had been fighting Rhode Island slave traders, including brother John, for a decade, since the passage of the largely ineffective state statute of 1787 that prohibited the trade to state residents.⁵⁰

In this instance, the society's traditional tactic -cajoling a pledge from the accused to forswear slaving in the future in exchange for dropping the suit- had failed. Even so, as Moses had pointedly reminded John before trial, the charges thus far were limited, involving only the comparatively mild first section of the three-year-old federal statute. A conviction would therefore require nothing more than forfeiture of the vessel, an aging one at that. What John should most fear, Moses advised, were "larger prosecutions" should he further provoke the Abolition Society by refusing to settle out of court.⁵¹

Ultimately, the elder Brown ignored his brother's mediation efforts and offered only an eleventh hour plea for a continuance to haggle over milder pledge terms. Its patience exhausted, the Abolition Society flatly rejected that ploy whereupon the case proceeded swiftly to trial. As predicted, the district court judge had little choice but to assent to the arguments and evidence in the prosecution's narrowly defined case.

49. Jay Coughtry, *THE NOTORIOUS TRIANGLE: RHODE ISLAND AND THE AFRICAN SLAVE TRADE* (Philadelphia, 1981), pages 214-215.

50. *NOTORIOUS TRIANGLE*, chapter 6. See also Mack Thompson, *MOSES BROWN: RELUCTANT REFORMER* (Chapel Hill, 1962), pages 175-190.

51. [Moses Brown](#) to [John Brown](#), March 15, 1797, [MOSES BROWN PAPERS](#), vol. 9, no. 29, Rhode Island Historical Society; [Moses Brown](#) to [John Brown](#), *ibid.*, vol. 9, no. 32.



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Consequently, [John Brown](#) lost his vessel at a local auction in late August, thereby closing the forfeiture case. When the Abolition Society again sought Brown's promise to abandon his African commerce, he refused, quickly prompting the "larger prosecutions" Moses had warned him about.⁵²

Meanwhile, Moses had become suspicious of John's continuing recalcitrance. It seemed premeditated in his younger brother's view, perhaps a deliberate strategy devised by John's "friends at [Newport](#)" (i.e., slave traders) to guarantee further suits over the illegal sale of the slaves. Such litigation, while potentially more costly, would also require a jury trial, and the slave traders assumed that local juries would not convict one of their own. They were right. Within six months [John Brown](#) announced his court victory over the "Wicked and Abominable Combination I mean the Abolition Society."⁵³

This insiders' view of the foregoing case of the ship *Hope* is documented, along with numerous other key prosecutions, in the correspondence of John and especially Moses Brown, now available in this microfilm series, PAPERS OF THE AMERICAN SLAVE TRADE: SELECTIONS FROM THE RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY. Moreover, Moses Brown's letters reveal not only the Abolition Society's formal legal stratagems but also its traditional policy of intense but informal negotiating with slave traders who often yielded to the group's demands without a court fight. Cyprian Sterry, for example, the principal slave trader in Providence during the 1790s with fifteen voyages to the African coast in 1794 alone, fully succumbed to the society's persistent pressure. He escaped prosecution (along with his captain, Samuel Packard) for an African voyage involving the ship *Ann* by signing a written pledge to leave the [slave trade](#) forever.⁵⁴

Despite occasional successes in and out of court, in general the campaign against the slave traders in the wake of federal prohibition was proceeding haltingly at best. Moses Brown continued to monitor the efforts of customs officials in the Rhode Island district for the Abolition Society, which increasingly relinquished its early prosecutorial role to the U.S. Attorney's office. Congress bolstered the federal district attorney's legal arsenal with amendments to the 1794 statute in 1800 and again in 1803. Meanwhile, an aggressive secretary of the treasury appointed a special prosecutor for the district in 1801. The new laws closed the most obvious loopholes in the original act while the appointment of a resident special prosecutor provided a full-time federal agent who could focus exclusively on the escalating volume of vessels clearing state ports for Africa.⁵⁵

Documentation for these events not only reveals the growing docket of slaver cases but also regularly exposes the personal and political dimensions of enforcement and evasion. By century's end, for example, it had become clear that slavers had rendered nearly null the local auctions designed to separate

52. [John Brown](#) to [Moses Brown](#), July 29, 31, 1797, [MOSES BROWN](#) PAPERS, vol. 9. nos. 43 and 44, Rhode Island Historical Society. See also NOTORIOUS TRIANGLE at 215.

53. [John Brown](#) to [Moses Brown](#), July 31, 1797, [MOSES BROWN](#) PAPERS, vol. 9, no. 44, Rhode Island Historical Society and Moses Brown to [John Brown](#), November 17, 1797, *ibid.*, vol. 9, no. 49; [John Brown](#) to James Brown, June 21, 1798, [John Brown](#) Papers, box D, Rhode Island Historical Society

54. [John Brown](#) to [Moses Brown](#), [MOSES BROWN](#) PAPERS, vol. 9, no. 43. See also NOTORIOUS TRIANGLE at 213-214.

55. NOTORIOUS TRIANGLE at 216-222.



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owners from their slaving vessels. African merchants and their influential supporters simply intimidated all potential bidders and then repurchased their ships for a fraction of their assessed value. To end such bogus sales-at-auction, the government in 1799 sent Samuel Bosworth, surveyor of the port of [Bristol](#), to bid for the D'Wolf family's recently condemned schooner *Lucy*. Twice within twenty-four hours of the scheduled sale, [John Brown](#) and two D'Wolf brothers, the country's largest slave traders, visited Bosworth at home to dissuade him from his duty. Despite a threatened dunking in [Bristol](#) harbor, Bosworth "with considerable fear and trembling" arrived at the wharf on auction morning where he was met by a party of local "Indians" in unconvincing native garb and with faces blackened. No [Bristol](#) version of the patriotic tea party ensued, fortunately. Instead, Bosworth's captors hustled him aboard a waiting sailboat and deposited him two miles down the bay at the foot of Mount Hope. The government never employed that strategy again.⁵⁶

Such an outrage was not the limit of "the trade's supporters" arrogance, however. Soon, Special Prosecutor John Leonard would personally feel the wrath of Rhode Island's African merchants. Even his limited success in libeling several of their vessels under the anemic section one was enough to prompt an attack on his person. They apparently feared that Leonard's February 1801 victory in prosecuting a D'Wolf captain caught redhanded by a U.S. Navy cruiser would set a costly precedent. Consequently, several overzealous supporters of the [slave trade](#) assaulted Leonard on the steps of the federal courthouse in Washington.⁵⁷ Even [John Brown](#) thought this response somewhat extreme, especially as he was then involved in concocting a federal legislative solution to his slaving constituents' problem. During the hectic months between Thomas Jefferson's election and inauguration as president, Brown successfully spearheaded a move in Congress to create a separate customs district for the port of [Bristol](#). Following passage of the requisite legislation late in February 1801 and the eventual appointment of customs officers amenable to the slave traders' needs, the effort to stop the [slave trade](#) in the courts permanently stalled. The end of Rhode Island participation in illegal African commerce would begin only years later with the implementation of the Anti-Slave Trade Act of 1807 on January 1, 1808. This now constitutional statute outlawed all foreign slave trading by American citizens in any capacity. By the time violations of this new law carried the death penalty in 1819, Rhode Islanders, along with other New Englanders, had found new markets for their commerce and textile factories for their surplus capital. The brief revival of the slave trade in clipper ships of the antebellum era from ports such as Baltimore would proceed without them.⁵⁸

56. Samuel Bosworth to Oliver Wolcott, August 1799, Shepley Papers, vol. 9, no. 8, Rhode Island Historical Society; Jonathan Russell to Albert Gallatin, March 18, 1804, *ibid.*, vol. 9, no. 7. George Howe tells the tale of the *Lucy* in his MOUNT HOPE: A NEW ENGLAND CHRONICLE (New York, 1959), 107-108.

57. [John Brown](#) to Benjamin Bourn, February 1801, Peck MSS, vol. 11, no. 66, Rhode Island Historical Society.

58. [John Brown](#) to James D'Wolf and Shearjashub Bourn (n.d. but 1800), JOHN BROWN PAPERS, Rhode Island Historical Society; [John Brown](#) to Shearjashub Bourn, February 1801, Peck MSS, box 11, no. 66, Rhode Island Historical Society. The full story of the separate district issue and the eventual end of slave trading from [Rhode Island](#) is detailed in NOTORIOUS TRIANGLE at 225-229 and 233-237.

1799

The [Rhode Island](#) brigantine *Orange* (or is this a typographic error in regard to a voyage in 1779?) brought a cargo of 120 new [slaves](#) from the coast of Africa.

[William Ellery](#) seized the [DeWolf](#) schooner *Lucy* (Captain Charles Collins) for engaging in the slave trade and put it up for auction in [Bristol](#). Local surveyor Samuel Bosworth was appointed to bid on the vessel on behalf of the government. After [John Brown](#) of [Providence](#) and several other slavers had attempted unsuccessfully to intimidate Bosworth, the DeWolfs simply hired thugs who, costumed as native Americans, kidnapped him and took him several miles up the bay while with a trifling bid the DeWolfs recovered their vessel.

[John Brown](#), as ever a strong defender of the absolute righteousness of the [international slave trade](#), was elected to the US House of Representatives. He would sponsor legislation to create a separate Customs House in [Bristol](#), in facilitation of the international slave trade that was still being conducted through that port by [James DeWolf](#) and Shearjashub Bourne.



The DeWolf Crest

W.E. Burghardt Du Bois: Meantime, in spite of the prohibitory State laws, the African slave-trade to the United States continued to flourish. It was notorious that New England traders carried on a large traffic.⁵⁹ Members stated on the floor of the House that "it was much to be regretted that the severe and pointed statute against the slave trade had been so little regarded. In defiance of its forbiddance and its penalties, it was well known that citizens and vessels of the United States were still engaged in that traffic.... In various parts of the nation, outfits were made for slave-voyages, without secrecy, shame, or apprehension.... Countenanced by their fellow-citizens at home, who were as ready to buy as they themselves were to collect and to bring to market, they approached our Southern harbors and inlets, and clandestinely disembarked the sooty offspring of the Eastern, upon the ill fated soil of the Western hemisphere. In this way, it had been computed that,

59. Cf. Fowler, LOCAL LAW IN MASSACHUSETTS AND CONNECTICUT, etc., page 126.



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during the last twelve months, twenty thousand enslaved negroes had been transported from Guinea, and, by smuggling, added to the plantation stock of Georgia and South Carolina. So little respect seems to have been paid to the existing prohibitory statute, that it may almost be considered as disregarded by common consent."⁶⁰

These voyages were generally made under the flag of a foreign nation, and often the vessel was sold in a foreign port to escape confiscation. South Carolina's own Congressman confessed that although the State had prohibited the trade since 1788, she "was unable to enforce" her laws. "With navigable rivers running into the heart of it," said he, "it was impossible, with our means, to prevent our Eastern brethren, who, in some parts of the Union, in defiance of the authority of the General Government, have been engaged in this trade, from introducing them into the country. The law was completely evaded, and, for the last year or two [1802-3], Africans were introduced into the country in numbers little short, I believe, of what they would have been had the trade been a legal one."⁶¹ The same tale undoubtedly might have been told of Georgia.

60. Speech of S.L. Mitchell of New York, Feb. 14, 1804: ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 8th Congress, 1st Session, page 1000. Cf. also speech of Bedinger: ANNALS OF CONGRESS, pages 997-8.

61. Speech of Lowndes in the House, Feb. 14, 1804: ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 8th Congress,, 1st Session, page 992. Cf. Stanton's speech later: ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 9th Congress, 2d Session, page 240.



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1800



February 23, Sunday: [William Jardine](#) was born at Edinburgh, Scotland. He would be educated at home to the age of 15.

The active enforcement of the [Rhode Island](#) law against slavetrading by abolitionist customs collector [William Ellery](#) so infuriated new congressman [John Brown](#), a slavetrader, that he had sponsored a federal bill to split off a customs district separate from [Newport](#), to have its headquarters in [Bristol](#). The Congress therefore on this day authorized a separate new customs house. The letter is predated by one month, and the obvious inferences that a historian can derive from this factoid are that this deal had gone down in secrecy, and that there were some concerned individuals who had not yet learned of it. This might not sound at all remarkable, but there is background information that makes it remarkable indeed, in connecting the establishment of this new federal customs house in Bristol **with the continuation of the trans-Atlantic trade in new slaves**. Here (within blue boxes, on following screens) is this background:

[TRIANGULAR TRADE](#)

1789

July 31, Friday: The federal Congress created the United States Custom Service, as a new branch of the Treasury Department.

1790

June 14, Monday: The federal Congress created the [Rhode Island](#) custom districts of [Providence](#) and [Newport](#). These two districts handled all ship traffic connecting with nine Rhode Island ports, in the Providence district, [Providence](#) and [Pawtuxet](#), and, in the Newport district, [Newport](#), [North Kingstown](#), [East Greenwich](#), [Westerly](#), [Bristol](#), [Warren](#), and Barrington.

READ EDWARD FIELD TEXT

1794

[Friend Moses Brown](#) and [Friend](#) Samuel Rodman presented to President George Washington and Vice-President John Adams a memorial in opposition to the [international slave trade](#). The federal Congress passed an act prohibiting the trans-Atlantic trade. (When officials of the [Newport](#) customs district would begin to enforce this law in the subsidiary port of [Bristol](#), this would interfere with the nefarious activities of [Rhode Island](#) slavetraders [James DeWolf](#) and Shearjashub Bourne. The [slavetraders](#) would lobby the government for the establishment of Bristol as a separate customs district and no longer subject to these out-of-control officials of the Newport customs district — who were actually daring to enforce this new law.)

W.E. Burghardt Du Bois: Of the twenty years from 1787 to 1807 it can only be said that they were, on the whole, a period of disappointment so far as the suppression of the slave-trade was concerned. Fear, interest, and philanthropy united for a time in an effort which bade fair to suppress the trade; then the real weakness of the constitutional compromise appeared, and the interests of the few overcame the fears and the humanity of the many.



The DeWolf Crest

1799

The [Rhode Island](#) brigantine *Orange* (or is this a typographic error in regard to a voyage in 1779?) brought a cargo of 120 new [slaves](#) from the coast of Africa.

[William Ellery](#) seized the [DeWolf](#) schooner *Lucy* (Captain Charles Collins) for engaging in the slave trade and put it up for auction in [Bristol](#). Local surveyor Samuel Bosworth was appointed to bid on the vessel on behalf of the government. After [John Brown](#) of [Providence](#) and several other slavers had attempted unsuccessfully to intimidate Bosworth, the DeWolfs simply hired thugs who, costumed as native Americans, kidnapped him and took him several miles up the bay while with a trifling bid the DeWolfs recovered their vessel.

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The DeWolf Crest

Taking into account this history that lies hidden behind the Act of February 23, 1800, it is interesting what would happen **next**. Next, Jonathan Russell would be appointed as 1st US customs collector at the new [Bristol, Rhode Island](#) customs house, and Russell would continue to enforce the law against the [international slave trade](#) in the manner in which it had been being enforced while the [Newport](#) customs house was still running the show. Because of this, the [DeWolf](#) family would need to circulate a petition for his removal, and conduct a lobbying campaign in Washington DC. The result would be that in February 1804, President [Thomas Jefferson](#) would fire Jonathan Russell, replacing him with a more cooperative official, a brother-in-law of [James DeWolf](#) who had a major investment in the international slave trade. This man, Charles Collins, would serve as collector at the new Bristol customs house, **and ignore the law at presidential behest and succor the international slave trade at presidential behest, until 1820:**

1804

February: The first customs collector for [Bristol, Rhode Island](#), Jonathan Russell, had been constantly interfering with the [international slave trade](#) in strict application and implementation of official US federal law and policy. The [DeWolfs](#) and the other slave trading families of Bristol therefore arranged with President [Thomas Jefferson](#) to have Russell replaced with a brother-in-law of theirs, Charles Collins, who was captain of one of that family's negro vessels — a man who could be counted on to not enforce the federal law against the importation of generations of fresh [slaves](#) from Africa into the United States of America.



The DeWolf Crest

W.E. Burghardt Du Bois: Of the twenty years from 1787 to 1807 it can only be said that they were, on the whole, a period of disappointment so far as the suppression of the slave-trade was concerned. Fear, interest, and philanthropy united for a time in an effort which bade fair to suppress the trade; then the real weakness of the constitutional compromise appeared, and the interests of the few overcame the fears and the humanity of the many.

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1801

➡ Josiah Quincy, Sr. visited [Rhode Island](#).

JOSIAH QUINCY, SR.

[Mount Hope](#) is not a high hill at all, rising only to some 200 plus feet above the level of [Narragansett Bay](#). In this year the infamous Senator [James DeWolf](#) had an octagonal summer house erected near its top.

BRISTOL



The DeWolf Crest





The DeWolf Carriage

1803



Christmas, Sunday,: William Thornton and Francis Fitzhugh Conway, cousins, found themselves in competition for the attentions of a niece of [James Madison](#), Miss Nellie Madison, who was a guest at Chatham during this year's [Christmas](#) season. The cousins arrived at the Chatham festivities on horseback and their horses were stabled. Francis had outfitted his horse with a handsome new bridle and told the young lady in the course of the evening that he was going to "surprise" her. When it came time for him to display his horse, he found that the groom had switched the bridles. It was his cousin's horse that impressed Miss Nellie. He accused his cousin of having paid the groom to switch the bridles, which meant they needed to have a [duel](#). They met on a narrow pathway between Alum Spring Rock and a mill pond and each shot the other in the region of the bladder. The cousins died at about the same hour.



[James DeWolf](#) of [Bristol](#) gave his wife a pair of [slaves](#) as her [Christmas](#) present. "I went shopping in this boutique in Africa and brought you home a little something, Darling. It's a matched set."⁶²

INTERNATIONAL SLAVE TRADE

BRISTOL, RHODE ISLAND

BRISTOL, RHODE ISLAND

W.E. Burghardt Du Bois: Of the twenty years from 1787 to 1807 it can only be said that they were, on the whole, a period of disappointment so far as the suppression of the slave-trade was concerned. Fear, interest, and philanthropy united for a time in an effort which bade fair to suppress the trade; then the real weakness of the constitutional compromise appeared, and the interests of the few overcame the fears and the humanity of the many.



The DeWolf Carriage

62. Clearly, there's a terminology problem here. In an effort to resolve this terminology issue, at the Republican National Convention in New-York during August 2004 –at which the Republican Party would for four days make an effort to strip from its face its mask of hostility to the plight of the downtrodden and reveal its true countenance of benevolent conservatism and concern– these people would be sensitively referred to by a Hoosier Republican running for the US Senate as “involuntary immigrants.”

So, perhaps, this is a good point at which to insert a story about involuntary immigrants that has been passed on to us by Ram Varmha, a retired IBM engineer whose father had briefly served as Maharaja after the independence of Cochin. He relates the story as narrated to him by his paternal grandmother who lived in Thripoonithura, Cochin: “When my grandmother (born 1882) was a young girl she would go with the elder ladies of the family to the Pazhayannur Devi Temple in Fort Cochin, next to the Cochin Lantha Palace built by the Dutch (Landers = Lantha), which was an early establishment of the Cochin royal family before the administration moved to Thripoonithura. My grandmother often told us that in the basement of the Lantha Palace, in a confined area, a family of Africans had been kept locked up, as in a zoo! By my Grandmother’s time all the Africans had died. But, some of the elder ladies had narrated the story to her of ‘Kappiries’ (Africans) kept in captivity there. It seems visitors would give them fruits and bananas. They were well cared for but always kept in confinement. My grandmother did not know all the details but according to her, ‘many’ years earlier, a ship having broken its mast drifted into the old Cochin harbor. When the locals climbed aboard, they found a crewless ship, but in the hold there were some chained ‘Kappiries’ still alive; others having perished. The locals did not know what to do with them. Not understanding their language and finding the Africans in chains, the locals thought that these were dangerous to set free. So they herded the poor Africans into the basement of the Cochin Fort, and held them in captivity, for many, many years! I have no idea when the initial incident happened, but I presume it took place in the late 1700s or early 1800s. This points to the possibility that it was, in fact, a slave ship carrying human cargo from East Africa to either the USA or the West Indies. An amazing and rather bizarre story. Incidentally, this is not an ‘old woman’s tale’! Its quite reliable. My grandmother would identify some of the older ladies who had actually seen the surviving Kappiries.”



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In [Newport, Rhode Island](#), by this point Friend [Stephen Wanton Gould](#), age 22, had reached a firm decision to “go to journey work” repairing timepieces, for his livelihood. Having just completed one apprenticeship which had been for seven years (we don’t know the nature of this), he apprenticed himself anew, to learn watch repair from Friend David Williams. While his brothers would be going into trade and traveling, he himself would be staying home and devoting himself to mundane activity — this in order to avoid any personal involvement at all in any slavery-related economic activity. He wrote in his journal of the religious anguish of his mind.

 December 27, Tuesday: [Friend Stephen Wanton Gould](#) wrote in his journal:

*27 of 12 Mo 1803 / I know not what to insert except that I am
weak & unfaithful*



1804

February: The first customs collector for [Bristol, Rhode Island](#), Jonathan Russell, had been constantly interfering with the [international slave trade](#) in strict application and implementation of official US federal law and policy. The [DeWolfs](#) and the other slave trading families of Bristol therefore arranged with President [Thomas Jefferson](#) to have Russell replaced with a brother-in-law of theirs, Charles Collins, who was captain of one of that family's negrero vessels — a man who could be counted on to not enforce the federal law against the importation of generations of fresh [slaves](#) from Africa into the United States of America.



The DeWolf Crest



The DeWolf Carriage

President [Jefferson](#) must have been doing something that Republicans liked, for in this month a Republican congressional caucus nominated him for re-election as president. (New York governor George Clinton was nominated to run as the Republican candidate for vice-president.)



BRISTOL, RHODE ISLAND

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1807



October 12, Monday: Louis Spohr was admitted to the newly reconstituted Masonic lodge “Ernst zum Kompass” in Gotha.

In [Bristol, Rhode Island](#), at the US Customs House, sale of [slaves](#) brought over in a voyage of the [negrero](#) brig *Three Sisters*.



TRIANGULAR TRADE

How was this possible under the federal Act of 1807, recently enacted?

W.E. Burghardt Du Bois: The dozen or more propositions on the question of the disposal of illegally imported Africans may be divided into two chief heads, representing two radically opposed parties: 1. That illegally imported Africans be free, although they might be indentured for a term of years or removed from the country. 2. That such Africans be sold as slaves.⁶³ The arguments on these two propositions, which were many and far-reaching, may be roughly divided into three classes, political, constitutional, and moral.

The political argument, reduced to its lowest terms, ran thus: those wishing to free the Negroes illegally imported declared that to enslave them would be to perpetrate the very evil which the law was designed to stop. “By the same law,” they said, “we condemn the man-stealer and become the receivers of his stolen goods. We punish the criminal, and then step into his place, and complete the crime.”⁶⁴ They said that the objection to free Negroes was no valid excuse; for if the Southern people really feared this class, they would consent to the imposing of such penalties on illicit traffic as would stop the importation of a

63. There were at least twelve distinct propositions as to the disposal of the Africans imported: —

1. That they be forfeited and sold by the United States at auction (Early’s bill, reported Dec. 15: ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 9th Congress 2d session, pages 167-8).
2. That they be forfeited and left to the disposal of the States (proposed by Bidwell and Early: ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 9th Congress 2d session, pages 181, 221, 477. This was the final settlement.)
3. That they be forfeited and sold, and that the proceeds go to charities, education, or internal improvements (Early, Holland, and Masters: ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 9th Congress 2d session, page 273).
4. That they be forfeited and indentured for life (Alston and Bidwell: ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 9th Congress 2d session, pages 170-1).
5. That they be forfeited and indentured for 7, 8, or 10 years (Pitkin: ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 9th Congress 2d session, page 186).
6. That they be forfeited and given into the custody of the President, and by him indentured in free States for a term of years (bill reported from the Senate Jan. 28: HOUSE JOURNAL (reprinted 1826), 9th Congress 2d session, V. 575; ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 9th Congress 2d session, page 477. Cf. also ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 9th Congress 2d session, page 272).
7. That the Secretary of the Treasury dispose of them, at his discretion, in service (Quincy: ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 9th Congress 2d session, page 183).
8. That those imported into slave States be returned to Africa or bound out in free States (Sloan: ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 9th Congress 2d session, page 254).
9. That all be sent back to Africa (Smilie: ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 9th Congress 2d session, page 176).
10. That those imported into free States be free, those imported into slave States be returned to Africa or indentured (Sloan: ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 9th Congress 2d session, page 226).
11. That they be forfeited but not sold (Sloan and others: ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 9th Congress 2d session, page 270).
12. That they be free (Sloan: ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 9th Congress 2d session, page 168; Bidwell: HOUSE JOURNAL (reprinted 1826), 9th Congress 2d session, V. 515).

64. Bidwell, Cook, and others: ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 9th Congress 2d session, page 201.



BRISTOL, RHODE ISLAND

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single slave.⁶⁵ Moreover, "forfeiture" and sale of the Negroes implied a property right in them which did not exist.⁶⁶ Waiving this technical point, and allowing them to be "forfeited" to the government, then the government should either immediately set them free, or, at the most, indenture them for a term of years; otherwise, the law would be an encouragement to violators. "It certainly will be," said they, "if the importer can find means to evade the penalty of the act; for there he has all the advantage of a market enhanced by our ineffectual attempt to prohibit."⁶⁷ They claimed that even the indenturing of the ignorant barbarian for life was better than slavery; and Sloan declared that the Northern States would receive the freed Negroes willingly rather than have them enslaved.⁶⁸

The argument of those who insisted that the Negroes should be sold was tersely put by Macon: "In adopting our measures on this subject, we must pass such a law as can be executed."⁶⁹ Early expanded this: "It is a principle in legislation, as correct as any which has ever prevailed, that to give effect to laws you must not make them repugnant to the passions and wishes of the people among whom they are to operate. How then, in this instance, stands the fact? Do not gentlemen from every quarter of the Union prove, on the discussion of every question that has ever arisen in the House, having the most remote bearing on the giving freedom to the Africans in the bosom of our country, that it has excited the deepest sensibility in the breasts of those where slavery exists? And why is this so? It is, because those who, from experience, know the extent of the evil, believe that the most formidable aspect in which it can present itself, is by making these people free among them. Yes, sir, though slavery is an evil, regretted by every man in the country, to have among us in any considerable quantity persons of this description, is an evil far greater than slavery itself. Does any gentleman want proof of this? I answer that all proof is useless; no fact can be more notorious. With this belief on the minds of the people where slavery exists, and where the importation will take place, if at all, we are about to turn loose in a state of freedom all persons brought in after the passage of this law. I ask gentlemen to reflect and say whether such a law, opposed to the ideas, the passions, the views, and the affections of the people of the Southern States, can be executed? I tell them, no; it is impossible - why? Because no man will inform - why? Because to inform will be to lead to an evil which will be deemed greater than the offence of which information is given, because it will be opposed to the principle of self-preservation, and to the love of family. No, no man will be disposed to jeopard his life, and the lives of his countrymen. And if no one dare inform, the whole authority of the Government cannot carry the law into effect. The whole people will rise up against it. Why? Because to enforce it would be to turn loose, in the bosom of the country, firebrands that would consume them."⁷⁰

65. Bidwell: ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 9th Congress 2d session, page 172.

66. Fisk: ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 9th Congress 2d session, pages 224-5; Bidwell: ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 9th Congress 2d session, page 221.

67. Quincy: ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 9th Congress 2d session, page 184.

68. ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 9th Congress 2d session, page 478; Bidwell: ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 9th Congress 2d session, page 171.

69. ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 9th Congress 2d session, page 172.

70. ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 9th Congress 2d session, pages 173-4.



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This was the more tragic form of the argument; it also had a mercenary side, which was presented with equal emphasis. It was repeatedly said that the only way to enforce the law was to play off individual interests against each other. The profit from the sale of illegally imported Negroes was declared to be the only sufficient "inducement to give information of their importation."⁷¹ "Give up the idea of forfeiture, and I challenge the gentleman to invent fines, penalties, or punishments of any sort, sufficient to restrain the slave trade."⁷² If such Negroes be freed, "I tell you that slaves will continue to be imported as heretofore.... You cannot get hold of the ships employed in this traffic. Besides, slaves will be brought into Georgia from East Florida. They will be brought into the Mississippi Territory from the bay of Mobile. You cannot inflict any other penalty, or devise any other adequate means of prevention, than a forfeiture of the Africans in whose possession they may be found after importation."⁷³ Then, too, when foreigners smuggled in Negroes, "who then ... could be operated on, but the purchasers? There was the rub - it was their interest alone which, by being operated on, would produce a check. Snap their purse-strings, break open their strong box, deprive them of their slaves, and by destroying the temptation to buy, you put an end to the trade, ... nothing short of a forfeiture of the slave would afford an effectual remedy."⁷⁴ Again, it was argued that it was impossible to prevent imported Negroes from becoming slaves, or, what was just as bad, from being sold as vagabonds or indentured for life.⁷⁵ Even our own laws, it was said, recognize the title of the African slave factor in the transported Negroes; and if the importer have no title, why do we legislate? Why not let the African immigrant alone to get on as he may, just as we do the Irish immigrant?⁷⁶ If he should be returned to Africa, his home could not be found, and he would in all probability be sold into slavery again.⁷⁷ The constitutional argument was not urged as seriously as the foregoing; but it had a considerable place. On the one hand, it was urged that if the Negroes were forfeited, they were forfeited to the United States government, which could dispose of them as it saw fit;⁷⁸ on the other hand, it was said that the United States, as owner, was subject to State laws, and could not free the Negroes contrary to such laws.⁷⁹ Some alleged that the freeing of such Negroes struck at the title to all slave property;⁸⁰ others thought that, as property in slaves was not recognized in the Constitution, it could not be in a statute.⁸¹ The question also arose as to the source of the power of Congress over the slave-trade. Southern men derived it from the clause

71. Alston: ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 9th Congress 2d session, page 170.

72. D.R. Williams: ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 9th Congress 2d session, page 183.

73. Early: ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 9th Congress 2d session, pages 184-5.

74. Lloyd, Early, and others: ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 9th Congress 2d session, page 203.

75. Alston: ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 9th Congress 2d session, page 170.

76. Quincy: ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 9th Congress 2d session, page 222; Macon: ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 9th Congress 2d session, page 225.

77. Macon: ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 9th Congress 2d session, page 177.

78. Barker: ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 9th Congress 2d session, page 171; Bidwell: ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 9th Congress 2d session, page 172.

79. Clay, Alston, and Early: ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 9th Congress 2d session, page 266.

80. Clay, Alston, and Early: ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 9th Congress 2d session, page 266.

81. Bidwell: ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 9th Congress 2d session, page 221.



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on commerce, and declared that it exceeded the power of Congress to declare Negroes imported into a slave State, free, against the laws of that State; that Congress could not determine what should or should not be property in a State.⁸² Northern men replied that, according to this principle, forfeiture and sale in Massachusetts would be illegal; that the power of Congress over the trade was derived from the restraining clause, as a non-existent power could not be restrained; and that the United States could act under her general powers as executor of the Law of Nations.⁸³

The moral argument as to the disposal of illegally imported Negroes was interlarded with all the others. On the one side, it began with the "Rights of Man," and descended to a stickling for the decent appearance of the statute-book; on the other side, it began with the uplifting of the heathen, and descended to a denial of the applicability of moral principles to the question. Said Holland of North Carolina: "It is admitted that the condition of the slaves in the Southern States is much superior to that of those in Africa. Who, then, will say that the trade is immoral?"⁸⁴ But, in fact, "morality has nothing to do with this traffic,"⁸⁵ for, as Joseph Clay declared, "it must appear to every man of common sense, that the question could be considered in a commercial point of view only."⁸⁶ The other side declared that, "by the laws of God and man," these captured Negroes are "entitled to their freedom as clearly and absolutely as we are;"⁸⁷ nevertheless, some were willing to leave them to the tender mercies of the slave States, so long as the statute-book was disgraced by no explicit recognition of slavery.⁸⁸ Such arguments brought some sharp sarcasm on those who seemed anxious "to legislate for the honor and glory of the statute book;"⁸⁹ some desired "to know what honor you will derive from a law that will be broken every day of your lives."⁹⁰ They would rather boldly sell the Negroes and turn the proceeds over to charity. The final settlement of the question was as follows: -

"SECTION 4.... And neither the importer, nor any person or persons claiming from or under him, shall hold any right or title whatsoever to any negro, mulatto, or person of color, nor to the service or labor thereof, who may be imported or brought within the United States, or territories thereof, in violation of this law, but the same shall remain subject to any regulations not contravening the provisions of this act, which the Legislatures of the several States or Territories at any time hereafter may make, for disposing of any such

82. Sloan and others: ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 9th Congress 2d session, page 271; Early and Alston: ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 9th Congress 2d session, pages 168, 171.

83. Ely, Bidwell, and others: ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 9th Congress 2d session, pages 179, 181, 271; Smilie and Findley: ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 9th Congress 2d session, pages 225, 226.

84. ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 9th Congress 2d session, page 240. Cf. Lloyd: ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 9th Congress 2d session, page 236.

85. Holland: ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 9th Congress 2d session, page 241.

86. ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 9th Congress 2d session, page 227; Macon: ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 9th Congress 2d session, page 225.

87. Bidwell, Cook, and others: ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 9th Congress 2d session, page 201.

88. Bidwell: ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 9th Congress 2d session, page 221. Cf. ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 9th Congress 2d session, page 202.

89. Early: ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 9th Congress 2d session, page 239.

90. ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 9th Congress 2d session



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negro, mulatto, or person of color.”⁹¹

1812

➡ According to a document that happens to have survived the ravages of time, Nicholas Peck (1762-1847) of [Bristol, Rhode Island](#) instructed a ship captain to trade for [slaves](#) at the mouth of the Gallinus River, at Cape Mount, and along the Gold Coast of Africa, and then convey the people he had purchased to Trinidad for sale there. (According to a letter from George F. Usher to Nicholas Peck dated January 31, 1821, a “smuggled cargo” had just been put ashore in Martinique, and this cargo being referred to might very well have been illicit new slaves from Africa — even as late as 1821 that sordid business was still going on, we know, and even as late as 1821, some Rhode Islanders still had their hands dirty!)

INTERNATIONAL SLAVE TRADE

1814

➡ The Reverend Timothy Alden mentioned that “the genuine aboriginal name” for “[Mount Hope](#)” had been “Mon Top.”

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NARRAGANSETT BAY

➡ February 3, Thursday: As the Emperor [Napoléon I](#) arrived in Troyes southeast of Paris, the citizens barricaded their houses and were refusing to aid his soldiers. Meanwhile, ministers of the four allies were meeting in Châtillon-sur-Seine.

Friend [Stephen Wanton Gould](#) wrote in his journal:

5th day Mornng after breakfast we rode to [Providence](#) stoped a few moments at O Browns - then went down town & did a message or two before Meeting. - At Meeting our fr James Greene opened the Service in a sound & I believe seasonable & savory testimony then Hinchman Haines in a living testimony & supplication - In the Meeting for buisness Sarah Greene - daughter of Paul was appointed to the Station of an Elder - I went with Br D Rodman to Henry Russells & dined where I saw Saml Brown & his sister Eliza who inform'd me of the decease of their Mother Lydia Brown on the 26 of 10 M last. - after dinner we gave a call at Josiah Lawtons & took a dish of tea - Spent the remainder of the eveng at Caleb Wheatens & returned to Henry Russells & lodged. -

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

➡ February 4, Friday: Friend [Stephen Wanton Gould](#) wrote in his journal:

6th day Mornng - After breakfasting at Henrys set out for home

91. ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 9th Congress 2d session, page 1267.



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we started from Jos Anthonys came over John Browns Bridge - stoped at Coles in [Warren](#) & bated our horse then over [Bristol](#) ferry to Holder Chases & dined & reached Home early in the eveng - With a thankful Heart that I had been once more favord to be at a Quarterly Meeting & to find my dear wife & little son in pretty good Health

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

 February 5, Saturday: Preliminary peace talks between the French and the Allies began at Châtillon-sur-Seine — the Allies offered the French their 1792 boundaries and the French of course found that utterly unacceptable.

Der Götterbund, an allegorical drama by Meyer Beer (Giacomo Meyerbeer) to words of Kley, was performed for the initial time, for the birthday of the composer's mother.

Friend [Stephen Wanton Gould](#) wrote in his journal:

7th day 5th of 2M 1814 / The savor of my visit still remains & I feel thankful that I have been -

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

 February 6, Sunday: Friend [Stephen Wanton Gould](#) wrote in his journal:

1st day 6 of 2 M / In our forenoon Meeting A friend bore testimony to the Truth In the Afternoon we were silent & I thought pretty good Meetings In the eveng called at D Williamses. -

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

1815

 January 12, Thursday: Friend [Stephen Wanton Gould](#) wrote in his journal:

5th day 12 of 1st M / Our Meeting was silent. And to me a season of but little proffit, being much unsettled. - We took tea at Father Rodmans. -

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

 January 14, Saturday: Friend [Stephen Wanton Gould](#) wrote in his journal:

7th day 14th of 1 M / Heard this Afternoon of the recent very sudden departure out of time of our Beloved friend & Brother Matthew Franklin of NYork. It appears he was at Pearl Street Meeting & was delivering a sermon in which he appeared to be engaged with unusual life & while in the Middle of a sentence



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Sat down & was soon helped out of Meeting to his home & died in a fit of Apoplexy in a short time - with this goodly young man I was well acquainted - He has twice visited New England & the last time was in 1812 - His ministry was lively pertinent & Sound His death was a solemn Warning to those who are in health to be prepared for we know not in which hour we may be Summoned to Eternity. -

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS



January 15, Sunday: Friend [Stephen Wanton Gould](#) wrote in his journal:

1st day 15 of 1st M / Ruth Weaver reviewed the text "Boast not thyself of tomorrow for we know not what a day may Bring forth - & father Rodman followed her on the same subject - D Buffum was lively & Powerful in testimony - In the Afternoon Silent. - In the eveng Br J Rodman & I called a little while at Neighbor Towles. - then came back & Set the remainder together & Br Isaac Joined us very agreeably -

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS



January 16, Monday: Friend [Stephen Wanton Gould](#) wrote in his journal:

*2nd day 16th of 1st M 1815 / I have today met with the Following Obituary notice in the NYork Commercial Advertiser of the 10th inst "Smitten friends
"Are Angels sent on errands full of love
"For us they languish
"And for us they die young
Death has impressed another awful lesson upon those who glory in the transitory enjoyments of life. - He has deprived this city of a valuable & worthy citizen & has bereaved the Society of Friends of a Member, who tho' in the prime of life has long stood forth, an Able advocate in the cause of universal righteousness, & whose life adorned the doctrines he professed. Matthew Franklin, a distinguished minister in that Society expired last evening about half past seven. The circumstances of his death are Solemn and impressive. In usual health he attended the meeting in Pearl Street to which he belonged on the preceding morning, and, after an interval of Silence, he rose & repeated the following emphatic declaration of the apostle James; "Pure religion & undefiled before God the Father, is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction." On this point of the text he enlarged very instructively illustrating the nature of the duties, to which the apostle alluded, and exhorted the audience to the exercise of christian benevolence with much of that feeling & pathos, for which his discourses have latterly been remarkable. -
But Oh! it was enough! While this pleading with a countenance suffused with earnestness & affection the cause of the indigent & friendless, a Mandate from the councils of eternal wisdom arrested him in the commencement of a sentence, and instantly closed his mental powers in utter oblivion to the woes &*



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sufferings of his fellow creatures. He suddenly applied his hand to his head, slowly took his seat, rose up, & feebly with the assistance of others walked out; was conveyed home & without uttering a Sentence fell into a State of Apoplectic insensibility in which he languished until released without a struggle, from the last tie of his mortal nature.

Numerous are the eyes that will overflow at this event, for he was tenderly beloved by every class of his friends. The poor will lament their loss for many were they upon whom his private charities, like the refreshing dews of the night upon the parched soil, shed relief & gladness. As an active Governor of the NYork Hospital; as a Trustee of the Free School; as a Member of other important associations; as a correct & upright Merchant, his loss will be long & deeply regretted. Oh his social qualities & his eminent worth as a Minister of the Gospel, it becomes us here to be silent: we cannot do justice to a theme so affecting. "He mourns the dead who lives as they desire."

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS



January 19, Thursday: Friend [Stephen Wanton Gould](#) wrote in his journal:

5th day 19th of 1st M 1815 / Our Meeting was pretty well attended by Members. James Hallack was with us, & I think it may be said the Love of God was very conspicuous in his ministry. -In the last (Preparative) he was also concerned very sweetly for the various branches of society & particularly for the Youth. -At the close of the preparative Meeting he requested a Meeting to be appointed at the sixth hour tomorrow evening which was agreed upon. - In the Afternoon I recd a letter from Aunt Patty giving a Short acct of the funeral of M Franklin - & at the same time one from Obadiah Brown giving inclosing two for James Hallack I immediately carried them to E Hoxies[?] where I found him. -they contained information of the extreme illness of his son, which brought his mind into a streight about the Meeting he had appointed, thinking he had better return homeward tomorrow Morning. -

Was called upon to examine the bruises of Matilda Speare which she said she had recd from Daniel Chase Jr & his wife to whom she was by indenture bound by the Overseers of this Town. (The child is about 6 years old. On inspection of the Back there appear'd to be marks which indicated severe bruises of a blackish, greenish & yellowish hue like old bruises that had begun to disappear the most remarkable was on the left Shoulder & there were similar marks on the right shoulder which the child inform'd me was occasioned by the stripes of an horse whip given by Mrs Chase. One of her ears bore the marks of bruises & scratches, the scabs remaining, which she said was done by Mrs. Chase who took her up by the ear. - On the lower extremities of her body there appeared large weals & from the breadth of them I should suppose they had been swollen to the size of a common finger. On inspecting her head there appeared to be bald spots where the hair was evidently pulled out by the roots which she said was done by Mrs. Chase at various times & stated twice in particular when she by sudden force tore her our of bed by the



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*hair & one when her own child wet the flour [floor], she took her by the hair & rubed her face in the Water. –
I went to see those marks of unnatural abuse at the request of one of the town Council in company with one of the overseers of the poor, & certainly it was wicked in the extreme & if the facts are proven upon Chase & his wife I think hevvy damages will be recovered by prosecupion & their rights of Membership in Society be forfeited. –*

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

 January 20, Friday: Friend [Stephen Wanton Gould](#) wrote in his journal:

*6th day 20th of 1 M 1815 / James Hallack feels most easy to attend the meeting & I have been much occupied tho' [thro'] the Day in preparing the Meeting house for it --
At 6 OC. R M the meeting met - the house was well lighted with Candles. - It proved to be the most solid & satisfactory Meeting that has been held by appointment in this town for many years. - James was engaged about two hours in very weighty & Powerful communication & tho' the Small part of the house was full & so much crowded that many stood in the Passage, when he concluded speaking all remained perfectly still & quiet, none moved from their seats & I thought I never witnessed a more solid covering over a gathering - & when the meeting concluded the people seemed unwilling to separate*

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

1817

 June 29, Sunday: New President James Monroe, on a northern tour during the summer, was the lion of the day at [Newport, Rhode Island](#).

Friend [Stephen Wanton Gould](#) wrote in his journal:

*1st day 29th of 6th M / The President went to the Episcopal Church in the forenoon & to Pattens meeting in the Afternoon. –
Our forenoon meeting was Silent but I thought solid & comfortable. –
Sister Eliza took tea & set the evening.*

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

 June 30, Monday: New President James Monroe, on a northern tour during the summer, went from [Newport](#) to Fall River. From there he would go to [Bristol, Rhode Island](#), and board the steamboat *Fire Fly* (the 1st steamboat to run a regular commercial service on [Narragansett Bay](#)) for the trip to [Providence](#), arriving there late in the evening.

1817. President Monroe visited the town, June 30. His arrival had been anticipated, and the citizens had appointed a Committee



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to receive and welcome him, which Committee consisted of the Town Council and ten other gentlemen. He was received amidst the ringing of bells, the discharge of cannon, and other demonstrations of joy, and was escorted from his place of landing from the steam-boat, by a civic and military procession, to the Golden Ball Inn (now Mansion House) where the Committee made him a very respectful address, to which he made a suitable response. On the following day he passed through the principal streets, on horseback, and at 11 o'clock left the town, under escort of the Light Dragoons.

READ EDWARD FIELD TEXT

Friend [Stephen Wanton Gould](#) wrote in his journal:

2nd day 30 of 6M / This morning Went with Rowland Hazard to visit the President - We were introduced by OH Perry - He received us very civilly. - my inducement for going was to shew a Simple testimony of respect & from a thought that it might be of use in some future day to be known to the president. we know not in what situation Our society may be placed, & a little knowledge of some of us may have some useful tendency in some way that we cannot now foresee. - While at the House I was also introduced to the Governor of the State (N R Knight) & to General Swift On turning to come away I forcibly felt the expression to arise "Better O Lord is an hour in thy Presence than a thousand elsewhere." -

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1818

William E. Richmond's "[Mount Hope](#), a Poem." In this poem, the three names "Mount Hope," "Monte Haup," and "Mon Top" are used interchangeably.

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February 6, Friday: Milton K. Barlow was born in Kentucky. In 1844 he would sell a planetarium mechanism created in his silversmith shop to the Girard College observatory, presumably for \$2,000. In 1851 he would exhibit such a mechanism at the New York World's Fair.

Friend [Stephen Wanton Gould](#) wrote in his journal:

6th day / left the company I went with to return tomorrow & set out for home with David Buffum Jr. found the sleighing poor, but we got to [Bristol](#) with tolerable convenience & from thence I took the Stage to Town. - found my H & John well & I have thankfully to acknowledge it has been a season of favor to me for which I desire to be thankful -

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→ July 9, Thursday: In [Newport, Rhode Island](#), Friend [Stephen Wanton Gould](#) wrote in his journal:

*5 day 9th of 7th M 1818 / I rose by 4 OC this morning took a pleasant Walk to the North Battery & took a Sea bathing, last evening a Brig belonging to Bristol came in & this morning I saw her with all her Canvass Spread to a small but fair breeze & favoring tide making her way home. The sight was animating to my feelings. I love commerce & hope she will again rise in this pleasant town. —
Our Meeting was rather small, & I believe not a season of much life. it was silent. —*



(We can trust that Friend Stephen knew a hawk from a handsaw and that therefore this “Brig belonging to Bristol” that Friend Stephen was having warm feelings toward **could not have been** one of the [DeWolf](#) family’s [Bristol](#)-based negreros bound for the proslavery Bristol US Customs Office because in that shed it was still being ignored and evaded that engaging in the [international slave trade](#) had been transformed years before, by the US Congress, into a capitol felony.)

NEGREROS



SLAVERY

1819

→ October 6, Wednesday: Returning to his find of February 6th, merchant captain William Smith landed on Desolation Island in the South Shetlands and planted a British flag, claiming the islands for Britain. This would mark the beginning of a massive program of seal hunting in the South Shetlands.

Friend [Stephen Wanton Gould](#) wrote in his journal:

4th day 10th M 6th 1819 / This evening with my H took a Walk out to D Buffums & set with him & his wife very agreeably. —

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1820

➡ For some two decades the US customs collector at [Bristol, Rhode Island](#) had been a brother-in-law of [James DeWolf](#) who had a major investment in the illicit [international slave trade](#), an official who could be counted on not to interfere with the importation of generations of fresh slaves from Africa into the United States of America. In this year, however, that convenient arrangement came to an end. –No more [slaves](#) were to be disembarked in broad daylight at this New England port!

➡ February 1, Tuesday: Under a plan of the economist David Ricardo the Bank of England began issuing gold ingots, for use by merchants making foreign payments (this would prove successful).

Adrien Boieldieu was named Professor of Composition at the Paris Conservatory.

Gaspare Spontini took up his position as Generalmusikdirektor in Berlin.

Friend [Stephen Wanton Gould](#) wrote in his journal:

3rd day 1st of 2 M 1820 / Tho' it is very cold this morning the thermometer only at six above 0, I set out [from [Newport](#)] in a sleigh with Isaac Mitchell & sister E Rodman for [Providence](#). On our arrival at [Bristol](#) ferry found several friends in weighting but the Wind so very high that there was no prospect of going over, so we set out to go round over the Stone Bridge, & got to Abraham Barkers to dinner, from thence crossed at Slaids ferry & reached the hospitable Mansion of our venerable friend [Moses Brown](#) about 1/2 after 6 OC in eveng who very kindly received us out of the Wind & cold & administered both to the necessities of ourselves & horse, all much fatigued. – here we lodged & found several friends whose company was very agreeable. – After breakfast the next morning we rode to the Yearly Meeting school House,⁹² spent a little time & from thence to [Providence](#) & attended the Select Meeting which was small in consequence of the travelling - I was the only member present from our Meeting. I dined at Obadiah Browns & spent the Afternoon & evening at Joseph Anthonys where I also lodged - in the evening we were joined by several [Rhode Island](#) friends who crossed at [Bristol](#). –

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

➡ February 3, Thursday: [John Keats](#)'s hemorrhaging began. Trained in medicine, he recognized the blood as arterial and understood that this indicated that his disease was terminal.⁹³

Friend [Stephen Wanton Gould](#) wrote in his journal:

5th day attended the Quarterly Meeting at large, in the first meeting we were burdened with several appearances from Micah Ruggles who I desire & pray may experience deeper Wisdom than he has yet known Thos Anthony was engaged in a lively testimony

92. This new school was on what was then rural land, Friend Moses Brown's farm on Providence Neck northeast of what was then the city of Providence.

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-there were several other appearances of which I can say but little.- -
 In the last meeting there was but little buisness & the heft of the first meeting remained I dined at Moses Browns, spent the remainder of the Afternoon & evening, in a very agreeable & edifying conversation with Moses & several friends there -lodged & next morning rode again to Providence & set out for home over India Bridge - we dined at James Maxwells in Warren & proceeded to Bristol Ferry but found Ice obstructed so that it was not prudent to cross & we returned to Warren & lodged at James Maxwells who very kindly entertained us. - 7th day, This Morning set out from Warren to Sleids ferry where we crossed in season to get to Abraham Barkers to dinner & got home before night. This little journey tho' attended with considerable bodily & mental suffering I trust has been a proffitable one to me - I was impressed with a belief that it was best for me to go being in health & not knowing how soon it may be otherwise with me. - time is both short & Uncertain many of my towns men & women have been removed the last year, some of whom promised a long & useful life.-1st day [Sunday] 6th of 2nd M 1820 / Our Meetings were both silent & to me seasons of labor. -

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

Elisha Kent Kane was born in Philadelphia.

Elisha Kent Kane passed a relatively unremarkable childhood. A first-born child, his family moved several times as it grew, within the precincts of Philadelphia, finally moving to an estate named Rensselaer. According to his contemporaneous biographer, William Elder, Kane was an average student, who was accepted at the University of Virginia. In his second year of college he contracted rheumatic fever. This event, more than any other was to configure the rest of his life. The first outcome

93. He would succumb at the age of 25, four months after his engagement to Fanny Brawne as depicted in the Jane Campion movie "Bright Star" — Fanny's loveletters would be placed in the coffin.



Fanny would not languish forever in grief, but would marry with Louis Lindon, Esq. and bear him three children and lead a long life.



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of his illness was his attraction to the world of medicine. Upon his graduation from the University of Virginia, Kane began the study of medicine in Philadelphia. By twenty-two, he had published a study of early pregnancy detection in the American Journal of Medical Sciences. More profound than this was the effect of the resulting terminal endocarditis on his world view. In the present time, of course, the existence of antibiotics would make short work of a chronic infection of the cardiac lining. In the early 19th century, however, it was a death sentence. Perhaps a couple of years would pass, perhaps a few decades, but the sentence was final. Kane set out with a vengeance to live a life that would be remembered. Joining the US Navy, he set out to discover the world. Finding himself in the South Pacific, he descended into the crater of an active volcano to retrieve water samples, much to the dismay of his companions, who fled the scene in mortal fear. Travelling to China, he practiced medicine on a hospital ship for several months before setting off to the west through India and Egypt, Athens and Paris. Two more tours of stultifying naval duty sent him to the White House to beg for a more exciting tour of duty. President Polk assigned him to an extremely dangerous mission: carry a message to the commander of American forces in Mexico during the Mexican-American War. After saving a Mexican general from being murdered by the mercenaries hired to escort him to Mexico City, Kane emerged as an important figure at the international level. Once again bored by navy duty, he wrote the Secretary of War, proposing a mission to the Arctic to rescue a missing British explorer, Sir John Franklin. Two weeks later began the most incredible chapters in this man's life, as he set off to Baffin Bay, between Canada and Greenland. Three out of the next five years were spent locked in pack ice, under unendurable conditions. After the incredible feat of leading eighteen of his twenty men to safety on foot, Kane wrote the largest selling book in American history about his adventures. Although largely forgotten today, Elisha Kent Kane was a hugely popular figure in the latter half of the nineteenth century. It has been said that, if homesteaders heading west across the United States' frontier carried two books, one was certainly by Dr. Kane; the other was probably a Bible. His rescue missions to the Arctic were widely regarded as suicidal. Inasmuch as his missions were validated by the scientific goal of the discovery of the Open Polar Sea (a popular theory among scientists of the era,) his was a scientific as well as a cultural mandate. His published accounts held a nation spellbound. The efforts connected with the writing of the account of his second mission (abetted by the "dragon within" of his chronic endocaditis) eventually killed him. Upon his death in Havana at the age of thirty-seven, the Governor of Cuba personally escorted the cortege as far as New Orleans. From New Orleans to Cincinnati, the banks of Mississippi were lined with mourners, and the train trip from Cincinnati to Philadelphia took nearly four days because of the throngs on the tracks. His funeral was the largest in American history, eclipsed only by Lincoln's a decade later. Culturally, Kane was the embodiment of Patricia Limerick's "sustainable American hero," representing the ascent of American Science and Technology to the stature of the European



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Renaissance and Enlightenment movements of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.



July 21, Friday: Hans Christian Ørsted published his findings of April 21st in the Annales de Chimie et de Physique, Paris.

Friend [Stephen Wanton Gould](#) wrote in his journal:

6th day 21st of 7th M / Rode to [Portsmouth](#) this mornng on buisness of society. took Uncle Stanton's horse & Waggon & carried with me Elizabeth & Mary - Dined & took tea At Uncle Peter Lawtons, & went to several other places - the Chief buisness that I went on was to see Susanna Brownell who was absent at [Bristol](#).

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

1821

In Providence, Rhode Island, the Society for Abolishing the Slave Trade, which had been inactive since 1793, resumed sponsoring its lawsuits under President David Howell.

After the extensive slavetrading career of James DeWolf of Bristol had finally been brought to a halt by the antislavery reformers, he had founded the Arkwright Mill in Coventry and had been the owner of the most successful privateer vessel of the War of 1812, the Yankee. At this point he was elected to the US Senate to represent Rhode Island.



The DeWolf Crest



The DeWolf Carriage

August 12, Sunday: Friend Stephen Wanton Gould wrote in his journal:



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1st day 12th of 8 M 1821 / Our meetings were both solid - D Buffum in the forenoon & father Rodman in the Afternoon deliver'd short testimonys -
After meeting in the Afternoon by request of Geo [?] Hazard set out with his son Alfred to go to Plainfield in Connecticut to place him at Rowland Greenes school The first night we lodged at Uncle Stantons. 2nd day [Monday] morning rose early & reached Benj Pearces at the Toll gate in Portsmouth & took breakfast then crossed Bristol ferry & rode to Warren where we fed our horse, then went on to Providence & reached Moses Brown's & lodged - 3rd day Morning proceeded on our journey stoped at several places to rest, & reached Sterling to dinner then went on & reached Rowlands House by the middle of the Afternoon - found it a pleasant situation, & the people also very pleasant within doors

Lodged there & on 4th day Morning, left my charge - & proceeded homewards, suffering much with the heat - dined at Fishes tavern in Scituate - then came -[obscured] & got into town in season to take a dish of tea at Obadiah Browns, walked round Providence to transact a little buisness & then rode out to Moses Browns & lodged, spending the evening in his very interesting company - 5th day Morning went up to the Yearly Meeting School & spent a little time very satisfactorily with the Superintendent & teachers, then came on to Warren and Dined & in the Afternoon reached home

This little journey has been in a good degree proffitable to me - my views have been extended, I have seen a greater extent of inland country than I ever did before, - it was the first time, & may be the only time I ever shall be in the State of Connecticut. - The Sceneray of the country has afforded an abundant theme for reflection & much beyond my theme of contemplation. - but according to my measure, I endeavour'd to proffit by it - In & about Providence I met with some of my friends that I love, & whose company is proffitable, so that altho' there has been no pecuniary benefit, yet is has been no loss. -

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

1822



February 4, Monday: Friend Stephen Wanton Gould wrote in his journal:

2nd day 4th of 2 m / This morning took passage in the Stage & rode to Providence - Dined at Hortons tavern in Bristol & reached Moses Browns about 4 OC PM, it was a Snow Storm most of the Day Spent the evening with MB in very interesting conversation & lodged there. -

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS



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 February 5, Tuesday: The brutal and rebellious Albanian ruler Ali Pasha of Janina (Ioannina, Greece) was murdered by agents of Ottoman Sultan Mahmud II. His head was sent to the Sultan in Constantinople

Friend [Stephen Wanton Gould](#) wrote in his journal:

3rd day Rode with [Moses Brown](#) to the Yearly Meeting School House & spent the Day there it being the day of the Meeting of the subcommittee - We visited the schools & found the Girls particularly in good order & in a state of improvement. - the boys tho' doing pretty well would admit of improvement. Dined at the Boys table & returned to M Browns to tea & Lodge. - in the evening arrived most of our R Island friends & found a welcome assylum under the roof of our Ancient friend abovementioned. -

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

1824

 The *General Padilla*, a schooner, appeared at [Bristol, Rhode Island](#), under the command of Captain Peter Bradford, a nephew of Mrs. James De Wolf. The local authorities learned, from incautious remarks by its Boston cabin boy and its black boatswain's mate, that it had been engaged in [piracy](#). Their schooner was able to escape from the harbor before being captured, but later the bodies of the boy and the negro washed ashore there, and it became clear that the boy and the negro had been executed by the crew by gunfire for having given them away by these incautious remarks.

 March 4, Thursday: The "[National Institution for the Preservation of Life from Shipwreck](#) was founded in the United Kingdom, to be renamed in 1858 The Royal National Lifeboat Institution.

In [Newport, Rhode Island](#), Friend [Stephen Wanton Gould](#) wrote in his journal:

5th day 4th of 3 M / At meeting, which was attended by many besides our own members, Isaac Stevenson was engaged in very acceptable testimony - at the close of it a meeting was appointed at 6 OC in the evening, the Middle & Winter apartments of the House were filled & the Gospel was preached in the demonstrations & power of it, greatly to the satisfaction & I have no doubt to the edification of Many of the Auditory, who were very still & reverently attendtive - Isaac Dined with us, with his Companion Saml Wood, They took tea at Father Rodmans, & lodge tonight at J Dennis's who waits on them to [Bristol](#) & [Warren](#) tomorrow where they intend to Appoint Meetings.-

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1825



In this year the brig *Venus*, owned by the firm of Brown & Ives of [Providence, Rhode Island](#), was making regular runs along Long Island Sound. We know of a Captain John T. Childs of [Warren](#), Rhode Island who was engaged in such business. Therefore it is a reasonable hypothesis, that this would be the “sloop” skippered by “Captain Childs” written about in late life by [William J. Brown](#) as on a voyage conveying cargo and passengers up Long Island Sound from New-York to [Providence](#), Rhode Island, aboard which he had enlisted at the age of approximately eleven, which had gotten caught in a storm and apparently came close to sinking:

I went coasting on board of the sloop *Venus*, commanded by Captain Childs, in whose family I had lived some years previous. He offered me ten dollars a month to go before the mast. I accepted the position and went to work. We numbered six in all: the captain, mate, cook, steward, and two foremastmen. His sloop was the largest in the line but the dullest sailer, unless she was under a stiff breeze. We came out of New York one day heavily laden with cotton, and one hundred carboys of vitriol on deck, bound for Providence, intending to stop at [Bristol](#) to land freight; there were thirty-three passengers on board. We started with a light wind which increased during the night, and became so powerful by ten in the morning, that it carried away our topsail, which we afterwards secured. The sea ran so high, and we shipped such heavy seas, that we lost the blocking from two casks, catching uncle Tom, the cook, between them. I did not see the danger he was in until the captain coming out called all hands to rescue him from the danger he was in; we did so, John and myself blocking and securing the casks. I was securing the main boom when the ship came about; she shipped another sea and down went the forecaskle and half a dozen casks of water. We were sent down to bail out the water; uncle Jack dipped it up, and I passed it over to John, and he threw it overboard. We had not been long at work when she shipped a second sea, and sent down more water; it seemed to be about a foot deep. Uncle Jack said “Hold on Bill, it is no use bailing, we must go up and shorten sail”; saying this he left me at the foot of the steps, went on deck, and said to the captain, “Hadn’t we better shorten sail?” He said, “No, we will drive her through;” to which uncle Jack replied, “Well drive her through if we go to the bottom.” I kept at my post at the foot of the steps, waiting for uncle Jack’s return, when she shipped another sea, filling the scuttle. I felt for the steps, for I thought she was sinking; soon I heard the captain’s voice. I jumped around trying to get up the steps, when the hatch came down over me. It was dark, and the water was nearly up to my arms. I was getting out of the water, but reaching the hatchway, could go no farther. I put the top of my head against the hatch, but could not move it; all was still on deck; not a step or a voice was heard. I was determined to come out, and stooping down, raised myself with all the power possible against the hatch; Captain Childs was sitting on the top of it to keep it down; a sea struck him in the back at the same time I was butting the hatch and knocked him completely off; he would have gone overboard, carried by the force of the wind, had he not fetched up the shrouds. When I came on deck a



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sad spectacle presented itself; her gunwales were even with the water, the men were trying to move around on deck and the water was up to their middle. Uncle Jack let go the jib and flying jib halyards, settled the peak, throttled the mainsails, lowered the sternsails, and she came up. It seemed by appearances that in one minute more she would have sunk, never to rise again. I took a hand-spike and knocked a board off the railing, letting the water off, and relieving the deck. I went aft to the pump, rigged it and went to pumping. The clattering of the pumps aroused the captain, and he said, "that's right, Bill, pump away." I kept watching the mate, thinking that if he got the boat which was hanging on the davits, I would grasp an oar and follow him. I asked a man who came on to work his passage to spell me at the pumps; he said he couldn't pump. There was a minister in board standing by, who said to him, "What kind of a man are you; here this boy is doing all he can to save the ship, which seems to be in danger of going to the bottom, and you refuse to help him." When the minister said that, I was frightened, for I was not fit to die, and if the vessel sunk, I saw no possible way of escaping hell. I began to pray within myself, for I never intended to go to hell, but I knew I must go there unless I repented; still I had confidence to believe that I must read the bible, and go according to its directing to be saved. I never thought of being taken by surprise before. I now felt that something must be done, and I promised if the Lord would spare my life, I would seek him in earnest and not suffer myself to be caught in such a state again. We soon got through the race and came to anchor; as I came out of the forecandle a sea struck me, and knocked my hat off; my shoes were in the chain box, and my jacket lay in the berth. Uncle Jack asked me to take something to drink, as I was wet and cold; I told him I would; he handed it to me and I took a tumbler full of rum, and drank it, not knowing its power. I took two biscuits and got into my berth, and knew no more until ten o'clock the next morning. The sloop got under way, and they called for me, but I was nowhere to be found; they found my hat and shoes and came to the conclusion that I was washed overboard; no one could recollect when I was last seen; they knew I was pumping, and that was the last they knew about me. The sloop arrived in [Newport](#) at twelve o'clock that night. He entered his vessel in the morning and reported the rough time he had on the sound and the loss of one man; after breakfast they began discharging their freight, Uncle Jack had to work in the hold as they were one man short. I was awoke by hearing the words "back down your tackle, hoist away." I could not imagine where I was. I lay some time thinking that we must be in Newport, for we had to stop there to leave freight. I got up, ate my breakfast, and went on deck; they had hoisted a barrel of flour up, and were just landing it, when I put my hand on John's shoulder; turning around he saw me, and jumped from me with a shriek; the man below asked, "What's the matter?" John said, "Here is Bill." They came out of the hold, to see if it was me. The captain hearing the sound came quickly into the sloop. They were all anxious to know where I had been. I told them I had struck my head against the hatchway, trying to get out of the scuttle, then got into my berth and knew no more until morning. They were all very glad that I was safe; saying, they thought



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they had looked everywhere, but never once thought about my berth. When we arrived in Providence, and discharged our cargo, we found our sheet iron damaged. We had five hundred bundles in the bottom of the sloop. I felt as if I had been a sailor long enough, and now desired to turn my attention to business of a different kind; so I left the vessel and entered school again.

 February 1, Tuesday: In [Newport, Rhode Island](#), Friend [Stephen Wanton Gould](#) wrote in his journal:

3rd day 1st of 2nd M 1825 / This morning walked from Uncle Stantons to [Bristol](#) ferry where I took the Stage & Rode to [Providence](#) - lodged at [Moses Browns](#) who I found well & glad to see me. - 4th day rode with our venerable frd to Select Meeting, after which I dined at Dorcas Browns - In the Afternoon attended the Meeting for Sufferings which set till 9 OC in the evening, then rode with M Brown to his house & lodged -- 5th day Attended the Meeting at large & Dined at Wm Jenkins's, then returned to the Meeting house to Meet with the Trustees of OB Benevolent fund which sat till 8 OC when I returned with Moses to his house & again lodged - 6th day at 10 OC went to the School House & attended school committee which took us all day & late in the eveing when I went into [Providence](#) & lodged at Wm Jenkins's -

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

 February 5, Saturday: Hannah Lord Montague of Troy patented the 1st detachable shirt collar.

In [Newport, Rhode Island](#), Friend [Stephen Wanton Gould](#) wrote in his journal:

7th day took Stage with D Buffum & rode to [Bristol](#) ferry -after we crossed we found his Carriage there in which I rode home.- This Quarterly Meeting has been as season of precious favour to me for which I desire to be very thankful. - The various sittings, both of Meetings & committees were all in harmony & the hearts of many renewedly Knit together - the labours of our two Ancient Standards D Buffum & [Moses Brown](#) was uncommonly interesting - it is no common occurrence to find two so aged men, one in the 87th & the other in his 82 Year, active green & pertinent in their labours. -

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1830

 August 5, Thursday: Charles Wesley Jr. reported that his brother Samuel was “deranged and strapped down” but was better after being bled by doctors. He said the cause was “drink.”

Friend [Stephen Wanton Gould](#) wrote in his journal:



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5th day After making a number of calls & doing a little buisness we again Rode to [Portsmouth](#) & Attended the Quarterly Meeting at large held there -

In the first meeting Wm Almy was very extensively engaged in a sound pertinent testimony - was followed in a short good testimony from Anna Macomber from Westport & the Meeting concluded after a prayer by Betsy Purinton.

We then rode to [Bristol](#) ferry & took some dinner at Jeremiah Giffords & from hence crossed the ferry & rode to our now home at the Institution before Dark.

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS



August 6, Friday: Friend [Stephen Wanton Gould](#) wrote in his journal:

6th day 6th of 8th M 1830 / To day has been our General Committee Meeting, which has been largely attended & several new members who was never at a similar Meeting. - The Subject of an extended education at this Institution was before us & it was unanimously agreed that Measures be taken to procure a teacher who was capable of teaching the higher branches of learning such as Latin Greek &c &c - but in the Settlement of the premises on which it should be done occasioned some exercise & both Meetings of the committee were occupied in the consideration of the subject - It resulted in the appointment of a committee to dispose of the subject by agreeing with an instructor as way should open for. -

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS



August 7, Saturday: In an all-day session, the French Chamber of Deputies rejected republican demands for a constitutional convention and a national referendum. They revised the constitution and named Louis-Philippe as the new King of France.

Friend [Stephen Wanton Gould](#) wrote in his journal:

7th day 7th of 8 M 1830 / Attended the Meeting for Sufferings - It was a time of exercise tho' there was no very important buisness before it. - things however ended pretty well. -

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August 8, Sunday: Friend [Stephen Wanton Gould](#) wrote in his journal:

1st day 8 of 8 M / We rode to [Smithfield](#) & Attended Meeting there. - It is a very pleasant Meeting place & the company who meet there considerably interesting. - The number at Meeting today was rather smaller than at some time but it was a comfortable season. -

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 August 9, Monday: Friedrich Wieck answered a letter of Johanna Schumann by telling her that her son Robert could in three years be made into “one of the foremost living pianists,” although he seriously doubted his steadfastness.

Louis-Philippe de France, duc d’Orleans accepted the crown of France and reigned as Louis-Philippe I.

 August 11, Wednesday: Friend [Stephen Wanton Gould](#) wrote in his journal:

4th day 11th of 8 M 1830 / Our Meeting was not a season of much life to me. I am thankful however in being able to insert in my Diary that however short I come in devotion to the Cause of Truth I have occasional renewals of life springing up in my heart.

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1837

James DeWolf, unrepentant Rhode Island slavetrader and US senator, died on his thousand-acre estate paid for with blood money, near Bristol.



(The thousand acres are still there, he having been seemingly unable to take any of this with him. His grave in the DeWolf family cemetery off Woodlawn Avenue is now, as you can see above, receiving the sort of tending appropriate to our memory of such a man.)



The general financial crisis and panic of this year in the United States of America hit the Yearly Meeting School in Providence, Rhode Island hard, its enrollment plunging from 134 to 79 as parents found themselves unable to continue to fund the education of their children. The loss of non-Quaker scholars hit the school especially hard, since it lost their tuition surcharges. For the following five years, enrollment would hover at around 80, with 10 of those having only one parent who was a Friend, or having some non-parental connection



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with the Society (perhaps by their having themselves become a “convinced” Friend). Only two of the 80 students had no connection whatever with the religion.

Friends Enoch Breed and Lydia Breed came back for another year as superintendents of the school.

Superintendents.

1819-1824.	Purinton, Matthew and Betsy.
1824-1835.	Breed, Enoch and Lydia.
1829-1835.	Gould, Stephen and Hannah, Asst. Supts.
1835-1836.	Davis, Seth and Mary.
1837.	Breed, Enoch and Lydia.
1838-1839.	Rathbun, Rowland and Alice.
1840-1844.	Wing, Allen and Olive.
1845-1846.	Thompson, Olney and Lydia.
1847.	Congdon, Jarvia and Lydia.
1847-1852.	Cornell, Silas and Sarah M.

1855

The [Providence, Warren, and Bristol](#) railroad link began to provide mass transportation for the East Bay region of [Rhode Island](#). If the locomotive used for this service was a new one, it may have looked like this, for this was “A good Standard Type” built by Danforth Cooke & Company in 1855:

[William J. Brown](#) would report a beginning of a decline, in the [Baptist](#) church for people of color on College Hill in [Providence, Rhode Island](#), due to their having lost their minister:

PAGES 121-124: Our church had been in a very low state. It commenced to decrease in 1855, directly after our pastor, Rev.



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Chauncey Leonard, left us. He had been with us some two years, when he united with us. He had come directly from a theological institution. His education was good, and his oratory surpassed any pastor that ever graced our pulpit since the organization of our church. He was receiving from us four hundred dollars a year, which was all we were able to give, and a portion of that came from the Rhode Island State Convention. But our pastor was greatly in debt for his education, and if he did not go as a missionary to Liberia, he must repay them. As soon as they learned that he had settled over our church, they demanded their pay, and this brought him into such straitened circumstances that he could not remain here and support his family; and having an offer from the people in Baltimore, Md., to take charge of a select school, and supply a church, with a salary of six hundred dollars, he tendered his resignation to our church and accepted the call to Baltimore. That left us without any pastor, and the church fell into a despondent state.... Brother Waterman remarked that we had better disband, as we were all paupers, our pastor had gone and we could not do anything. But the majority proposed to continue together and trust in the Lord.

(During this period of his church's vulnerability, Brown would be serving proudly as a lay minister or exhorter.)



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1887

October 21, Friday: A [German](#) protectorate was established over Nauru.

Baluchistan was united with [India](#).

The Reverend [Grindall Reynolds](#) read his paper “King Philip’s War; with special reference to the attack on Brookfield in August, 1675” before the American Antiquarian Society (refer to his later publication KING PHILIP’S WAR IN HISTORICAL SKETCHES).

[METACOM](#)

My ancestor, Captain Nathaniel Reynolds, was one of the original settlers, who after the war took possession of Mount Hope, the home of the Wampanoags, and named it [Bristol](#).... The whole of Plymouth County was then [1681] settled, except this territory, which was the only spot left uncovered in the western march of English population.... Of this great tract all they [the Wampanoag] retained in 1675 was a little strip, called then [Mount Hope](#), scarcely six miles long and two miles wide. The southern line of English possession had been drawn right across Bristol Neck, enclosing, and almost imprisoning, the tribe in a little peninsula, washed on all sides, except the north, by the waters of Narragansett and Mount Hope bays. As if to emphasize this fact, their neighbors, the people of Swanzy [sic], “set up a very substantial fence quite across the great neck.”

[“KING PHILLIP’S WAR”](#)

In this year the legal genocide against the surviving [Narragansett](#) tribespeople of [Rhode Island](#) had culminated in the passage of the General Allotment Act, the thrust of which was to grant quite meaningless individual “citizenship” while destroying tribal government.

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"Denial is an integral part of atrocity, and it's a natural part after a society has committed genocide. First you kill, and then the memory of killing is killed."

– Iris Chang, author of THE RAPE OF NANKING (1997), when the Japanese translation of her work was cancelled by Basic Books due to threats from [Japan](#), on May 20, 1999.



"Historical amnesia has always been with us: we just keep forgetting we have it."

– Russell Shorto



1891

A photograph was taken of a rotting ship hulk at Fort Adams near [Newport, Rhode Island](#), the rotting hulk of the slave ship *Jem* — a reminder of everything people commonly try to just forget all about:



TRIANGULAR TRADE

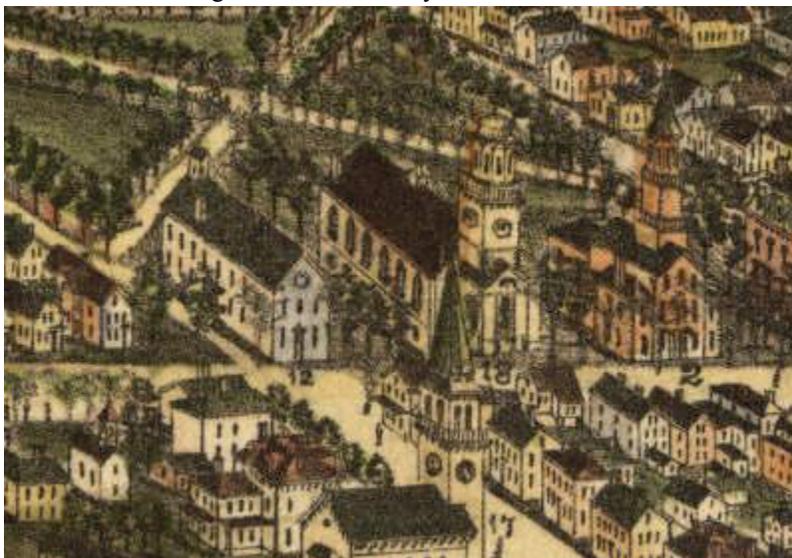
The number of [Quakers](#) on [Aquidneck Island](#) having diminished, the monthly meeting in Conanicut or [Jamestown](#) was laid down, and its remaining members absorbed into other meetings.

This is what the town of [Bristol, Rhode Island](#) looked like in this year:



READ EDWARD FIELD TEXT

Here is a detail of the above image of Bristol in this year:



1893

In Boston, David H. Montgomery's THE BEGINNER'S AMERICAN HISTORY was typeset by J.S. Cushing and Company and put through the presses by Ginn and Company. Here is a slightly truncated version of what the book had to tell our beautiful white children about the evil of [Mount Hope, Rhode Island](#) and "[King Phillip's War](#)":

87. Death of Massasoit; Wamsutta and Philip; Wamsutta's sudden death. — When the Indian chief Massasoit died, the people of Plymouth lost one of their best friends. Massasoit left two sons, one named Wamsutta, who became chief in his father's place, and the other called Philip. They both lived near Mount Hope, in Rhode Island.

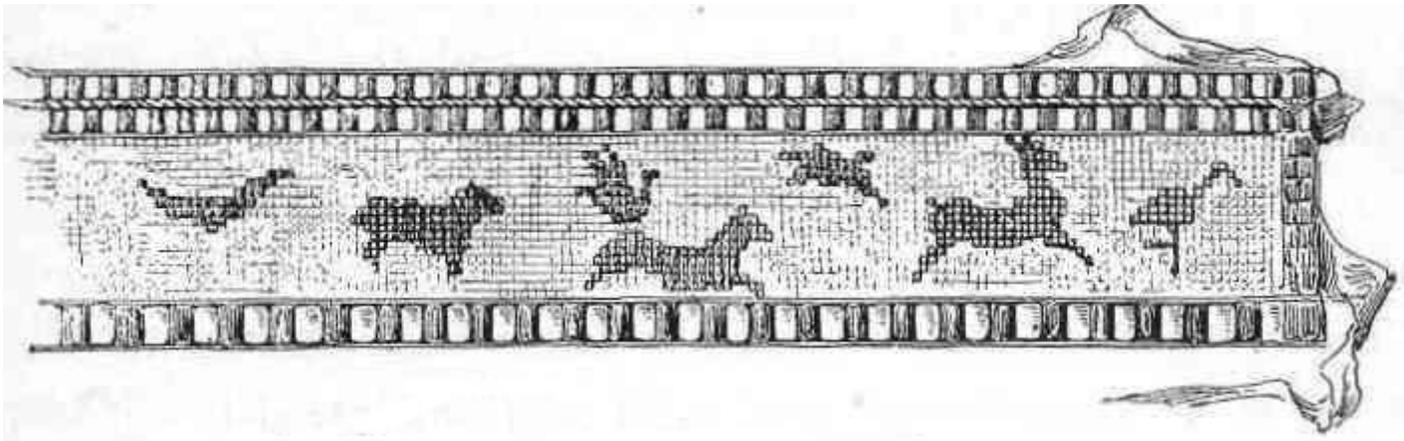
The governor of Plymouth heard that Wamsutta was stirring up the Indians to make war on the whites, and he sent for the Indian chief to come to him and give an account of himself. Wamsutta went, but on his way back he suddenly fell sick, and soon after he reached home he died. His young wife was a woman who was thought a great deal of by her tribe, and she told them that she felt sure the white people had poisoned her husband in order to get rid of him. This was not true, but the Indians believed it.

88. Philip becomes chief; why he hated the white men; how the white men had got possession of the Indian lands. — Philip now became chief. He called himself "King Philip." His palace was a wigwam made of bark. On great occasions he wore a bright red blanket and a kind of crown made of a broad belt ornamented with shells. King Philip hated the white people because, in the first place, he believed that they had murdered his brother; and next, because he saw that they were growing stronger in numbers every year, while the

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Indians were becoming weaker.



THE BELT WHICH KING PHILIP WORE FOR A CROWN.⁹⁴

When the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth, Massasoit, Philip's father, held all the country from Cape Cod back to the eastern shores of Narragansett Bay; that is, a strip about thirty miles wide. The white settlers bought a small piece of this land. After a while they bought more, and so they kept on until in about fifty years they got nearly all of what Massasoit's tribe had once owned. The Indians had nothing left but two little necks of land, which were nearly surrounded by the waters of Narragansett Bay. Here they felt that they were shut up almost like prisoners, and that the white men watched everything that they did.

89. How King Philip felt; signs of the coming war; the "Praying Indians"; the murder. — King Philip was a very proud man — quite as proud, in fact, as the king of England. He could not bear to see his people losing power. He said to himself, if the Indians do not rise and drive out the white men, then the white men will certainly drive out the Indians. Most of the Indians now had guns, and could use them quite as well as the whites could; so Philip thought that it was best to fight.

The settlers felt that the war was coming. Some of them fancied that they saw the figure of an Indian bow in the clouds. Others said that they heard sounds like guns fired off in the air, and horsemen riding furiously up and down in the sky, as if getting ready for battle.

But though many Indians now hated the white settlers, this was not true of all. A minister, named John Eliot, had persuaded some of the red men near Boston to give up their religion, and to try to live like the white people. These were called "Praying Indians." One of them who knew King Philip well told the settlers that Philip's warriors were grinding their hatchets sharp for war. Soon after, this "Praying Indian" was found murdered. The white people accused three of Philip's men of having killed him. They were tried, found guilty, and hanged.

90. Beginning of the war at Swansea; burning of Brookfield. — Then Philip's warriors began the war in the summer of 1675. Some white settlers were going home from church in the town of Swansea, Massachusetts; they had been to pray that there might be no fighting. As they walked along, talking together, two guns were fired out of the bushes. One of the white men fell dead in the road, and another was badly hurt.

The shots were fired by Indians. This was the way they always fought when they could.

They were not cowards, but they did not come out boldly, but would fire from behind trees

94. As near as I can tell, this is an inauthentic reconstruction. King Phillip was indeed reputed to have in his possession a bandolier about nine inches wide "wrought with black and white wampum in various figures and flowers, and pictures of many birds and beasts" but when hanging from his shoulder it reached to the ground. There does not seem to be any contemporary mention of his having wrapped one end of it around his head as a sort of crown, and we have no contemporary images of either him or it.

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and rocks. Often a white man would be killed without even seeing who shot him. At first the fighting was mainly in those villages of Plymouth Colony which were nearest Narragansett Bay; then it spread to the valley of the Connecticut River and the neighborhood. Deerfield, Springfield, Brookfield, Groton, and many other places in Massachusetts were attacked. The Indians would creep up stealthily in the night, burn the houses, carry off the women and children prisoners if they could, kill the rest of the inhabitants, take their scalps home and hang them up in their wigwams.



At Brookfield the settlers left their houses, and gathered in one strong house for defence. The Indians burned all the houses but that one, and did their best to burn that, too. They dipped rags in brimstone, such as we make matches of, fastened them to the points of their arrows, set fire to them, and then shot the blazing arrows into the shingles of the roof. When the Indians saw that the shingles had caught, and were beginning to flame up, they danced for joy, and roared like wild bulls. But the men in the house managed to put out the fire on the roof. Then the savages got a cart, filled it with hay, set it on fire, and pushed it up against the house. This time they thought that they should certainly burn the white people out; but just then a heavy shower came up, and put out the fire. A little later, some white soldiers marched into the village, and saved the people in the house.

91. The fight at Hadley; what Colonel Goffe did. — At Hadley, the people were in the meeting-house when the terrible Indian war-whoop rang through the village. The savages drove back those who dared to go out against them, and it seemed as if the village must be



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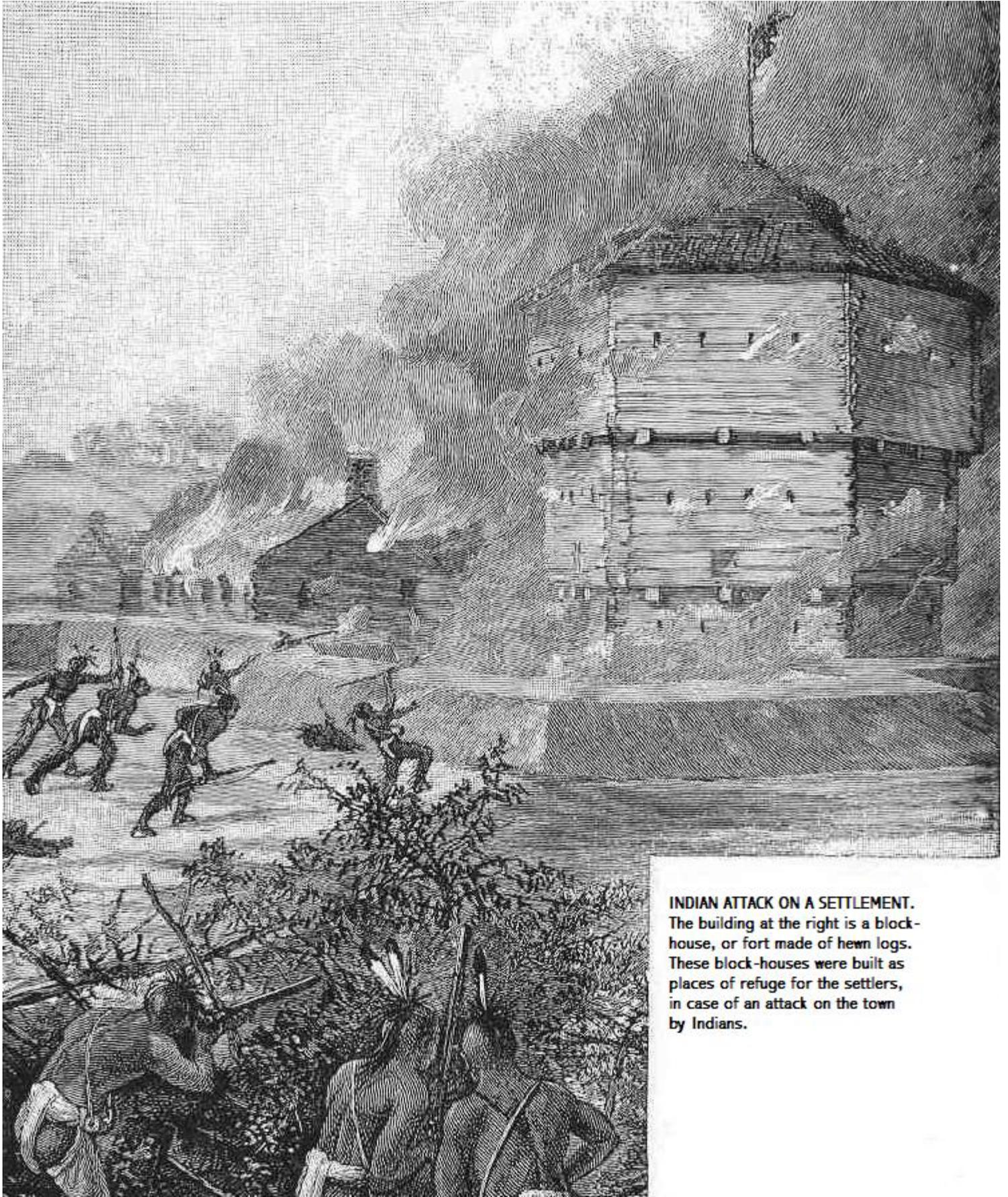
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destroyed. Suddenly a white-haired old man, sword in hand, appeared among the settlers. No one knew who he was; but he called to them to follow him, as a captain calls to his men, and they obeyed him. The astonished Indians turned and ran. When, after all was over, the whites looked for their brave leader, he had gone; they never saw him again. Many thought that he was an angel who had been sent to save them. But the angel was Colonel Goffe, an Englishman, who was one of the judges who had sentenced King Charles the First to death during a great war in England. He had escaped to America; and, luckily for the people of Hadley, he was hiding in the house of a friend in that village when the Indians attacked it.

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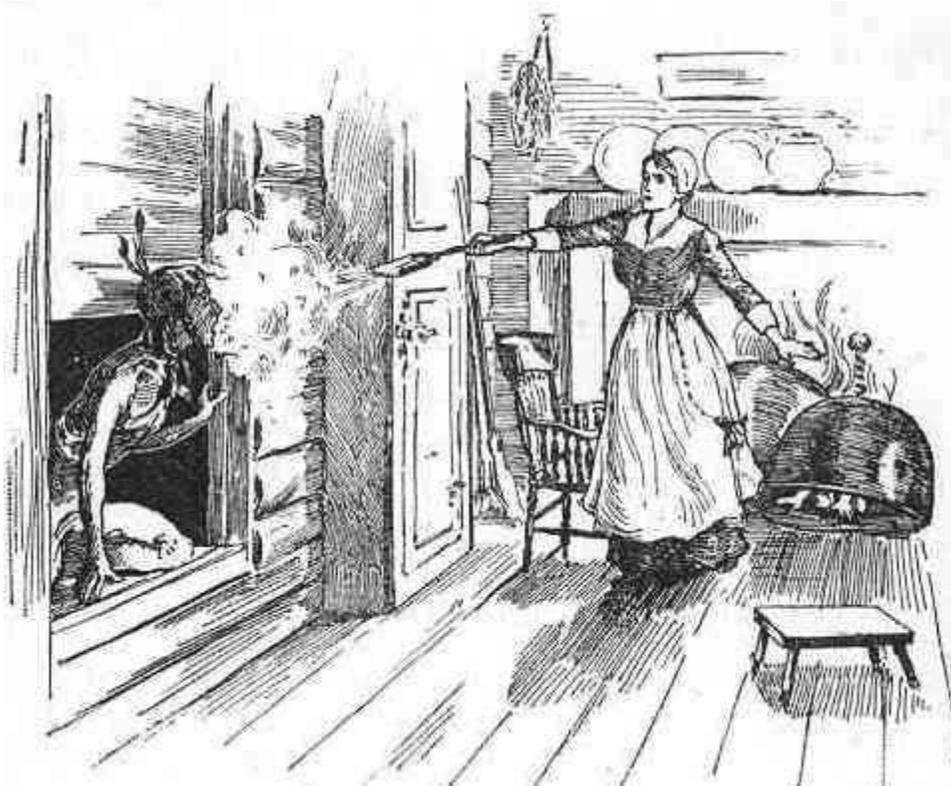


INDIAN ATTACK ON A SETTLEMENT. The building at the right is a block-house, or fort made of hewn logs. These block-houses were built as places of refuge for the settlers, in case of an attack on the town by Indians.

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92. How a woman drove off an Indian. — In this dreadful war with the savages there were times when even the women had to fight for their lives. In one case, a woman had been left in a house with two young children. She heard a noise at the window, and looking up, saw an Indian trying to raise the sash. Quick as thought, she clapped the two little children under two large brass kettles which stood near. Then, seizing a shovel-full of red-hot coals from the open fire, she stood ready, and just as the Indian thrust his head into the room, she dashed the coals right into his face and eyes. With a yell of agony the Indian let go his hold, dropped to the ground as though he had been shot, and ran howling to the woods.



93. The great swamp fight; burning the Indian wigwams; what the Chief Canonchet said. — During the summer and autumn of 1675 the Indians on the west side of Narragansett Bay took no open part in King Philip's War. But the next winter the white people found that these Indians were secretly receiving and sheltering the savages who had been wounded in fighting for that noted chief. For that reason, the settlers determined to raise a large force and attack them. The Indians had gathered in a fort on an island in a swamp. This fort was a very difficult place to reach. It was built of the trunks of trees set upright in the ground. It was so strong that the savages felt quite safe.

Starting very early in the morning, the attacking party waded fifteen miles through deep snow. Many of them had their hands and feet badly frozen. One of the chief men in leading the attack was Captain Benjamin Church of Plymouth; he was a very brave soldier, and knew all about Indian life and Indian fighting. In the battle, he was struck by two bullets, and so badly wounded that he could not move a step further; but he made one of his men hold him up, and he shouted to his soldiers to go ahead. The fight was a desperate one, but at length the fort was taken. The attacking party lost more than two hundred and fifty men in killed and wounded; the Indians lost as many as a thousand.

After the battle was over, Captain Church begged the men not to burn the wigwams inside



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the fort, for there were a great number of old men and women and little Indian children in the wigwams. But the men were very mad against the savages, and would not listen to him. They set the wigwams on fire, and burned many of these poor creatures to death. Canonchet, the chief of the tribe, was taken prisoner. The settlers told him they would spare his life if he would try to make peace. "No," said he, "we will all fight to the last man rather than become slaves to the white men." He was then told that he must be shot. "I like it well," said he. "I wish to die before my heart becomes soft, or I say anything unworthy of myself."

94. Philip's wife and son are taken prisoners; Philip is shot; end of the war. — The next summer Captain Church, with a lot of "brisk Bridgewater lads" chased King Philip and his men, and took many of the Indians prisoners. Among those then taken captive were King Philip's wife and his little boy. When Philip heard of it, he cried out, "My heart breaks; now I am ready to die." He had good reason for saying so. It was the custom in England to sell such prisoners of war as slaves. Following this custom, the settlers here took this boy, the grandson of that Massasoit who had helped them when they were poor and weak, and sold him with his mother. They were sent to the Bermuda Islands, and there worked to death under the hot sun and the lash of the slave-driver's whip.

Not long after that, King Philip himself was shot. He had been hunted like a wild beast from place to place. At last he had come back to see his old home at Mount Hope once more. There Captain Church found him; there the Indian warrior was shot. His head and hands were cut off, — as was then done in England in such cases, — and his head was carried to Plymouth and set up on a pole. It stood there twenty years.

King Philip's death brought the war to an end. It had lasted a little over a year; that is, from the early summer of 1675 to the latter part of the summer of 1676. In that short time the Indians had killed between five and six hundred white settlers, and had burned thirteen villages to ashes, besides partly burning a great many more. The war cost so much money that many people were made poor by it; but the strength of the Indians was broken, and they never dared to trouble the people of Southern New England again.

95. Summary. — In 1675 King Philip began a great Indian war against the people of Southeastern New England. His object was to kill off the white settlers, and get back the land for the Indians. He did kill a large number, and he destroyed many villages, but in the end the white men gained the victory. Philip's wife and child were sold as slaves, and he was shot. The Indians never attempted another war in this part of the country.

Who was Wamsutta? What happened to him? Who was "King Philip"? Why did he hate the white men? What did he say to himself? What is said about the "Praying Indians"? What happened to one of them? What was done with three of Philip's men? Where and how did the war begin? To what part of the country did it spread? Tell about the Indian attack on Brookfield. What happened at Hadley? Tell how a woman drove off an Indian. Tell all you can about the Great Swamp Fight. What is said about Canonchet? What is said of King Philip's wife and son? What happened to King Philip himself? What is said about the war?



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1998

February 15, Sunday: An extraordinarily different article appeared in the local [Providence, Rhode Island](#) newspaper, the “ProJo”:

History of slavery in R.I. not a story in black and white, but shades of gray

By JODY McPHILLIPS, Journal-Bulletin Staff Writer

Steven Spielberg shot his slave-revolt film [La Amistad](#) in [Rhode Island](#) because the state has great Colonial architecture.

It made sense for other reasons.

Rhode Island played a bigger role than any other state in the [Atlantic slave trade](#) and had the only slave plantations in New England. At the same time, it was an early leader in the efforts to abolish slavery.

“Throughout the 18th century, Rhode Island merchants controlled between 60 and 90 percent of the American trade in African slaves,” writes historian Jay Coughtry in *THE NOTORIOUS TRIANGLE: RHODE ISLAND AND THE AFRICAN SLAVE TRADE, 1700-1807*.

To be fair, the American slave trade amounted to just a small fraction of the European trade, which brought more than 11 million Africans to the New World over nearly 400 years.

Only half a million of them went directly to North American colonies; the rest went to the plantations and slave markets of Central and South America, from which some would be resold later to the southern colonies.

By comparison Rhode Island, which came the closest of any colony to having a slave trade of its own, made more than 900 slaving voyages during the 18th century, transporting about 106,000 slaves.

Few actually settled in Rhode Island, which was poorly suited for large-scale agriculture with its small rocky farms and icy winters. But they were bought from the slave fortresses of Africa’s Gold Coast with Rhode Island-made rum; transported on Rhode Island-built ships to the slave markets of the Caribbean; and later dressed in Rhode Island-made slave cloth.

Why did Rhode Island get so involved?

Money, mostly. The state had good ports and skilled seamen but not much good farmland. Once the fertile areas of South County were settled, the only place to make real money was at sea.

And no trade was as profitable as slaving.

Slave traders like the Browns of [Providence](#) amassed great fortunes, enough to build those mansions along Benefit Street and to found Brown University. Later, [Rhode Island](#) textile manufacturers produced the coarse



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cotton cloth slaves wore throughout the New World, much like prison garb today.

There were also coincidental connections.

Two groups who eventually settled here -the Portuguese and the Cape Verdeans- played huge roles in the early slave trade. In the 1400s, the Portuguese were the first Europeans to buy or steal humans from the west coast of Africa; they turned the empty, volcanic Cape Verde islands into a major depot for the worldwide slave trade and created a mixed-race population that flourishes today throughout southeastern New England.

And yet, from the earliest days, some Rhode Islanders were repelled by this human commerce.

The conflict tore families apart. [John Brown](#), of [Providence](#), was an avid slaver, his brother [Moses Brown](#) an abolitionist who fought him at every turn. [Bristol](#) slaver James DeWolf's son Levi made one slaving voyage and abandoned the trade in disgust; Levi's brother Charles once defended his extensive slaving activities by telling a preacher, "Parson, I've always wanted to roll in gold."

In 1774, the General Assembly outlawed importing slaves into [Rhode Island](#); a decade later, it was one of the first states to free children born of slave mothers.

It's a complicated story, with many moral shadings. Or, as Keith Stokes of [Newport](#) says, "It's not black and white so much as gray."

Humanity is divided into two: the masters and the slaves.

- Aristotle, POLITICS.

How could it happen? How could supposedly civilized people enslave other human beings?

Historian Hugh Thomas, in *THE SLAVE TRADE*, says slavery is as old as recorded history, known in virtually all cultures. Typically, slaves were people who lost wars, owed debts, broke laws or were sold into servitude by impoverished parents.

Throughout the Middle Ages, enslavement was increasingly linked to religious conflict. Moslems would enslave Christians, or vice versa: the dominant culture felt they were doing the "less enlightened" people a favor, by liberating them from error and exposing them to the true faith.

By the 1400s, the seafaring Portuguese had begun trading with the small fiefdoms of northwest Africa. They went looking for gold, but didn't find enough; increasingly, they brought home slaves, with the blessing of the Pope. Better a slave in an advanced Christian nation than a free subject of a "cannibal" king, the reasoning went. African slaves quickly became highly prized as strong, hardy workers able to withstand punishing tropical heat. As European colonists flooded into the New World, demand for workers grew exponentially, especially in



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the Caribbean islands and the plantations of Central and South America.

At first, the Europeans tried to enslave the native Indians too. The first slaves transported across the Atlantic, in fact, went west to east: Taino Indians brought to Spain from the Caribbean by Christopher Columbus.

But the New World Indians proved too susceptible to European diseases, and not strong enough to cultivate the new cash crops of sugar, tobacco, rice, cotton and indigo in the tropics.

It was the Africans' bad luck that they were physically well suited to hard work in hot climates – and that African kings and chieftains were so willing to sell their enemies and rivals into slavery.

Over the next centuries, the combined lure of gold and slaves drew successive waves of Europeans to Africa: the Portuguese, the Spanish, the Dutch, the French, and finally the English, in the mid-1600s.

They made no bones about why.

"A ship full of blacks brings more to the Treasury than galleons and fleets put together," wrote Pedro Zapata de Mendoza, governor of Cartagena de Indias (in present-day Colombia), in 1648.

The British entered the trade two centuries after the Portuguese, but quickly made up for lost time. One maritime city after another sent huge ships to Africa, capable of carrying as many as 450 slaves at once.

They made money hand over fist.

"Liverpool was in no way shy about the benefits brought her by the slave trade," Thomas writes about the city. "The facade of the Exchange carried reliefs of Africans' heads, with elephants, in a frieze, and one street was commonly known as 'Negro Row.'"

By the end of the 17th century, British traders had exported nearly 100,000 slaves from Africa; by 1725, 75,000 had been sold to British North America.

It was about that time that slaving voyages start showing up in [Rhode Island](#) records.

The early eighteenth century marked the end of North America's novitiate in the traffic of slaves. In the seventeenth century, too poor or too concerned with primitive agriculture, colonists there had been slow to participate in any substantial way.

A few slaves acting as servants had always been seen in all the colonies; but it was not until the owners of plantations in the Carolinas ... realized they could make considerable profits from rice and indigo that anything like a regular trade in slaves began.

– Hugh Thomas

The only land in Rhode Island good enough for plantation-style farming was the [Narragansett](#) Country (South County today), where a handful of white



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landowners did get rich off the labor of black slaves in the years before the Revolution. But the rest of the settlers had to come up with other ways to make money. The colony's most successful industry was distilling rum, which at first was sold mainly to other colonies. The strong, good-quality rum soon found a market with slave-trading Africans of the Gold Coast who preferred it to Caribbean rums, which could be weak, salty or packed in leaky barrels.

[Rhode Island](#) distillers in [Newport](#) (and later [Bristol](#) and [Providence](#)) were soon making double- and triple-distilled rums for the African trade, taking care to pack it in sturdy hogsheads. [Rhode Island](#) rum became so popular in Africa that, like gold, it served as money. The rum-for-slaves trade began slowly, with occasional voyages as far back as 1709. The triangle trade that evolved was simple: take rum to Africa, and trade it for slaves; take the slaves to the Caribbean, and trade them for molasses; take the molasses back to [Rhode Island](#), and make more rum.

Everybody made out – except the slaves.

At first, the trade was concentrated in [Newport](#). By 1725, one or two voyages a year were being recorded; by 1735, it was up to a dozen a year, a pace maintained until 1740, when fighting between England, Spain and then France disrupted all colonial commerce.

A pattern developed: when hostilities broke out, trade faltered; when peace resumed, slaving boomed. In 1750, 15 [Rhode Island](#) trips were recorded; by 1772, that number had doubled.

[Rhode Island](#) and, particularly, Newport, was, in the 1750s and 1760s, still the North American colonies' most important slaving zone. Newport, which always welcomed enterprising people without asking whence they came, also used more slaves in small businesses, farms, or homes than any other Northern colony.

– Hugh Thomas

One Rhode Islander in nine was black, the highest percentage north of the Mason-Dixon line. Most were slaves on the [Narragansett](#) Country plantations, but others clustered in Newport, where an artisan class of skilled workers developed.

Slavery in New England –and particularly liberal Newport– was probably never absolute. From the early days, a small percentage of Newport blacks were free men, having bought or otherwise obtained their freedom. Keith Stokes, in an essay on the slave trade, writes, "An early 1770s census lists nearly one-third of (Newport's) 9,000 inhabitants as being Negro, both slave and free."

Ship captains were always looking for able mariners; by 1800, "black seamen made up 21 percent of all Newport crews engaged in the West Indian, European and African



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trades," writes Coughtry.

Yet at the same time, slavers were working out of [Providence](#), [Bristol](#) and [Warren](#) as well as Newport. (Bristol, in fact, surpassed [Newport](#) as the state's primary slaving port as the century closed). Merchants in Greenwich, [Tiverton](#), Little Compton and [North Kingstown](#) played a lesser role.

The slavers were some of the colony's leading citizens, their names still familiar today: Newport's John Bannister (Bannister's Wharf) and Abraham Redwood ([Redwood Library](#)); [John Brown](#) of [Providence](#) (Brown University); the DeWolfs of [Bristol](#), who built Linden Place.

One of the most active was [Aaron Lopez](#) of Newport, a founder of [Touro Synagogue](#), who entered the slave trade in 1762 and by 1775 was the largest taxpayer in Newport, with more than 30 ships.

Some were more reprehensible than others. In 1764, Simeon Potter of [Bristol](#) wrote to his captain on the slaver *King George*: "Water your rum as much as possible and sell as much by the short measure as you can."

Or the captain of James DeWolf's slaver *Polly*, who lashed a slave infected with smallpox to a chair, threw her overboard, and "lamented only the lost chair."

Merchants not rich enough to build their own ships pooled resources and invested in voyages. Later on, the ships were more often owned by individuals or family groups.

Rhode Islanders made a go of slaving for a number of reasons. Their small, sturdy ships held from 75 to 150 slaves, far fewer than the massive British or French slavers, but their survival rates were better. Shorter loading times in Africa exposed the crews to fewer new diseases, and less crowding of slaves meant fewer died on the voyage, which took from five to 12 weeks.

[La Amistad](#)-style rebellions did occur -17 revolts were recorded on [Rhode Island](#) slavers between 1730 and 1807- but were about half as common as on British and French slavers, perhaps because conditions were somewhat better on the smaller boats.

The British destruction of [Newport](#) during the Revolution brought a temporary halt to the trade. When it resumed after the war, much of the action shifted up the bay to [Bristol](#), home of the DeWolf clan.

Without a doubt, then, the DeWolfs had the largest interest in the African slave trade of any American family before or after the Revolution; theirs was one of the few fortunes that truly rested on rum and slaves.

- Jay Coughtry

It was a family operation, all right - along the lines of la cosa nostra.

The first DeWolf slaver was Mark Anthony DeWolf, who began as captain for his brother-in-law, Simeon Potter.



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By 1774, Mark Anthony and Charles, one of his five sons, had completed seven voyages and may have been financing their own ships, Coughtry writes.

Between 1784 and 1807, seven DeWolfs completed 88 slaving voyages, or one-quarter of all [Rhode Island](#) trips made in those years; they were involved in 60 percent of the slaving voyages from [Bristol](#).

They didn't just sail the ships – they branched out into all aspects of the operation. James DeWolf, another of Mark Anthony's sons, married the daughter of William Bradford, who owned [Bristol](#)'s rum distillery; he went on to make another fortune in cotton manufacturing, and served in the U.S. Senate.

Other sons sold slaves at slave markets in Charleston and Havana; the family also bought a Cuban sugar plantation, so they had a piece of the action at all stages of the cycle.

They were resourceful. As the public grew more repulsed by slavery and anti-slavery laws began to be passed, the DeWolfs dug in, and used their clout and connections to keep the money flowing.

By the turn of the century, William Ellery, the customs collector in [Newport](#), was cracking down on illegal slaving. The DeWolfs got the General Assembly to create a separate customs office in [Bristol](#), and in 1804 snared the collector's job for Charles Collins, a DeWolf in-law and a slaver himself.

It was clear sailing out of [Bristol](#) after that.

Although slavery was outlawed nationally as of 1808, James DeWolf continued slaving until 1820, "the period of the [[Rhode Island](#)] trade's greatest profits," writes Arline Ruth Kiven, in a history of the state's abolitionist movement called *THEN WHY THE NEGROES?*

"This was also the time of his greatest affluence," although, she notes, there are no records for the [Bristol](#) port during this period because Collins burned them all when he was finally ousted in 1820.

Slavers were pretty crafty about staying ahead of the anti-slaving laws. A 1794 law banning U.S. citizens from carrying slaves to other nations, for example, had only one real enforcement provision: much like modern-day drug laws, the government could confiscate slaving vessels and sell them at auction.

Slavers promptly rigged the auctions so they (or straw buyers) could buy back the ships for pocket change. The government countered by getting the ships assessed, and then sending an agent to the auction to enter that price as an opening bid.

Samuel Bosworth, the surveyor for [Bristol](#), was the unfortunate soul sent to bid on the *Lucy*, a slaver confiscated from Charles DeWolf. He undertook the job "with considerable fear and trembling," writes Coughtry.

The night before the sale, Bosworth got a visit from DeWolf, his brother James, and [John Brown](#), who advised him to refuse the assignment. He stood his ground.



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The next morning the DeWolfs dropped by again, telling Bosworth that while they certainly wouldn't harm a hair of his head, if he showed up at the sale he would probably be "insulted if not thrown off the wharf" by sailors.

Bosworth never made it to the auction. "His would-be baptizers, in nominal Indian dress and with faces blackened, seized him as he approached the wharf, and hustled him aboard a small sailboat" which took him for a pleasant two-mile ride down the bay, Coughtry writes. By the time he made it back to [Bristol](#), the *Lucy* had been bought by a captain who worked for the DeWolfs.

The DeWolfs - or their agents - at times went in for outright thuggery. In 1800 the Treasury Department sent Capt. John Leonard to [Rhode Island](#) as a kind of special prosecutor targeting slave traders. He promptly sued James DeWolf for \$20,000 over violations by DeWolf's slave ship *Fanny*.

The jury found for DeWolf. But some months after the trial, "apparently fearful that Leonard's strategy against DeWolf would become a dangerous and costly precedent, a group of civic-minded Bristolians traveled to Washington to make their own appeal at the Federal Courthouse," Coughtry writes.

When they spotted Leonard coming down the courthouse steps, "several unidentified assailants assaulted him."

Whereas, there is a common course practiced by Englishmen to buy negers so that they may have them for service or slaves forever; for the preventing of such practices among us, let it be ordered that no blacke mankind or white, being forced by covenant bond, or otherwise, to serve any man or his assignnes longer than 10 years or until they come to bee 24 years of age....

- [Rhode Island](#)'s first anti-slavery law, 1652

The 1652 law was supposed to ban slavery of any kind from [Providence](#) and Warwick, or indentured servitude for more than 10 years. It was enforced for whites but largely ignored for blacks; like so many cultures before them, the British colonies were deeply conflicted over slavery.

In 1636, Roger Williams, who founded the colony in [Providence](#), questioned the justice of enslaving the Pequots. Yet in 1676, the same man denounced one of the early calls for freeing black slaves as "nothing but a bundle of ignorance and boisterousness."

Kiven writes that the northern part of the state was always less enamored of slavery than the seafaring and farming south.

Slaving was not confined to a particular religion or sect. Christians and Jews made fortunes in the trade, though by the early 18th century [Quakers](#) began to question the ethics of what they were doing.

Abolitionist sentiment got a boost in 1738, when an



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article in the English Weekly Miscellany "declared that, if Africans were to seize people from the coast of England, one could easily imagine the screams of 'unjust' which would be heard," writes Thomas.

In Newport in 1770, the Rev. Samuel Hopkins of the First Congregational Church preached his first sermon against slavery, and was surprised when his congregation -many of whom owned slaves- did not walk out en masse.

Three years later, Hopkins got the idea of sending two educated blacks to Africa as missionaries. To that end, John Quamine and Bristol Yamma were sent to Princeton College to prepare.

The Revolution intervened, however, and Quamine died aboard a privateer, while Yamma apparently dropped out of school to go to work and disappeared into history.

According to Kiven, the Quakers were the biggest and best-organized religious group in Rhode Island, and once they began to oppose slavery, its days were numbered.

One by one, slave owners changed their minds. "College Tom" Hazard, heir to Narragansett Country landowner Robert Hazard, refused his father's offer of slaves on his marriage (Robert was said to own 1,000 slaves in 1730).

In 1773, the younger Hazard convinced the Quaker Yearly Meeting to ban Quaker participation in slavery. That same year Moses Brown of Providence quit the family slaving business, and began a decades-long assault on his brother, John Brown, for continuing to buy and sell humans; the next year he became a Quaker.

The approach of the Revolution brought a temporary end to slaving, but also disrupted abolitionist momentum. In 1774, the General Assembly passed a law banning residents from importing slaves to Rhode Island, though it said nothing about visitors, or slaveowners who might want to move here.

(That was partly because Newport had a prosperous relationship with rich Southern plantation owners, who summered in Rhode Island before the Civil War, to escape the ferocious southern heat).

Brown, working with Hopkins, set about lobbying the state legislature as well as the Continental Congress; Hopkins wrote a persuasive tract, DIALOGUE CONCERNING THE SLAVERY OF THE AFRICANS, which was used well into the 19th century as an argument for abolition.

The war also gave blacks a chance to earn their own freedom. In 1778, a law was passed freeing any slave who would enlist in the Continental Army; several hundred formed the First Rhode Island Regiment, which performed well in battle, although the soldiers later had trouble getting paid.

"Their courage in battle and the subsequent gratitude of the people of the state to them is credited for the law, passed in 1784, providing for the gradual abolition of slavery in the state," writes Kiven.

The new law, which freed children born of slaves, passed



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only after a provision banning the trade entirely was removed. According to [Moses Brown](#), the act was eviscerated by the Speaker of the House, William Bradford of [Bristol](#).

Yes, the same Bradford who ran the big Bristol rum distillery, and whose daughter was married to slave-trader James DeWolf.

State House insiders were apparently getting pretty sick of lectures from the reform-minded [Quakers](#). Wrote Brown, "We were much flung at by several."

Is it not extraordinary that [[Rhode Island](#)], which has exceeded the rest of the states in carrying on this trade, should be the first Legislature on this globe which has prohibited that trade?

— Rev. Samuel Hopkins, Nov. 27, 1787

Other states were wrestling with the slavery issue. It proved so contentious that in 1787, when the Continental Congress adopted a constitution, it deferred any national action on slavery until 1808.

New England, however, wasn't waiting around. [Rhode Island](#) banned the trade entirely in 1787; Connecticut and Massachusetts followed suit the following year.

True, the slave trade would continue for 70 years, by one means or another. Some slavers shifted operations to ports like New York, which had not yet passed any slaving laws; others simply broke the law.

But in 1789, Hopkins and [Moses Brown](#) helped found the Providence Abolition Society, which worked for anti-slaving laws and sued those who broke them.

One such was [John Brown](#), Moses' brother. The society sued him in 1796 on charges of illegal slave-trading; though he offered to abandon the trade and pay all court costs, they seemed to want to make an example of him.

They should have taken the deal. He was acquitted.

"The verdict was a definite defeat for the Society, many of whose members became convinced that a [Rhode Island](#) jury would not give judgment against the prominent type of men engaged in the slave-trade," writes Kiven.

Over the next few decades a pattern evolved. Abolitionists would pressure the government to pass anti-slavery legislation, and the slaving interests would do what they could to water it down.

Once a law was passed, business would temporarily falter while the slavers watched to see how strictly the law would be enforced; usually, enforcement was sporadic, and business actually increased.

The American and British governments finally banned slaving as of 1808. But the trade hardly stopped. Some American ships flew Spanish flags; Gen. George DeWolf of [Bristol](#) simply shifted his operations to Cuba.

The American law only banned the international slave trade. American slavers could still trade slaves internally, or move them up and down the coast. And they



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did, because demand was huge. With the invention of the cotton gin in 1793, the demand for agricultural workers exploded in the south, Thomas writes. In 1792, the United States exported 138,328 pounds of cotton; by 1800, it was 17,790,000 pounds and by 1820, 35,000,000 pounds. The planters weren't going to pick it themselves.

[Rhode Island](#) participation in the slave trade after Jan. 1, 1808, is a maddening puzzle, for most of the pieces are missing.

– Jay Coughtry

It looks like [Rhode Island](#) slavers began to pull out of the business after the federal ban, although it's hard to be sure since it was easy to cheat, particularly at first.

Some, like the DeWolfs, continued to slave illegally. But Coughtry concludes that "it does not appear that [Rhode Island](#) ports or individual [Rhode Island](#) merchants participated in the illegal heyday of the modern American slave trade" between 1820 and 1860.

They abandoned the business sporadically, much as they had started. [John Brown](#) died in 1803. James DeWolf quit the trade in 1808, though his brother George continued until 1820, when the sympathetic Collins was fired in [Bristol](#); after a series of business failures, George fled the state in 1825 for his Cuban plantation.

[Rhode Island](#) merchants gradually turned away from the maritime trade and invested their money in cotton mills – by 1830, the state had 130 of them. They managed to squeeze yet more profit from slavery: many specialized in coarse slave or negro cloth, worn by slaves throughout the New World.

Abolitionists kept up the pressure. The Providence Abolition Society was joined by other groups; three buildings still standing today served as stations on the Underground Railroad – the Isaac Rice homestead in [Newport](#), the Elizabeth Buffum Chace house in [Central Falls](#), and the Charles Perry home in [Westerly](#).

Some decided not to wait. In 1826, a group of free Newport blacks, led by former slave Newport Gardiner, sailed for Liberia with the help of the American Colonization Society.

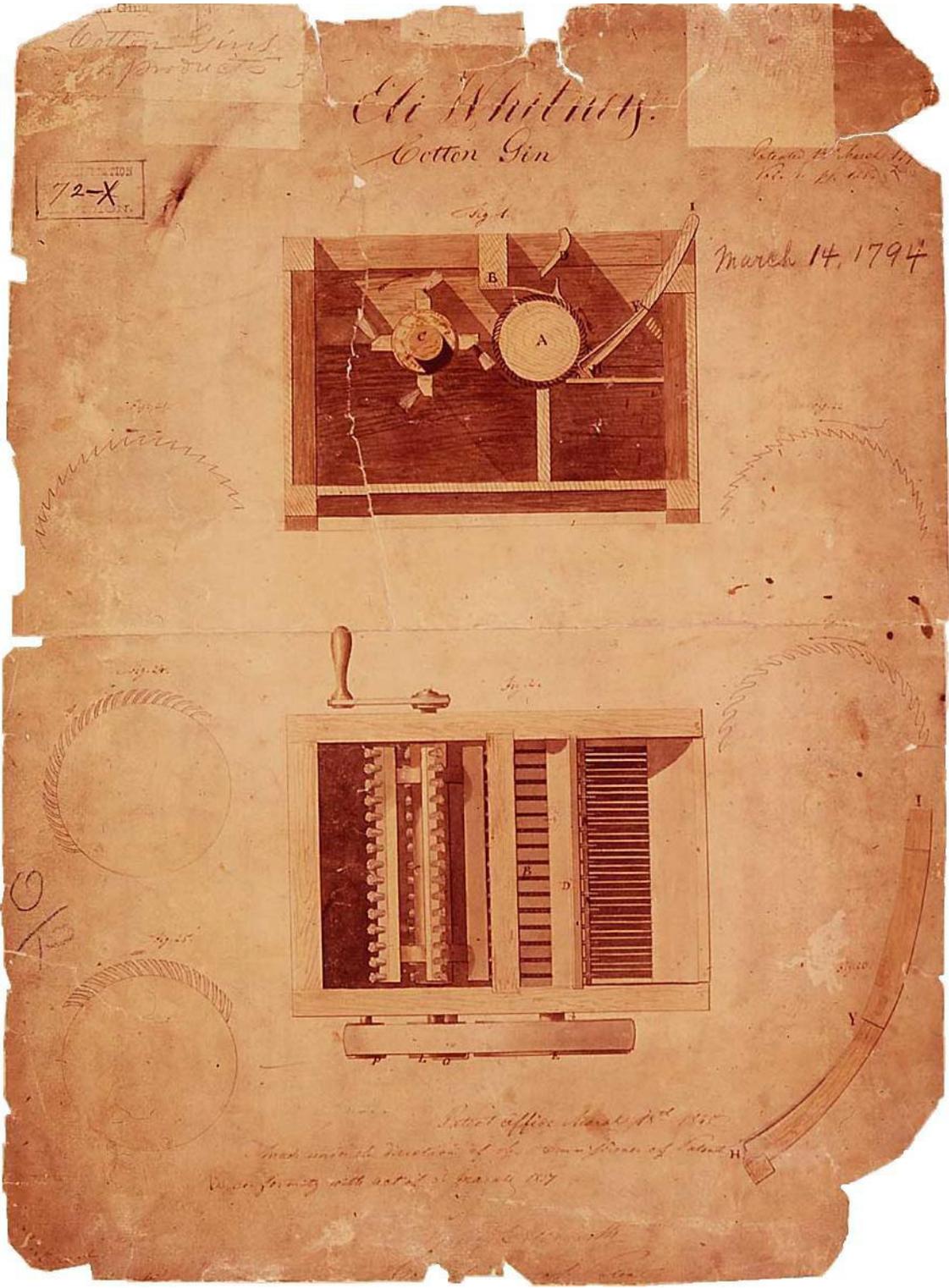
Gardiner, who worked for years to buy freedom for himself and his family, was freed in 1791. He helped found the nation's first black civic organizations, the African Union Society, and the African Benevolent Society.

His decision to leave came 14 months after white rioters destroyed Hard Scrabble, the black community in [Providence](#) (University Heights today). He was 75 years old.

"I go to set an example for the youth of my race," he

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said. "I go to encourage the young. They can never be elevated here. I have tried it for 60 years.... It is in vain."

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2006

March 12, Sunday: Paul Davis's column about the days of [slavery](#) and the [international slave trade](#) in [Providence, Rhode Island](#)'s "ProJo," the [Providence Journal](#):

Buying and Selling the Human Species: Newport and the Slave Trade

For more than 75 years, Rhode Island ruled the American slave trade. On sloops and ships called Endeavor, Success and Wheel of Fortune, slave captains made more than 1,000 voyages to Africa from 1725 to 1807. They chained their human cargo and forced more than 100,000 men, women and children into slavery in the West Indies, Havana and the American colonies. The traffic was so lucrative that nearly half the ships that sailed to Africa did so after 1787 – the year Rhode Island outlawed the trade. Rum fueled the business. The colony had nearly 30 distilleries where molasses was boiled into rum. Rhode Island ships carried barrels of it to buy African slaves, who were then traded for more molasses in the West Indies which was returned to Rhode Island. By the mid-18th century, 114 years after Roger Williams founded the tiny Colony of Rhode Island, slaves lived in every port and village. In 1755, 11.5 percent of all Rhode Islanders, or about 4,700 people, were black, nearly all of them slaves. In [Newport](#), [Bristol](#) and [Providence](#), the slave economy provided thousands of jobs for captains, seamen, coopers, sail makers, dock workers, and shop owners, and helped merchants build banks, wharves and mansions. But it was only a small part of a much larger international trade, which historians call the first global economy.

Pollipus Hammond was dying. As a young man in Newport he had sailed wooden sloops and brigs across the roiling Atlantic. Now, at 72, he was curled up in agony. The Rev. [Ezra Stiles](#) was surprised. He had heard that dying men often stretched out. Shortly before midnight in the winter of 1773, Hammond died. Stiles, a pastor for nearly 20 years at the Second Congregational Church on Clarke Street, closed the dead man's eyes. Physically, Hammond was short and thin. But spiritually, he had been a pillar in the congregation, a sober churchgoer for nearly 34 years. A boat builder, mechanic and father of five, Hammond could have turned "his hand to any Thing," Stiles wrote in his daily journal. For a quarter of century, Hammond had



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turned his hand to the slave trade. Sailing from Newport's crowded harbor, he purchased hundreds of slaves from the west coast of Africa and chained them aboard ships owned by some of the town's wealthiest merchants. Hammond belonged to a group of captains who depended on the slave trade for a living. He quit the business in the 1750s, when he was in his mid-50s. He became a devout Congregationalist; he even offered his home for monthly meetings. But he never stopped telling stories about danger, even exaggerating what he had seen and heard on his African voyages along what slavers called the Guinea Coast. It was, Stiles wrote, the only "blemish in his character." "He was many years a Guinea Captain; he had then no doubt of the Slave Trade," Stiles wrote. "But I have reason to think that if he had his Life to live over again, he would not choose to spend it in buying and selling the human species." If Hammond regretted his life as a slave captain, he left no record of it. When Hammond died on Feb. 5, 1773, Newport's slave trade was booming. Nearly 30 captains had sailed to Africa the year before, ferrying away nearly 3,500 Africans to slave ports in the Americas and the Caribbean. "Our orders to you are, that you Embrace the first fair wind and make the best of your way to the coast of Africa," wrote merchant [Aaron Lopez](#) to Capt. William English. "When please God you arrive there ... Convert your cargo into good Slaves" and sell them "on the best terms you can," ordered Lopez, who outfitted four slave ships that year. The first recorded departure of a Newport slave ship was in 1709, and regular voyages from Newport to Africa were recorded beginning in 1725. "There's no Newport without slavery," says James Garman, a professor of historic preservation at Salve Regina University in Newport. "The sheer accumulation of wealth is astonishing and it has everything to do with the African trade..." It's unclear when Pollipus Hammond, born in 1701, boarded his first slave ship, but Hammond and the trade matured together. By the time Hammond turned 21, more than 600 ships a year passed through Rhode Island's busy ports. Many carried New England goods – mackerel, pork, beef, cider, beer, onions, flour, butter, candles, apples, cheese and staves – to other colonies along the Atlantic Coast. Others carried goods directly to the slave plantations in the Caribbean or in South America. These ships returned to Newport with sugar and barrels of molasses, which distillers turned into rum. Some of it was sold in New England. But Rhode Islanders soon discovered a new market for their rum: tribal leaders and European traders along the African coast, in regions known as the Slave, Gold and Windward Coasts. In all, Rhode Island ships carried nearly 11 million gallons of rum to Africa during the 18th and early 19th centuries. Tribal leaders were willing to dicker with Newport captains, turning over prisoners from rival tribes and other natives in exchange for Rhode Island rum. The African captives were then sold in the Caribbean or in the southern colonies for cash or for more sugar and molasses, creating what was known as the Triangular Trade. Rhode Islanders distilled an especially potent liquor that was referred to as Guinea rum, spirits which quickly displaced French brandy in the slave trade. As a result, slavers from Rhode Island were often called "rum men." By his mid-30s, Hammond was a rum man. In 1733, he sailed the Dispatch, owned by merchant



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Godfrey Malbone, to Africa. Six years later Malbone, who owned a house in Newport, a country estate and several slaves, hired Hammond again, this time to take 55 slaves to the West Indies aboard the sloop Diamond. Already, the slave trade was competitive. In 1736, Capt. John Cahoon told Newport merchant Stephen Ayrault that seven Rhode Island captains and 12 other slavers were anchored off the coast of Africa, "ready to devour one another for the chance to trade" for slaves being held at a handful of British ports. Never "was so much rum on the Coast at one time before...." Four years later, the colony's fleet of 120 ships was "constantly employed in trade, some on the coast of Africa, others in the neighboring colonies, many in the West Indies and a few in Europe," Gov. Richard Ward told the Board of Trade in 1740. The sugar and slave plantations especially benefited from Rhode Island's exports. Plantation owners – too busy growing sugar cane to grow their own food – "reaped great advantage from our trade, by being supplied with lumber of all sorts, suitable for building houses, sugar works and making casks," Governor Ward noted. The West Indies slave owners dined on beef, port, flour and other provisions "we are daily carrying to them." Rhode Island horses hauled their cane and turned their sugar mills. And "our African trade often furnishes 'em with slaves for their plantations." For Pollipus Hammond and other slave captains, African voyages posed many risks. The voyages were filthy, laborious and dangerous. "Few men are fit for those voyages but them that are bred up to it," Dalby Thomas, an agent for the Royal African Company, told his superiors in London in the early 1700s. These captains must be ready to "do the meanest office," he wrote. Africa teemed with killers – river blindness, yellow fever, malaria. One or two captains died each year from disease, violent storms or slave uprisings. Capt. George Scott barely escaped a slave revolt in 1730, when several Africans aboard the Little George murdered three of his men in their sleep. Caleb Godfrey jumped into a longboat after lightning struck his ship, and he once was mauled by a leopard. If a captain survived –and many did not– he "had nothing to lose and a great deal to gain from a slaving venture," says historian Sarah Deutsch. In addition to a monthly wage, captains received a 5 percent commission on every slave sold. Many also received a bonus, or "privilege," of four or more slaves per 104 Africans aboard. The captains were free to sell them or keep them. Some made enough to invest in later trips to Africa. Many joined the Fellowship Club, a mutual aid society, established in Newport in 1752. When the club received a charter from the Rhode Island legislature, 17 of the 88 members had made at least one voyage to Africa. By the time Hammond died, slaving captains formed a third of the society. While some captains made enough money to quit the trade and move up socially, Hammond "never left the wheel," says Jay Coughtry in *THE NOTORIOUS TRIANGLE*. "Lack of capital, ambition, or, perhaps, the lure of the sea" prevented men like Hammond "from rising into the ranks of the merchant class," he says.

The Rev. Ezra Stiles arrived in Newport to assume the pulpit of the Second Congregational Church in 1755, about the time Pollipus Hammond quit the slave trade. A bookish man who studied Latin and physics at Yale, Stiles declared Newport "an agreeable



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Town," a place of "leisure and books," and a choice spot to continue "my Love of preaching." He drank cider, tea and claret, and planned future books, including a history of the world. In 1761, six years after he arrived in Newport, the minister paced off its streets to map the town. Evidence of the town's booming sea and slave trade was everywhere. He counted 888 houses, 16 rum distilleries and 61 shops near the waterfront. Some of the town's biggest slave traders belonged to Stiles' Clarke Street church. Eleven members were either slave traders or captains, including Caleb Gardner, William Ellery and William and Samuel Vernon. Newport was a far cry from New Haven, where Stiles grew up and attended Yale. While New Haven had been settled by strict religious leaders, Newport had been settled by "men who chafed at the economic, as well as religious, restrictions of Puritan society," says historian Lynne Withey. They "wanted to build prosperous towns and personal fortunes out of the wilderness." Those attracted to Newport included the Quaker merchant Thomas Richardson, who had moved from Boston in 1712; Daniel Ayrault, a French Huguenot, who arrived around 1700, and Godfrey Malbone, who moved from Virginia at about the same time. William and John Wanton, shipbuilders from Massachusetts, arrived a few years later. These entrepreneurs – or their sons or in-laws – added slave trading to their business ventures. Yet another group of investors arrived between 1746 and 1757, among them Ellery, the Champlins and Lopez. Stiles read the BIBLE in the morning and visited some of the slave traders as their pastor in the afternoon. He socialized with them, too. He dined often with William Vernon, who bought a mansion three doors down on Clarke Street. An ardent gardener, Stiles wrote his name on an aloe leaf on Abraham Redwood's country estate. Eventually, the pastor was named librarian of the new Redwood Library. While he talked philosophy with Newport's slave merchants, he also ministered to the town's slaves. By the mid-1770s, he was preaching to dozens of slaves. Often, he preached to them in small groups in his home. "I directed the Negroes to come to me this Evening," he wrote in 1771. "I discoursed with them on the great Things of the divine Life and eternal Salvation..." Three days after Pollipus Hammond died, the temperature plunged to 5 degrees. Ice clogged the harbor. That winter, the spindly trees above the waterfront were "full of crystals or frozen sleet or icy horror," noted Stiles. It was so cold his window had frozen shut. "I can not come at my thermometer which is usually left abroad all night," he complained. Head down, his long nose poking forward, Stiles trudged through Newport's icy streets to attend Hammond's burial in the Common Burying Ground, on a hill near the edge of town. A prominent stone mason had carved a final thought for the slave captain. His headstone, topped with an angel, said, "Here Lieth the Body of the Ingenious Capt. Pollipus Hammond." It was Stiles's habit to visit his church members and their families at least four times a year. Stiles had visited Hammond 10 times before his death. If the two men discussed slavery, Stiles did not note it in his diary. Then again, the pastor had written little about his own ties to the slave trade. His father, Isaac, had purchased an African couple to work in the fields of the family's 100-acre farm in North Haven. And a year after he became pastor of the Second



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Congregational Church, Stiles put a hogshead of rum – 106 gallons – aboard a ship bound for the coast of Africa. The captain, William Pinnegar, returned with a 10-year-old African boy. Stiles kept the slave for 22 years, and freed him only after he accepted a job as president of Yale in 1777. In 1756, Stiles gave the boy a name. He called him Newport.

March 15, Wednesday: In [Providence, Rhode Island](#)'s "ProJo," the [Providence Journal](#), Paul Davis's series about the days of [slavery](#) and the [international slave trade](#) continued:

1 Boye Slave Dyed: The Terrible Voyage of the Sally

The first ship to leave [Providence](#) for Africa was sent by James Brown in 1735, but only a smattering of ships departed from that port before the Revolutionary War. Providence never became a busy slave center, like [Newport](#) and Bristol.

Newport dominated the state's slave trade for the first 50 years. All trade came to a halt during the seven years the colonies fought for independence from Great Britain. When the war ended, [Rhode Island](#) ships again cleared for Africa. Newport continued to send dozens of ships to Africa, but Providence and [Warren](#), and especially [Bristol](#), became bigger players.

Between 1784 and 1807, 402 ships sailed from Rhode Island for Africa.

Providence, which sent 55 of those ships, accounted for only 14 percent of the state's slave trade.

* * *

Capt. [Esek Hopkins](#) had just cleared the African coast when one of his captives died.

The young girl wasn't the first.

For nine long months, Hopkins had bartered with slave traders on behalf of the Brown brothers of Providence - Nicholas, Joseph, John and Moses. By late August 1765, he had finally purchased enough slaves, 167, so he could leave. Tarrying on the malarial coast -sailors called it the White Man's Grave- Hopkins had already lost 20 slaves and two members of his crew.

On his first -and last- slave trade voyage on the *Sally* in 1765, Capt. Esek Hopkins lost 109 slaves to uprisings and disease. The failed attempt marked a turning point for the Brown family of Providence as [Moses Brown](#) turned his back on the slave trade. Now, on board the 120-ton brig *Sally*, the deaths continued.

"1 boye slave Dyed," Hopkins wrote on Aug. 25. He kept a tally of the slave deaths in his trade book. The young boy was number 22.

The Browns had instructed Hopkins to sell his slaves in the West Indies for "hard cash" or "good bills of exchange."

"Dispatch," they reminded him, "is the life of Business."

Esek Hopkins, 46, had spent years at sea, but, until now, he had never helmed a slave ship.

At 20, he left the family farm in Scituate to board a ship bound for Surinam, a South American port favored by Newport captains and slave dealers. Two older brothers also sailed. John died at sea; Samuel died at Hispaniola, a Caribbean slave and sugar center, now known as Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

Stephen, a third brother, rose through the ranks of colonial



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politics and became governor of Rhode Island.

Esek married in 1741, bought a farm in Providence and also dabbled in civic affairs. But he preferred the sea. Aggressive and outspoken, he worked for more than three decades as a privateer and merchant-adventurer, sometimes for the Browns. During the Seven Years' War between England and France, he captured a French ship loaded with oil and other goods.

But commanding a slave ship required knowledge of African tribal customs and negotiating skills; he possessed neither. He wasn't even the Browns' first choice; many Rhode Island captains were already on the African coast.

Stocked with handcuffs, leg irons, chains and padlocks, the *Sally* was a floating prison.

The women, mostly naked, lived unchained on the quarterdeck. Crew members believed there was little chance they would stage a rebellion.

The males, chained together in pairs, were kept below deck, where they struggled for air in the dark humid hold. Their spaces were so cramped they struggled to sit up.

In good weather, Hopkins and his crew exercised the more than 100 African slaves on deck, and scrubbed their filthy quarters with water and vinegar.

On Aug. 28, just eight days after leaving the coast of Africa, Hopkins freed some of the slaves to help with the chores. Instead, they freed other slaves and turned on what was left of his crew. "...the whole rose upon the People, and endeavored to get Possession of the vessel," the Newport Mercury reported later. Outnumbered, the sailors grabbed some of the weapons aboard the *Sally*: 4 pistols, 7 swivel guns, 13 cutlasses, 2 blunderbusses and a keg of gunpowder. The curved cutlass blades and short-barreled blunderbusses - favored by pirates and highwaymen - were ideal weapons for killing enemies in close quarters. "Destroyed 8 and several more wounded," Hopkins wrote. One slave suffered broken ribs, another a cracked thigh bone. Both later died.

At sea, the *Sally* creaked and rolled as the crew kept careful watch on the remaining males shackled on the decks below.

Above deck, Hopkins revised the death count in his trade book. 32, he wrote.

* * *

Back in Providence, the Browns had high hopes for the *Sally*. Among the city's richest men, they operated under the name Nicholas Brown and Company. They owned all or partial interest in a number of ships; a candle factory at Fox Point; a rope factory, sugar house and chocolate mill and two rum distilleries.

Just before the *Sally* sailed, they invested in an iron foundry on the Pawtuxet River, the Hope Furnace in Scituate. Esek's brother, Stephen, was a partner. To help raise cash for the new foundry and their candle business, the Browns invested in the *Sally* and two non-slave ships that carried horses and other goods to the Caribbean.

Sending the *Sally* to Africa marked the first time the four brothers, as a group, had ventured into the slave trade.

Their great-great grandfather, Chad Brown, had been an early religious leader of the colony along with founder Roger



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Williams. The brothers' grandfather, James, a pious [Baptist](#) church elder, was openly critical of Providence's rising merchant class.

Yet, his son, Capt. James Brown, rejected the pulpit for the counting house. He sailed to the West Indies, ran a slaughter house, opened a shop and ran two distilleries. Unlike the earlier Browns, James recorded his children's births in his business ledger, rather than the family Bible.

And in 1735, he sent Providence's first slave ship to Africa.

"Gett Molases if you can" and "leave no debts behind," James wrote to his brother, Obadiah. The market was poor; still, Obadiah traded the Mary's human cargo in the West Indies for coffee, cordage, duck and salt. He brought three slaves, valued at 120 English pounds, back to Providence.

When James died three years later, Obadiah helped raise his brother's sons: Nicholas, Joseph, John and Moses.

In 1759, John and Nicholas joined Obadiah and other merchants in outfitting another slave ship, the *Wheel of Fortune*. It was captured by a French privateer. "Taken" wrote Obadiah in his insurance book.

The sons were not deterred.

[Abraham Redwood](#) was one of the principal contributors to The Redwood Library and Athenaeum when it was opened in 1750. Although he made his fortune from his Caribbean plantations and the slave trade, Redwood was remembered at the time of his death as a philanthropist and benefactor of the poor.

Although the local economy had suffered during the war between France and Britain, the slave trade surged in 1763.

In Virginia, plantation owner Carter Braxton urged the Browns to send him slaves. I understand, he said, there is a "great Traid carried on from Rhode Island to Guinea for Negroes."

The Browns did not act on Braxton's offer. But in the summer of 1754, three of the brothers helped stock the *Sally* with 17,274 gallons of rum, the main currency of the Rhode Island slave trade, 1,800 bunches of onions, 90 pounds of coffee, 40 barrels of flour, 30 boxes of candles, 25 casks of rice, 10 hogsheads of tobacco, 6 barrels of tar, and bread, molasses, beef and pork. The *Sally's* crew included a first and second mate, Hopkins' personal slave and a cooper to make barrels for the molasses the *Sally* would receive in trade for slaves.

The Browns agreed to pay Esek Hopkins 50 pounds a month for the voyage. Although it was slightly less than the wages paid the first and second mates, Hopkins was also promised a fat bonus, or "privilege," including 10 barrels of rum and 10 slaves. Most Rhode Island captains received a bonus of 4 slaves per 104 sold at market.

Because hard money was scarce in Rhode Island, the first and second mates were also offered slaves as commissions.

For the Browns, the stakes were high. For 50 years, Newport had been the colony's major shipping port. The Browns, along with Gov. Stephen Hopkins and a few other merchants, wanted to make Providence the political and commercial center of Rhode Island.

"The Browns knew that the trade posed risks, but they also knew it could result in tremendous profits," says James Campbell, a Brown University professor. "They clearly anticipated a very profitable voyage."



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Hopkins, however, fared poorly in Africa. With the end of the Seven Years' War, transatlantic trade resumed; British and New England ships jammed Africa's slave castles, trade forts and river mouths. "Demand was great and prices were high," Campbell says. "The seller had the upper hand."

Hopkins had no choice but to sail a 100-mile stretch of coast, looking for deals. Worse, he didn't understand local customs, which depended on gifts, tributes and bribes.

The trade, which dragged on for months, "involved an exchange of courtesies, gifts and negotiations," says Campbell. "You had to establish your credentials and character before trade actually began."

By mid-December, Hopkins had purchased 23 slaves. But the trading went slowly. Hopkins gave King Fodolgo Talko and his officers two barrels of rum and a keg of snuff. It wasn't enough. The next day, he gave another leader and his men two casks of rum.

On Dec. 23, he met with the king beneath a tree. He gave him 75 gallons of rum and received a cow as a present. The next day trading resumed, and Hopkins offered another 112 gallons of rum. He got one slave.

Later that day, the king demanded more rum, tobacco, iron and sugar for himself, his son and other officials.

Rhode Island captains spent an average of four months on the African coast; it took Hopkins nine.

"Hopkins was inexperienced as a slaver," says Campbell. "You wanted to get in and out as quickly as possible. As long as a slave ship was close to land, there was a danger of insurrection. Moreover, you die when you're on the West African coast. You're being exposed to diseases like malaria and yellow fever. Your slaves and crews start to die."

On June 8, Hopkins logged his most successful day of trading - 12 slaves. That same day, one of his earlier captives hanged herself between the decks of the *Sally*.

* * *

Now, as Hopkins crossed a cruel stretch of ocean called the Middle Passage, death came almost daily.

"3 women Slaves Dyed," Hopkins wrote in his trade book on Oct. 1. The ink had hardly dried when, a day later, he wrote: "3 men Slaves and 2 women Slaves - Dyed."

On Oct. 3, "1 garle Slave Dyed."

The family clock of Adm. Esek Hopkins sits today in an office in University Hall at Brown University, which was Rhode Island College at the time. The first building on campus, it was built using slave labor. The clock was presented by his granddaughter Elizabeth Angell in 1855.

In a letter to the Browns, Hopkins blamed the deaths on the failed slave revolt. The survivors were "so dispirited," he wrote, that "some drowned themselves, some starved and others sickened and died."

But the rate at which the Africans died "suggests an epidemic disease," probably smallpox or dysentery, says Campbell.

Amoebic dysentery, carried through fecal-tainted water, was spread by the filthy conditions below slave ship decks. It



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caused violent diarrhea, dehydration and death. Traders called it the "bloody flux."

The remaining Africans aboard the *Sally* were in a "very sickly and disordered manner," Hopkins wrote to the Browns when he arrived in Antigua. The emaciated slaves, fed a gruel made of rice, fetched poor prices; some sold for as little as 4 to 6 English pounds.

By the time Hopkins returned to Newport, he had lost 109 Africans. For most investors, a 15 percent loss of life was an acceptable risk; Hopkins lost more than half of his human cargo. And, the Browns lost the equivalent of \$10,000 on the voyage, says Campbell. "The debacle represented a turning point for three of the brothers -Nicholas, Joseph and Moses- who thereafter left the trade for good," says Campbell. "It would be nice to say that they quit because of moral qualms, but there isn't much evidence to support that, at least initially. More likely, they simply concluded that [slavery](#) was too risky an investment."

John invested in additional slave voyages -between four and eight more- and became a defender of the trade.

His younger brother, Moses, took another path.

Depressed, unable to sleep, he avoided the family counting house. In 1773 -eight years after the *Sally's* voyage- he freed his six slaves. He was sure his wife's death was the result of his role in the trade.

Joining other [Quakers](#), Moses declared war on New England's slavers.

One of his first targets was his older brother, [John Brown](#).

March 17, Friday: In [Providence, Rhode Island's](#) "ProJo," the [Providence Journal](#), Paul Davis's series about the days of [slavery](#) and the [international slave trade](#) concluded:

Living Off the Trade: Bristol and the DeWolfs

[Rhode Island](#) outlawed slave trading in 1787, but it didn't stop the trafficking. Almost half of all of Rhode Island's slave voyages occurred after trading was outlawed. By the end of the 18th century, Bristol surpassed [Newport](#) as the busiest slave port in Rhode Island.

In 1807, the United States Congress, after a bitter debate, banished the slave trade and Rhode Island's 75-year reign sputtered to an end.

Rhode Island's rum mills were gradually replaced by cotton mills. [Bristol](#) was broke, Newport was struggling and [Providence](#) merchants turned to manufacturing.

* * *

Samuel Bosworth was scared.

He was ordered to buy a ship at auction to keep it out of the hands of its owner, Charles DeWolf, one of Bristol's biggest slave traders.

Federal officials had just seized the *Lucy*, which they were sure DeWolf planned to send to Africa on a slave voyage - a clear violation of a 1794 law that prohibited Americans from fitting out vessels "for the purpose of carrying on any trade or traffic



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in slaves, to any foreign country."

U.S. Treasury officials wanted to send a message to Rhode Island's slavers so they instructed Bosworth, a government port surveyor, to outbid competitors. In the past, slave traders caught violating the law simply repurchased their ships at auction, often at a fraction of their value.

Keeping the *Lucy* from DeWolf would not be popular.

Charles and his brothers had prospered from trafficking in human cargo since the 1780s and the town's residents depended on them for their livelihood. Bristol's craftsmen made iron chains, sails and rope for the slave ships; farmers grew onions and distillers made rum – all items needed to support the trade. The night before the auction, three of Rhode Island's wealthiest men appeared at Bosworth's home. Charles and James DeWolf and [John Brown](#), a Providence merchant who had just been elected to Congress, warned Bosworth not to go, saying it was not part of his job as a surveyor. But Bosworth had little choice. He had been pressured by William Ellery, Newport's zealous customs collector, a "straight-gazing patriot" who had signed the Declaration of Independence 23 years earlier. Although his father had been a slave trader, Ellery regarded smuggling slaves as "nothing short of treason," writes George Howe, a DeWolf descendant.

On the morning of the auction, July 25, 1799, Charles DeWolf approached Bosworth a second time. If he tried to buy the *Lucy*, he would likely be "insulted if not thrown off the wharf by some of the sailors," DeWolf warned.

Bosworth continued on his way. But he never reached the town wharf.

As he neared the *Lucy*, eight men in Indian garb and painted faces grabbed him and pushed him into a sailboat. The black-faced men sailed Bosworth around Ferry Point and dumped him at the foot of Mount Hope, two miles from the auction site. With Bosworth out of the way, a DeWolf captain bought the *Lucy* for \$738. "The government had found the slave traders more than a match on their home turf, and never tried the tactic again," says historian Jay Coughtry.

The DeWolfs were just getting started.

* * *

Already, the clan owned a piece of Bristol's waterfront.

The brothers William and James DeWolf operated from a wharf and a three-story brick counting house on Thames Street, overlooking the harbor.

At the turn of the century, the family founded the Bank of Bristol, chartered with \$50,000 in capital. Among the chief stockholders in 1803 were two generations of DeWolfs – John, Charles, James, William, George and Levi. The clan also started the Mount-Hope Insurance Co., which insured their own slave ships.

When slave merchant James DeWolf traveled to Washington as a senator, he rode in the ornate carriage that is kept at Linden Place, in Bristol, the George DeWolf family mansion. Business was good.

Before the American Revolution, Newport merchants dominated the slave trade. But from 1789 to 1793, nearly a third of Rhode Island's slave ships sailed from Bristol. By 1800, Bristol



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surpassed Newport as the busiest slave port. The DeWolfs financed 88 slaving voyages from 1784 to 1807 – roughly a quarter of all Rhode Island slave trips during that period. Alone, or with other investors, the family was responsible for nearly 60 percent of all African voyages that began in Bristol.

"This will inform you of my arrival in this port safe, with seventy-eight well slaves," wrote Jeremiah Diman to James DeWolf on April 1, 1796. Writing from St. Thomas, Diman said he'd lost two slaves on the voyage from Africa, and promised to leave soon for Havana to sell the others. "I shall do the best I can, and without other orders, load with molasses and return to Bristol." The DeWolfs owned five plantations in Cuba –among them the Mary Ann, the New Hope and the Esperanza– where their slaves grew sugar cane and coffee. The DeWolfs also brought some slaves back to Bristol, where they were "sold to some of the best families in the state," says historian Charles O.F. Thompson. In 1803, James DeWolf gave his wife an African boy and girl for Christmas.

* * *

They were self-made men. The DeWolf family crest, shown here as painted on the door of the carriage, above. Too poor to stay in school, they took jobs on ships. Their father, Mark Anthony DeWolf, was a slaver and a seaman, too. But he never made any money from it.

He married the daughter of wealthy privateer Simeon Potter, moved from Guadeloupe to Bristol and sailed on Potter's ships. After years of scrambling to make a living, he died, broke, of a "nervous fever" in 1793.

Between voyages he sired 15 children. Three of his sons died at sea. But five –James, John, Charles, William and Levi– survived. The "Quakerish" Levi quit the slave trade after a single voyage, but the others prospered from the trade, privateering, whaling and other ventures.

Each son worked a different part of the family business. Charles, the oldest, acted as the family's financial consultant. William ran the Mount-Hope Insurance Company, which insured ships and their cargoes against "the dangers of the seas, of fire, enemies, pirates, assailing thieves, restraints and detentions of kings . . . and all other losses and misfortunes." Ships and their cargoes were insured at up to \$7,000.

In 1804, Henry DeWolf moved to South Carolina to handle the family's slave sales in Charleston. The move was typical; the family placed relatives or in-laws in every part of their slaving enterprise from Bristol to Cuba.

At the urging of the DeWolfs, Congressman John Brown helped establish Bristol and Warren as a separate customs district where slave traders could operate away from "the prying eyes" of William Ellery in Newport, says Coughtry. A few years later, the family successfully lobbied President Thomas Jefferson to name Charles Collins, a slave trader and DeWolf cousin, as head of the new district. Collins had been captain of the seized ship, the Lucy.

The family's hold was now complete.

From 1804 to 1807, the prosecution of slave traders ceased, and the number of Africa-bound ships from Bristol soared.

"The DeWolf family monopolized the slave trade," says Kevin E. Jordan, a retired professor at Roger Williams University.



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To keep an eye on their trade, the DeWolfs built huge homes near the harbor. Charles hired ship carpenters to build the Mansion House on Thames Street before 1785. It had four entrances, with broad halls running north to south and east to west. Wallpaper in the drawing room featured exotic birds with brilliant plumage.

Two decades later, James hired architect Russell Warren to build The Mount, a white three-story home with five chimneys, a deer park and a glass-enclosed cupola. Each day, his wife's slave washed the teak floors with tea leaves. In 1810, George hired Warren to design a \$60,000 mansion with fluted Corinthian columns, a three-story spiral staircase and a skylight. The estate is now referred to as Linden Place.

* * *

James DeWolf was the most extraordinary of the brothers. His life, says historian Wilfred H. Munro, resembled "the wildest chapters of a romance." Born in Bristol in 1764, he boarded Revolutionary War ships as a boy, and was held prisoner by the British in Bermuda. The cruelty and hardship he experienced as a young prisoner "made him a man of force and indomitable energy with no nice ethical distinctions," says one biographer.

In his early 20s, he sailed aboard the slave ship Providence, owned by John Brown; he bought his own slave ship, a 40-ton schooner, in 1788.

Tall, with gray-blue eyes, he had big sailor's hands – and a Midas touch, says Munro.

While his fellow merchants "were cautiously weighing the possible chances of success in ventures in untried fields, he was accustomed to rush boldly in, sweep away the rich prizes that so often await a pioneer, and leave for those who followed him only the moderate gains that ordinary business affords," writes Munro.

Some called his boldness cruel.

In 1791, a grand jury charged James with murdering a slave aboard a bark the year before. The woman, who had smallpox, had to be jettisoned before she contaminated the other slaves and crew, some sailors testified in his defense. But jurors said the slave ship captain did not have "the fear of God before his eyes." Instead, he was "moved and seduced by the instigation of the Devil" when he threw the woman from his ship. She "instantly sank, drowned and died ..." the jury said.

Although an arrest warrant was issued, the federal marshal from Newport reported twice annually that he couldn't find James. After four years, the charge was dropped. Whether James was in Bristol during these years or, as one historian writes, hiding out in the Danish West Indies, is unclear.

It wasn't the only time James flouted the law. After it became illegal to sell slaves in foreign lands, he and his captains disguised their mission by equipping their ships with slave quarters after they left Rhode Island waters. Others simply sailed past Newport in the dark.

James DeWolf, left, served as a senator while he profited from the trade; William, center, ran the Mount-Hope Insurance Company that insured the slave traders' ships and Charles, right, the oldest son, was the family's financial consultant.

Before he turned 25, James had accumulated considerable wealth.



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His 1790 marriage to Nancy, the daughter of Deputy Gov. William Bradford, brought him more money. During the War of 1812, he sent out his own 18-gun brig with the government's blessing and captured 40 British vessels worth more than \$5 million, says Ray Battcher III, curator of the Bristol Historical & Preservation Society.

He emerged, according to Battcher, as one of the richest men in the United States.

When the federal government ran low on credit, James DeWolf loaned the nation money.

He built the Arkwright Mills in Coventry, where workers made cloth from cotton grown by southern slaves. He also converted some of his ships into whalers, took up farming and traded with China.

In his late 30s, he entered politics. In 1802, he won a seat in the state legislature and later became speaker of the House. Locally, he was town moderator. In 1821, he went to Washington to serve in the Senate.

DeWolf's reputation as a slave trader followed him.

During a Senate debate over whether Missouri should be admitted as a slave state, a senator from South Carolina noted that some Rhode Islanders opposed the move and were bitter toward slaveholders.

But such a sentiment could not be widespread, he said with sarcasm.

After all, Rhode Island voters elected James DeWolf to represent them – a man who "had accumulated an immense fortune by the slave trade."

The southern senator noted that of the 202 vessels that carried slaves to South Carolina from 1804 to 1807, 59 were from Rhode Island – and 10 belonged to DeWolf. DeWolf left the Senate before his term was up – one biographer said he was bored.

* * *

After 1807, a much stronger federal law ending the slave trade was passed, and the DeWolfs' hold on Bristol began to unravel. They moved their slaving operation to their Cuban plantations.

In 1825, when George DeWolf's sugar cane crop failed, he defaulted on a business bank loan, bringing three banks to near collapse. The reverberations hit the other DeWolfs and much of Bristol. "The family went bankrupt. They couldn't pay the farmers" or other suppliers "so the people all went bankrupt," says Jordan. Among them was slave ship Capt. Isaac Manchester, who lost \$80,000 and turned to clamming to earn a living.

According to one account, women wept and even churches closed their doors. "General DeWolf has failed utterly!" wrote Joel Mann to his father on Dec. 12, 1825.

"All night and yesterday officers and men were flying in all directions, attacking and securing property of every description. All classes of men, even clergymen and servants, are sufferers. Many among us are stripped of everything. Honest merchants and shopkeepers have lost all or nearly all," the pastor of the Bristol Congregational Church wrote.

Although the DeWolf family was responsible for much of the early wealth of Bristol, modest homes line the street that bears their name.

"The banks are in equal distress. A director has just told me



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that the General is on paper in some way or other at all the banks ... The Union Bank is thought to be ruined – perhaps others.”

Six months later, the directors of the Bristol Union Bank, Eagle Bank and Bank of Bristol asked the General Assembly for tax relief because DeWolf’s failure had cost them more than \$130,000 in capital.

James lost money, too, but died, in 1837, a millionaire. His estate included property in Ohio, Kentucky, Maryland, New York and Bristol.

To avoid Bristol’s creditors, George DeWolf left his Bristol mansion at night, just before Christmas. Eight years earlier, he had entertained President James Monroe there.

“All the creditors stormed the place and looted it,” says Jordan. “They pulled out everything that wasn’t nailed to the walls. They took the chandeliers from the ceilings.”

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“It’s all now you see. Yesterday won’t be over until tomorrow and tomorrow began ten thousand years ago.”

– Remark by character “Garin Stevens”
in William Faulkner’s INTRUDER IN THE DUST



Prepared: September 19, 2013

ARRGH AUTOMATED RESearch REPORT

GENERATION HOTLINE



This stuff presumably looks to you as if it were generated by a human. Such is not the case. Instead, upon someone's request we have pulled it out of the hat of a pirate that has grown out of the shoulder of our pet parrot "Laura" (depicted above). What these chronological lists are: they are research reports compiled by ARRGH algorithms out of a database of data modules which we term the Kouroo Contexture. This is data mining. To respond to such a request for information, we merely push a button.



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Commonly, the first output of the program has obvious deficiencies and so we need to go back into the data modules stored in the contexture and do a minor amount of tweaking, and then we need to punch that button again and do a recompile of the chronology – but there is nothing here that remotely resembles the ordinary “writerly” process which you know and love. As the contents of this originating contexture improve, and as the programming improves, and as funding becomes available (to date no funding whatever has been needed in the creation of this facility, the entire operation being run out of pocket change) we expect a diminished need to do such tweaking and recompiling, and we fully expect to achieve a simulation of a generous and untiring robotic research librarian. Onward and upward in this brave new world.

First come first serve. There is no charge.
Place your requests with <Kouroo@kouroo.info>.
Arrgh.