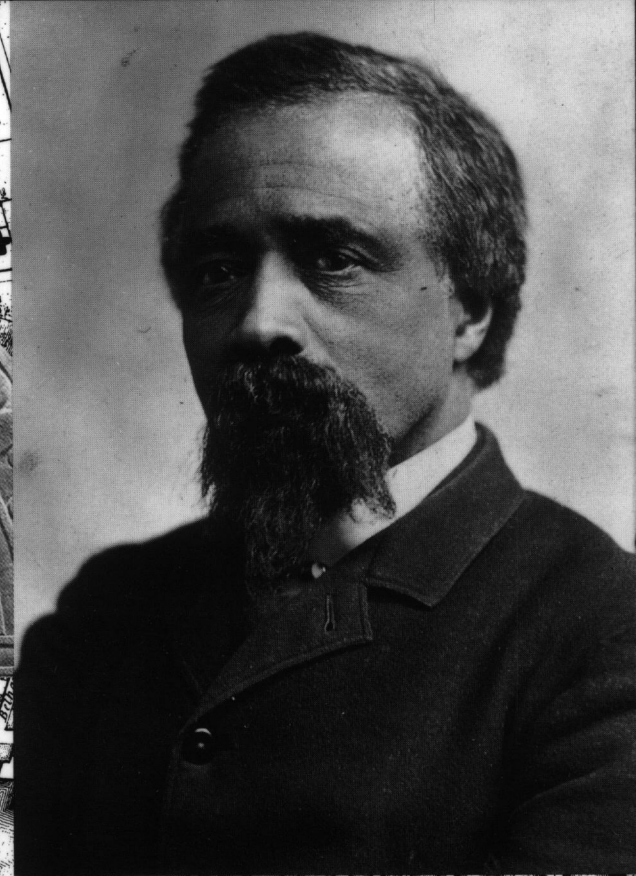


AFRICAN AMERICANS in NEWPORT

An Introduction to the Heritage of African Americans in Newport, Rhode Island, 1700-1945



RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL PRESERVATION & HERITAGE COMMISSION
RHODE ISLAND BLACK HERITAGE SOCIETY



Richard C. Youngken

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Acknowledgments

This introduction to Newport's African-American heritage is the outgrowth of the research and advocacy of key individuals within the city's African-American community. Without the assistance of Paul Gaines, Gert Henry, Edna Johnston, Eleanor Keys, Regina Parker, Charlotte Parks, Harry Rice, Theresa Stokes, Warren Weston, and Elsie Yates, the compilation of material would not have been possible. Dr. Daniel Snyder of the Newport Historical Society provided a detailed critique of the work as well as guidance on research materials. Joan Youngken, Collections Manager at the Newport Historical Society, gave direction and focus to the photo search which centered in the Society's rich collection. She also doubled as an editor/proofreader. Both Bertram Lippincott III, Librarian, and Ronald M. Potvin, Curator of Manuscripts at the Newport Historical Society, were tremendously helpful throughout the research process. The Rev. Dr. Frank Carpenter provided invaluable research in connection with the Pope Street area and key Africans of the early period. James C. Garman and Ronald Onorato were most helpful serving as scholarly readers of the document. Pam Bradford provided great skill in her editing/proofreading work. Special thanks to Jane Carey, who provided considerable graphics skills, formatting the document, selecting the illustrations and photographs. Jane's commitment to the project and her creativity have been outstanding. RCY

Front Cover: (Left to right) Marguerite and Mildred Hicks. Collection of the Newport Historical Society. Pompey Brenton gravestone. Photograph by Robert Foley, Collection of the Advisory Commission on the Common Burying Ground, City of Newport. Edward Bannister. Collection of the Rhode Island Historical Society. Blaskowitz Map. (detail) Collection of the Newport Historical Society. Back cover: (Left to right) Katherine Hurley. Collection of Eleanor Keys. Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church. Collection of Eleanor Keys. 47 John Street. Photograph by Richard Youngken. William A. Jackson. Collection of Eleanor Keys.

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The Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission is your state agency for historical preservation. The Commission identifies and protects historic buildings, districts, landscapes, structures, and archaeological sites throughout the State of Rhode Island.



Ida Hurley Golden, daughter of Armstead Hurley, businessman. Collection of Regina Parker

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M. Alonzo van Horne, D.D.S. Collection of the Rhode Island Black Heritage Society.
van Horne Collection

Preface

This publication reports on the extraordinarily long and rich history of African Americans in the City of Newport. The project was a two year effort, funded by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission and reflects the long-standing commitment of the Commission to ensure that the history of all Rhode Islanders is reflected in its historical preservation activities.

The Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission first proposed this research and publication effort to the Rhode Island Black Heritage Society in 1990, and since then the Society has been the Commission's enthusiastic and supportive partner in the project.

The initial phase of this project was carried out by Beth Parkhurst and Kevin Gaines, under a grant made by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission to the Rhode Island Black Heritage Society and the City of Newport. The first phase of the project identified relevant sources and issues in the history of African-American Newporters, and identified some sites and buildings associated with significant people and events.

The second phase of the project, also supported by grant funding from the Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission to the Rhode Island Black Heritage Society and the City of Newport, was carried out by Richard C. Youngken of the Newport Collaborative. This part of the project relied heavily on the active participation and advice of a number of Newporters familiar with the City's African-American community and history. The second phase of the project produced this report, additional research to be added to the National Register nominations, and several public presentations.

The Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission and the Rhode Island Black Heritage Society are pleased to bring this study of African Americans in Newport to a wide audience. Both the Commission and the Society are grateful to all those who helped make our project a success, but especially to our unusually able consultants, particularly Richard C. Youngken and Jane Carey, and to the many Newporters who shared their time, their knowledge, their buildings, their photographs, and their care and affection for their city.

Edward F. Sanderson
Executive Director, Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission

Linda A'Vant-Deishinni
Executive Director, Rhode Island Black Heritage Society



World War I servicemen, City Hall. Collection of the Newport Historical Society.

Foreword

African-American culture has made many contributions to the varied cultures of the world and has advanced the heritage and legacy of thousands of years of human response as it impacts upon the 355 years of the African-American sojourn in Newport, Rhode Island. It is our hope that this historical and cultural documentation of some of the accomplishments made by the African Americans who helped to build our historic city of Newport is enjoyed and shared by people of all cultures. This document, showing a portrait of the African-American community in Newport, should serve as a major credential for not only African Americans living in Newport and the United States, but for scholars, tourists, educators, business people, government workers and others in the world audience. We would also hope that this will give the readers a relationship with, and a representation of some of our forbearers' lives, their activities, their successes, little or well known, and facts about the African-American community of Newport.

We remember that it is not only important, but it is our duty, to keep alive, by documentation, these contributions to society by African Americans for present and future generations. History is a powerful tool that helps us to understand that the world is controlled by ideas and it is our clock we use to tell our time of day. History also is our compass to help us find ourselves on the map of human geography and it records where we have been, where we are and where we are going in relation to others.

This chronicle, unfortunately, can not exhibit or present every detail of African-American life that contributed to the historic significance of the City of Newport or to the vibrant African-American community that existed within its confines. We are certain that inadvertent omissions of individuals and their related activities will occur, but a valid attempt was made to select

information, personalities and activities that exemplified some of the significant contributions that would accompany the rich heritage that impacted not only on the local and state spectrums but on the national and world stage as well. It is our hope that the manner in which the data, the photographs and the maps are presented reflects not just accuracy, but also exhibits the pride and the love we have for such a noble subject.

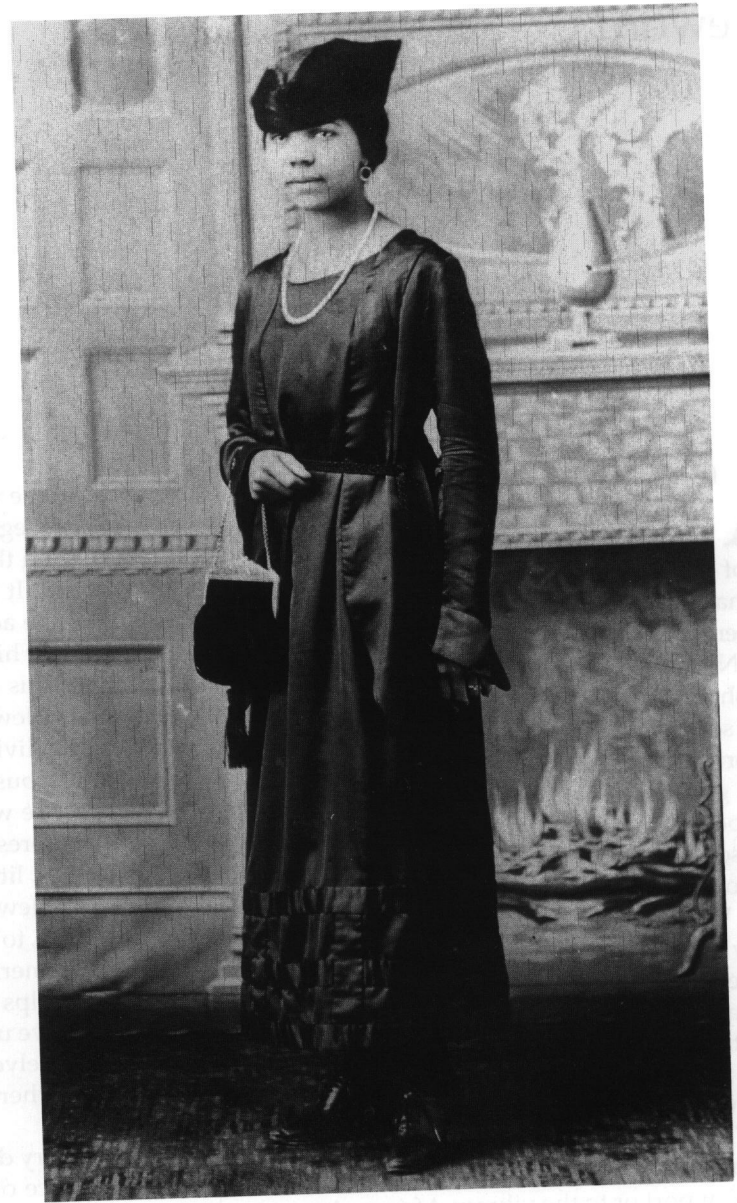
Hopefully, those readers who witnessed some of these past accomplishments, personalities and activities, and those who contributed information to this effort, will appreciate and share our joy and pride in the discovery, revelation and recording of these glorious contributions of a glorious people living in Newport, Rhode Island since 1700.

This is our story; this is our song. . . . And to that end, I hope each of you who are a part of our community and remember relevant people and places of our heritage, take the time to write down your history in the note section at the back of this book. This in turn can be passed down to your children and their children as we have done to keep our history alive.

Paul L. Gaines



Louis Walker. Collection of Eleanor Keys.



Rita Ray. Collection of Eleanor Keys.

Be Brave, Have Courage, Persevere

Introduction

In 1908, Dr. Marcus F. Wheatland, a prominent Newport African-American physician, spoke to the nation's black community through an article entitled "Getting Along Under Difficulties" published in the *Colored American Magazine*. He said, "Be brave, have courage and persevere". He echoed in one phrase the accomplishments of his Newport, a city whose African-American community had gained influence and prospered.

The history of African Americans in Newport illustrates the perseverance of an ethnic culture and race in extreme adversity. It illustrates the contribution of African Americans to the development of one of the five leading North American eighteenth century colonial communities, to the survival of Newport following the Revolution, and to its later rebirth as one of North America's leading resorts. It is a history of the interplay of economic development and social systems, acculturation, and the survival of an independent black community within the city prior to World War II.

The survey of African Americans in Newport is a window on the evolution of an urban black community influenced by socio-economic factors in the northeastern region of the United States. The influences upon the community included a hybridized form of slavery which was a significant force in the local economy; early anti-slavery and abolitionist agitation spurred by white religious leaders within a community of toleration; the early development of African cultural institutions by free Africans to preserve customs and create an independence; and early participation in both the African Colonization movement and in the counter-reaction espoused by mid and late 19th century black integrationist leaders striving for black achievement and independence. All of these forces within the black community nationally are exemplified in Newport's black heritage and, in many cases, it is from Newport that these influences actually emanate. This rich heritage of African Americans is physically represented by a wealth of historic resources ranging across the entire period of significance: 1700-1945.

Methodology

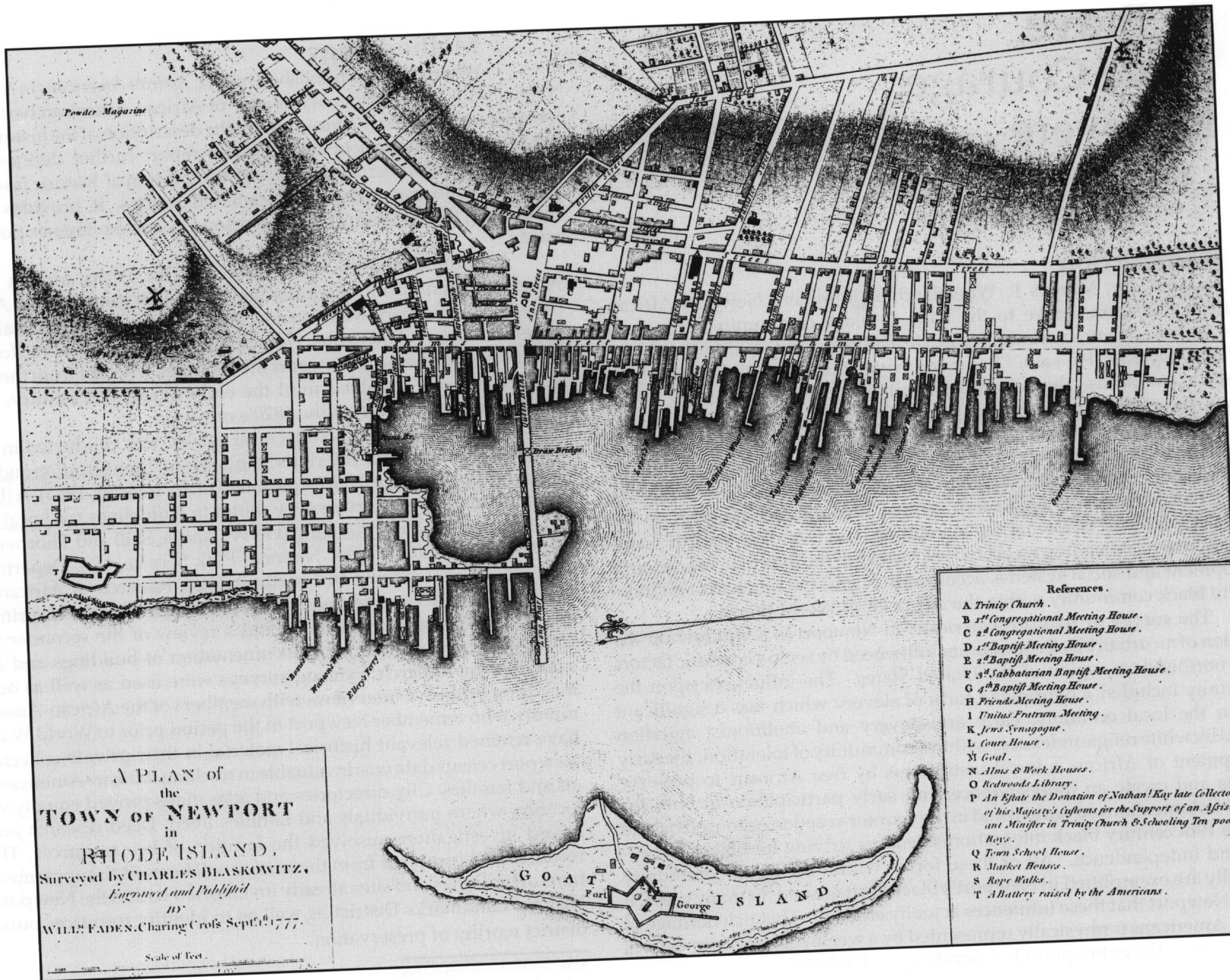
Whereas the unpublished report: *African Americans in Newport, (1600-1960, Part I)*, the preliminary survey of African-American heritage in Newport, has as its primary concentration the description of the historical presence of African-Americans in the city, this report further defines and frames principal developmental periods and the location of historic resources which physically illustrate these developmental periods. It provides a context for evaluating the significance of local resources and a reference point for future study.

A distinction is made here between the terms African and African American. Significantly African refers to the first generation of Africans who came to Newport and who carried their homeland in their hearts. The next generation were Americans, participating freely in striving for success as permanent residents. In Newport the Africans, whether from the West Indies or African, were involved until the early nineteenth century. The second generation took hold from the 1820's onward.

This historical and architectural survey was conducted in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Identification and Evaluation (National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1983). A discussion of the general methodology may be found in Guidelines for Local Surveys: A Basis for Preservation Planning (Derry, Jandle, Shill and Thorman, National Register of Historic Places, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1977). Utilizing this methodology, research of African American historic resources was first undertaken with an emphasis on primary source material in Newport Collections and a review of the secondary literature, followed by the location and documentation of buildings and sites represented in the research. Existing surveys were used as well as oral sources, including extensive interviews with members of the African-American community who remember Newport in the period prior to World War II or who have retained relevant historical material in their private collections. Early Newport census data was invaluable in tracking African-American individuals and families. City directories and atlas maps proved equally valuable in locating where individuals and families lived. Deed research and probate record investigations resolved the location of key resources. The historic resources list compiled from the survey will be used to supplement descriptions of buildings and sites already inventoried within the Newport National Historic Landmarks District as well as to identify resources outside of the district worthy of preservation.

Note on footnote references

The authors and sources noted in parentheses at the end of paragraphs in the text refer to the annotated bibliography. Where specific pages are listed, key source material pertinent to the topic is cited; where just the author or institution is mentioned, general supporting material is available.



A PLAN of
 the
TOWN OF NEWPORT
 in
 RHODE ISLAND,
 Surveyed by CHARLES BLASKOWITZ,
Engraved and Published
 by
 WILHELM FADEN, Charing Cross Sept^r 1777.

Scale of Feet.

References.

- A Trinity Church.
- B 1st Congregational Meeting House.
- C 2^d Congregational Meeting House.
- D 1st Baptist Meeting House.
- E 2^d Baptist Meeting House.
- F 3^d Sabbatarian Baptist Meeting House.
- G 4th Baptist Meeting House.
- H Friends Meeting House.
- I Unius Fratrum Meeting.
- K Jews Synagogue.
- L Court House.
- M Goal.
- N Alms & Work Houses.
- O Redwoods Library.
- P An Ephraim the Donation of Nathan! Kay late Collector of his Majesty's Customs for the Support of an Assistant Minister in Trinity Church & Schooling Ten poor Boys.
- Q Town School House.
- R Market House.
- S Rope Walks.
- T A Battery raised by the Americans.

Chapter 1

Slavery : 1700 -1800

ORIGINS:

UNDERSTANDING THE BACKGROUND CULTURE

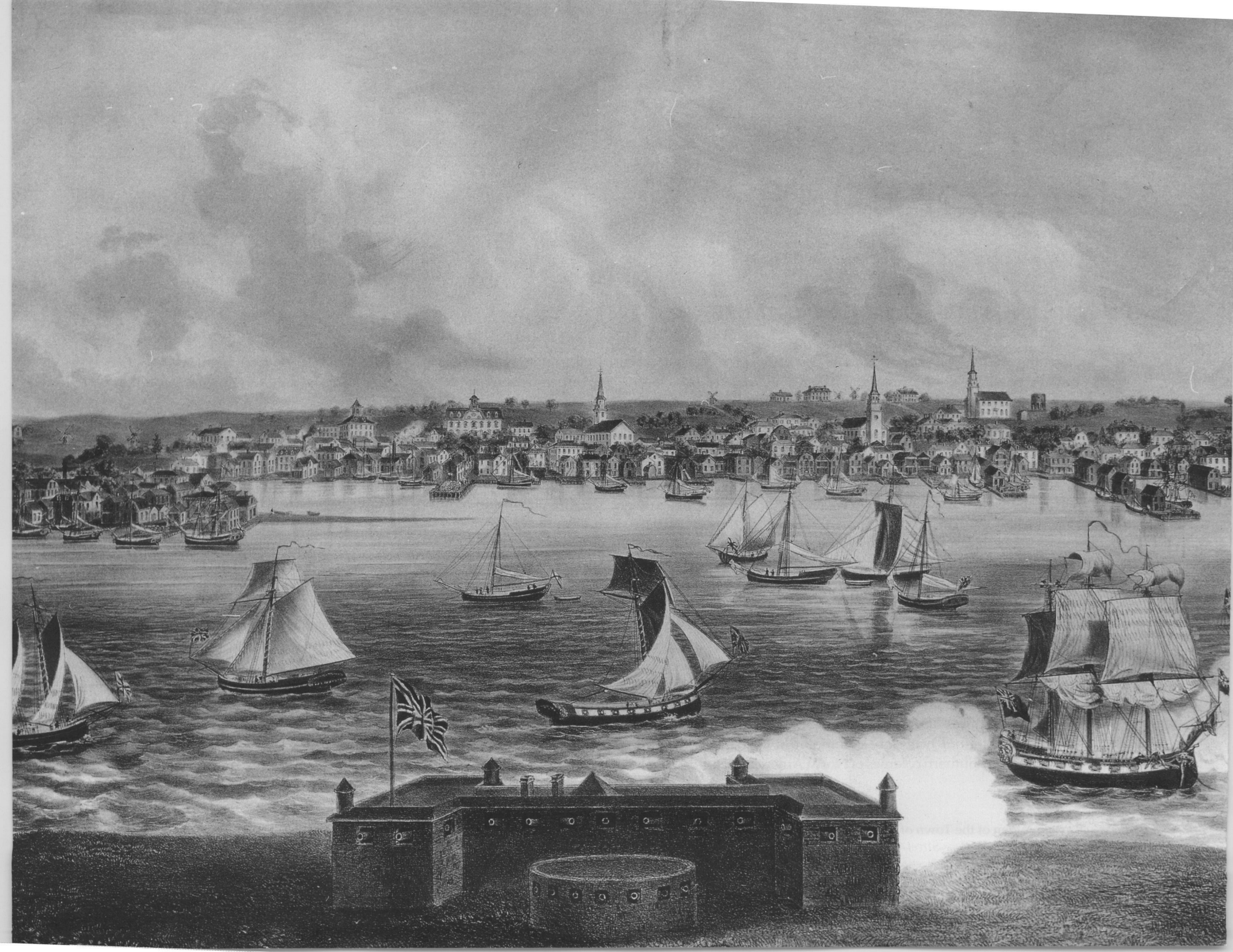
Eighteenth century Newport evolved as one of the principal colonial trading ports in North America in large part due to the clever exploitation of coastal, West Indian and European trading markets. The coastal market provided for the shipment into Newport of produce and raw materials which were transhipped along the northeast and southern coasts as market items, either produce and livestock or manufactured goods such as rum, spermaceti candles, barrels, and luxury items such as furniture and silver goods. The West Indian market included the so-called "triangle" trade in which rum distilled in Newport was traded on the West African coast by Newporters directly for slaves. The slaves were transported to the West Indies and sold to sugar cane and rice planters. Molasses was purchased in the West Indies with slave profits and transported back to Newport to be distilled into rum. Other commodities required for the sustenance of West Indian plantation life were shipped directly from Newport and from other coastal ports. The profits derived from slave trading may have provided for Newport merchants the extra venture capital to indulge in additional trade or luxury items. Overall, the West Indies trade was far more important to Newport's eighteenth century economy than the sale of African slaves to plantation owners. Newporters played a role in the development and perpetuation of slavery in the New World. This role was not, however solely as slave traders, but as suppliers of mundane but necessary commodities to the slave-owning Caribbean countries and the southern colonies of North America. Newport's West

Indies and coastal trades were an essential part of what has been described as the "plantation complex". Newport merchants kept that complex alive and profitable. (Curtin)

The triangle trade became more fully developed after 1740. Prior to the mid-eighteenth century, slaves were brought back to Newport in greater numbers either to be sold locally -- particularly to plantations in the Narragansett Country across the Bay-- or to be transported south to be sold in the southern colonies. After the mid-eighteenth century, Newport slavers primarily sold Africans in the West Indies after completing a Middle Passage from the African coast. Some slaves were culled for transport to Newport either from the African coast or the West Indies by special request from ship-owners or as captains' privilege, to be disposed of separately from the cargo. Others were obtained from West Indies plantations having been "seasoned" through a period of acculturation there. Research by Daniel Snydacker and others has suggested that many African Americans were second generation West Indian slaves imported into Newport in small groups of 1-3. Others came from other mainland southern colonies. Many were brought back to Newport for domestic, manual and specialized labor. At its peak, slaving interests in Newport owned or managed more than 30 rum distilleries and 150 vessels engaged in the trade. This was a small number when compared to the global slave market. Newport's share was less than 0.10% of the world market.(Coughtry; Preston p.67 et seq., Withey)

Newporters entered the African slave trade on the "Guinea" coast relatively late in its exploitation by Europeans. They developed a competitive, hybrid slaving system, producing a highly sought-after higher-proof "Guinea" rum in their stillhouses which bought a higher value on the African coast in barter for slaves than other exchange items. Newport rum became a currency standard in this trade.

Charles Blaskowitz map, A Plan of the Town of Newport, Rhode Island, 1777. Note the wharves and their merchant owners. Pope Street, an area of early African-American settlement, is at the southern edge of town. (Detail) Collection of the Newport Historical Society.



The Newport-based slave ship was small by European standards, holding perhaps one half to one quarter as many slaves as English or French slavers. Smaller cargos were preferred by West Indies factors due to market conditions which failed to handle large quantities of slaves at auction. Large slave ships glutted markets with slaves in poor condition. Newport slavers were known in the marketplace for transporting slaves in better health in numbers which could easily be sold at island auctions. (Coughtry)

Of significance is the fact that the triangle trade originating in Newport was controlled by key Newport merchants and entrepreneurs. In some cases it developed into a form of vertical business in which merchants controlled distilling, shipping, and the raw materials - slaves and sugar cane. Newporter Abraham Redwood owned a sizable sugar plantation in the West Indies as well as slaving and trading interests in Newport. Redwood may have been the only Newporter to have attempted such a monopoly; whether or not other Newport merchants were successful remains for further research. Newport became an entrepôt for distribution of local and international commodities. Newport's great merchant families participated in the trade including Malbones, Banisters, Gardners, Wantons, Brentons, Collins, Vernons, Aaron Lopez and his father-in-law Jacob Rodrigues Rivera, and the Channings, among many others. (Crane, Coughtry) These wealthy merchants had the financial capacity to undertake the risks involved in the slave trade. They were also able to take full advantage of the sizable profits offered by successful slave-shipping and trading.

The importation of Africans was an ingredient in the operation of the trade on several levels. Not only did slavery provide a major new profit sector and an engine for trade with the West Indies, it most likely provided the manpower needed in Newport to produce, load and transport market products, with a large portion bound for the plantations in the West Indies or the African coast (principally rum). (Coughtry p.180 et seq.) Newport's continued rivalry of Charleston, Philadelphia, New York and Boston before the Revolution may not have been sustained if local merchants had not been involved in slavery, the triangle trade, and West Indian markets or had not been innovative in establishing vertical and factor-based markets with quality trading products. Slavery bolstered rum distilling and provided a growing plantation market in the West Indies for food stuffs (including dried fish) and raw materials such as lumber and wood products shipped directly from Newport. (Walton, et al)

THE AFRICAN COAST ORIGINS

The African coast from Senegal to the Bight of Benin had been influenced by European slaving from the sixteenth century. It was this area which supplied Newporters in the eighteenth century. Characterized by coastal river estuaries and forest, the area was home to various tribes, villages and cultural centers with a single family of languages known as Kwa. The forest belt produced an agricultural lifestyle based upon hoe cultivation and the raising of root crops, rice, yams, cocoyams, fruits - - including cultivated bananas - - and tree crops from oil and raffia palms and the cola tree. Hunting and trapping were prominent within the culture. Livestock husbandry was also prominent, including raising fowl, goats, pigs and, in a few areas, dwarf cattle. Iron tools were available but in limited supply and woodcrafts produced goods, buildings (massive assembly halls), and the decorative arts such as stools, slit gongs, drums, ceremonial statuary and masks. (Piersen, Stuckey)

There were areas of higher civilization. Islam had penetrated to the western area of the coast from areas to the north and northeast but was limited in its influence east of Senegambia. The Akan-speaking African peoples of Ghana and the Ivory Coast as well as the Yoruba and Edo (Beni) peoples of present day southwest Nigeria had greater technical skills and a sophisticated political organization. This culture grew cotton for weaving cloth. Bronze, brass, gold and precious stones were used artistically to embellish ceremonial objects. A hereditary aristocracy evolved. Extensive buildings were erected at coastal towns with protective walls and moats. Armies from more primitive tribes were enemies. Africans captured in battle were enslaved by their African conquerors. These slaves were traded on the coast by Africans for the highly desirable Newport "Guinea" rum. By the time Newporters became involved in slave trading, Africans had established a centuries old tradition of slavery and slave trading not only with Europeans but with fellow Africans.

Newport's eighteenth century skyline was punctuated by four churches (from left to right): Friends Meeting House, Ezra Stiles' Second Congregational, , Anglican Trinity and Samuel Hopkins' First Congregational. Small sloops in the foreground, as well as snows, schooners and brigs, were typical of ships involved with coastal and African trade. (Detail) Collection of the Newport Historical Society

The European trading posts, or "slave castles," established along the coast to exploit trade in gold, ivory, spices and slaves, certainly influenced local traditions. These settlements consisted of permanent and semi-permanent building complexes, many of masonry construction. From the first incursions in the sixteenth-century, traders provided muskets and gunpowder, further militarizing local chiefdoms. (Dow) Slave raiding and trading evolved into a primary means of attaining power and prestige. The Akwamu, Ashanti, Dahomey and Oyo chiefdoms in the interior sought to gain hegemony over each other for control of trading routes to and from the coast. The small fishing villages of the river deltas were transformed into slave-for-rum trading centers. (Coughtry)

During Newport's ascendance among North American ports furnishing ships for the African slave trade, slaves were obtained from all of these tribes through capture by Africans and barter for Newport "Guinea" rum with Newport-based slave captains and slaving interests. The slaves were shipped from Africa either directly back to Newport (for future transshipment in New England or south) or to the West Indies for sale to island and southern plantation-owners.

Although each of these African tribes had individual cultures, the white participants in slaving, including slave ship captains, factors and planters who became slave owners, usually could not distinguish between the tribes. Some have said, however, that Africans from Gambia, Senegal, Cormantee, and Eboe obtained higher prices in the South Carolina and Georgia slave markets, presumably for acquired skills in agriculture (rice farming, among others). (Coughtry p.187 et seq.)

Newport. June 6, 1763.

ON Thursday intl arriv'd from the Coast of
AFRICA, the Brig *ROYAL CHARLOTTE*,
with a Parcel of extreme fine, healthy, well limb'd,
Gold Coast SLAVES,

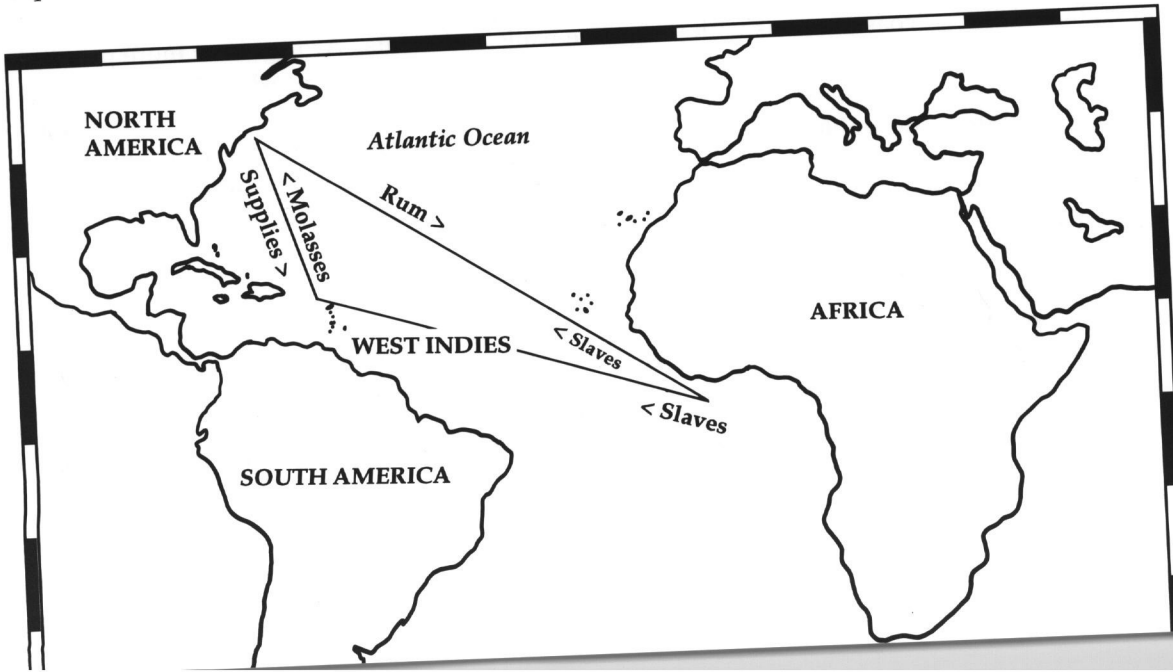
Men, Women, Boys, and Girls, Gentlemen in Town
and Country men now an Opportunity to furnish
themselves with such as will suit them. Those that
want, are desired to apply very speedily, or they
will have the Advantage of supplying themselves.
They are to be seen on board the Vessel at Tay-
lor's Wharf.

Apply to *Thomas Teskle Taylor,*
Samuel and William Vernon.

N. B. Those that remain on Hand will be shipped
off very soon.

(Top) Advertisements like this appeared frequently in the Newport Mercury. Collection of the Newport Historical Society.

The triangle trade, in its most simple terms, consisted of shipping Newport rum to the African coast for bartering for slaves. (About 100 gallons would buy a healthy adult male.) The slaves were shipped to the West Indies or North America and sold for bills of exchange on European banks. Sugar cane, ground by plantation slaves and refined into molasses, was the principal commodity purchased in the West Indies for shipment back to Newport for distilling into rum. The cycle was enhanced by coastal trading between Newport and West Indies ports, in which foodstuffs, wood, lumber and other supplies were shipped to the West Indies plantations to sustain slave labor. In many cases, before the mid-eighteenth century, slaves were shipped directly back to Newport from Africa for trans-shipment south or sale within the city and neighboring towns



Supply and Demand

The total number of slaves taken from the African coast by Newporters prior to the Revolution was 59,067 individuals, a very small number when compared to the estimated ten to fifteen million Africans shipped to the western world as slaves. After the American Revolution, until Rhode Island law finally abolished the trade in 1807, an additional 47,477 slaves were transported by Rhode Island ships, including those from Newport and Bristol. Of the total (106,544 African slaves) shipped by Newporters from the African coast, a small percentage (less than two percent) were actually brought to Newport (either directly from Africa or by way of the West Indies), sold to Newport residents and became part of the local population. A far greater number were sold to West Indian and Southern plantation interests. Within the New England region, there was a demand for slaves in the eighteenth century to service primarily agricultural interests. The plantations of Rhode Island, on Aquidneck Island and in Washington ("South") County were supplied from Newport. The greater region was supplied by the major slaving ports: Newport, Bristol (after the Revolution) and Boston. (Coughtry)

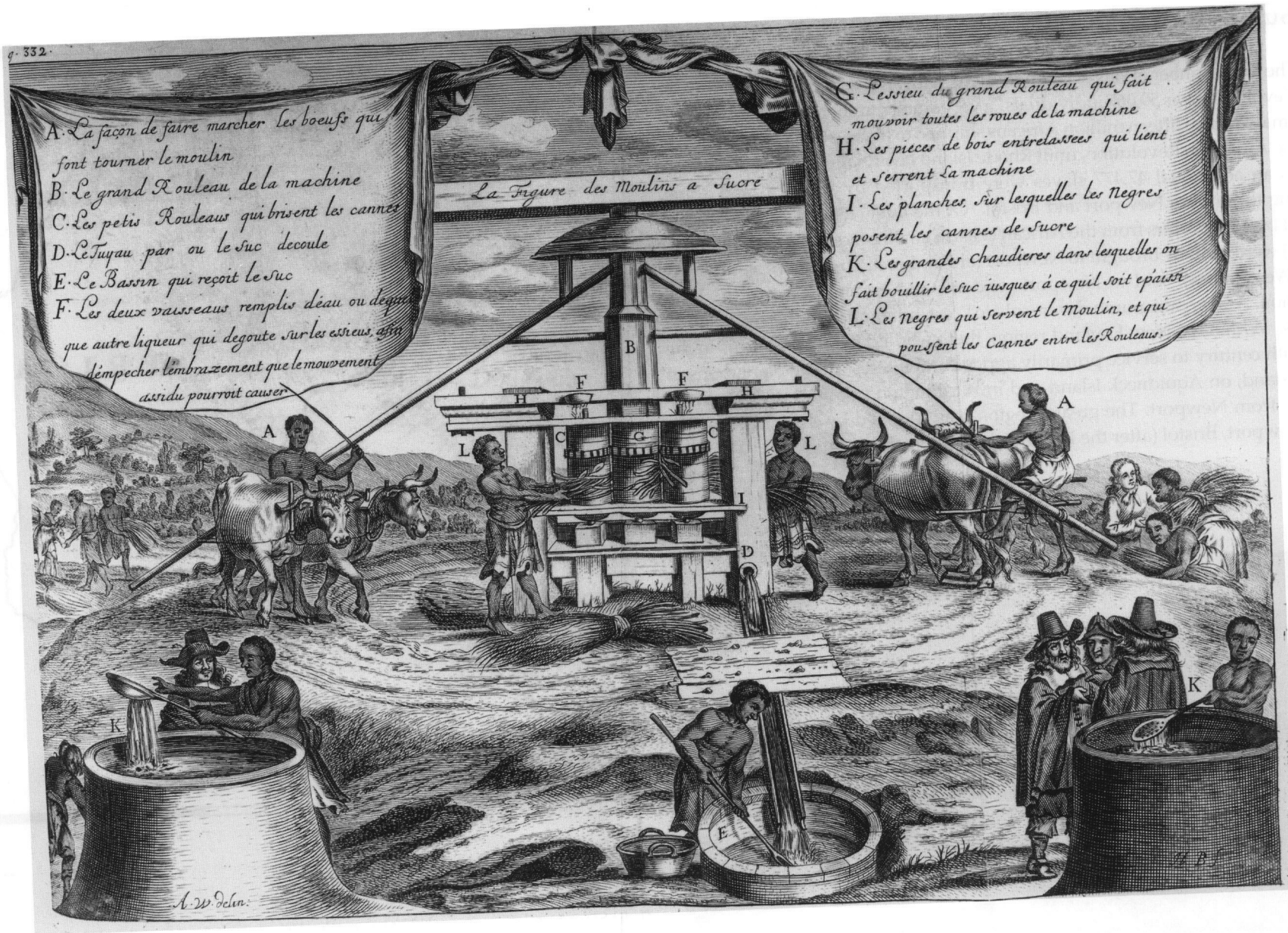


(Above) The West African Coast today.

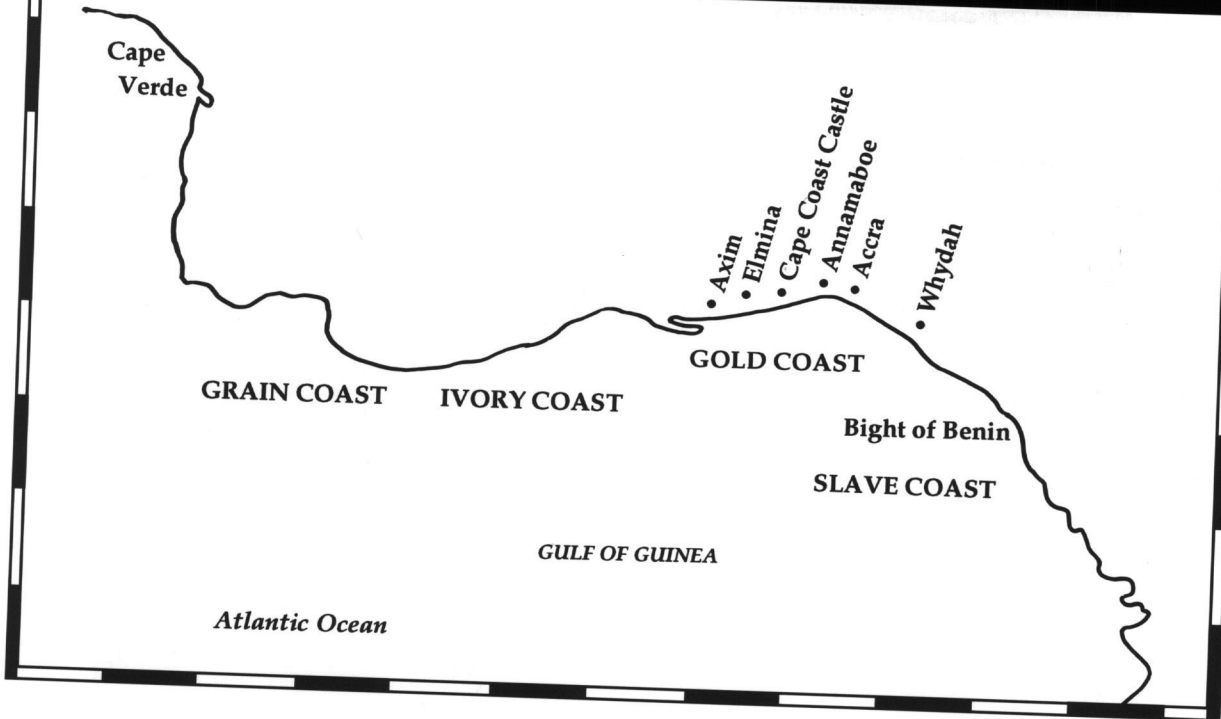
(Left) Slave "castles" were established along the African coast from Cape Verde to the Bight of Benin. These sometimes fortified posts served as collection areas for slaves bartered for rum and other commodities by African tribes and European dealers. Collection of the Rhode Island Black Heritage Society.



g. 332.



Processing sugar cane on a tropical plantation.
 Collection of the Library Company of Philadelphia.



The "Gold Coast" (slaving grounds) of Africa extended from Cape Verde and Senegal on the west to the Bight of Benin to the east. Annamaboe, an often-cited port of call for Newport slavers, was located in proximity to Cape Coast Castle. Slave ports punctuated the coastline along the entire zone. The African population of the coast included Mandingo, Mende, Ashanti, Yoruba, Edo and Ibo tribes. European traders established posts at such ports as Cape Coast Castle, Annamaboe, Whydah, Axim, Elmina and Accra. The area is predominantly characterized by a coastal forest.

In the eighteenth century, the West Indies was a common destination for African slaves. Newport slavers and traders traveled as far as Surinam (coast of South America) to exchange slaves for bills of exchange.





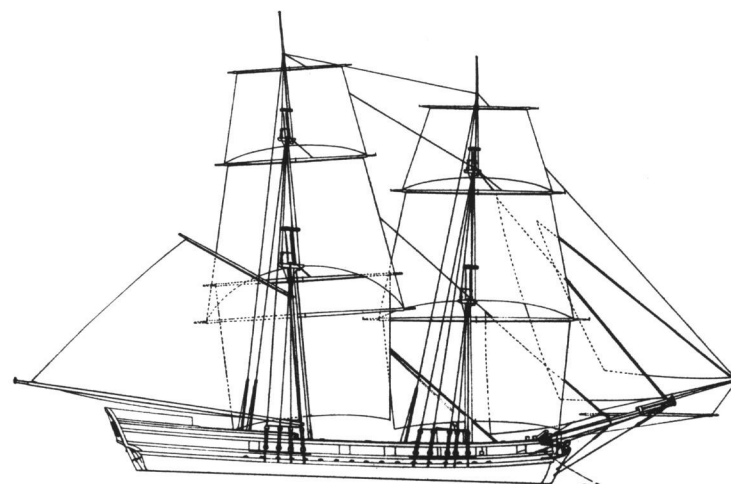
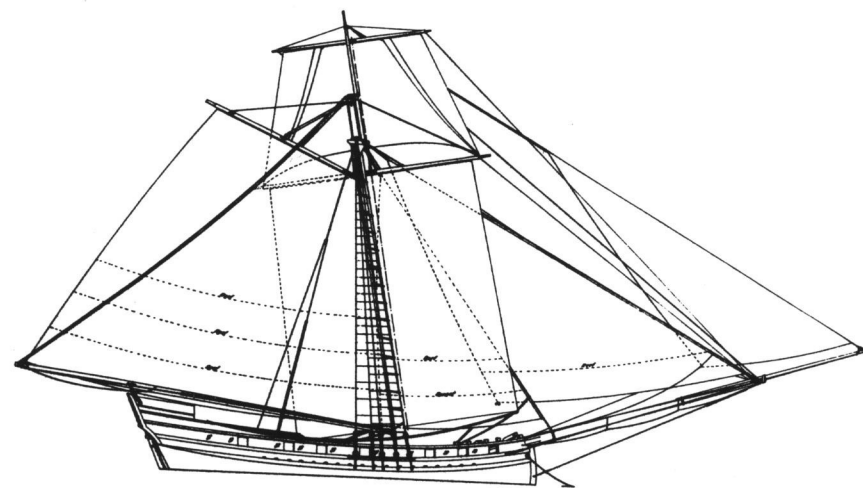
Sea Captains Carousing in Surinam by John Greenwood, 1755.

Newport slavers and traders traveled as far as Surinam (South America) to trade slaves for bills of exchange. Rhode Island traders were once described as "a lawless set of smugglers" by Lord Loudon, British commander in America. Prominent traders identified in this painting include Newporters Joseph Wanton and Nicholas Cooke. Collection of the St. Louis Art Museum

The number of Africans in Newport, however, was large compared to the local white population residing in town. During the peak years of Newport's pre-Revolutionary golden age, upwards of twenty to thirty-three percent of the local population was black or African. Thirty percent of white families in Newport owned slaves at this time. Just prior to the Revolution, about 150 Newport families each owned three or more slaves. (Coughtry; NHS, 1774 Census)

Employment, Acculturation and Residency

Newport's eighteenth-century economy took full advantage of the availability of African labor. This was also true of the regional economy, driven by the production of produce and agricultural goods on the plantations of the Narragansett Country in Washington County to the west and Aquidneck Island. Employment appears to have included domestic service, primarily for woman, children, and aged slaves, and domestic and manual labor for men. Male slaves were utilized for manual activities associated with rum production, barrel-making, wharf-warehousing, ship-building and associated services such as rope-making; the marine trades including ship's cook and porter, whaling and seaman; animal husbandry; teamster and livery services; blacksmithing; candle-making; the building trades including masonry and wood crafts; silver-making; furniture-making; and printing. With the exception of the marine trades and the printing trade, local employment of slaves appears to have followed skills already known in Africa or the West Indies. It is possible that Africans brought with them animal husbandry, cooking and building skills that enhanced the European traditions already in use in Newport. The sites of this employment include wharf areas and related distilleries, ship yards, rope walks, spermaceti candle factories, furniture-making establishments, major building projects and homes where slaves were known to live and to be employed domestically. (NHS, Richardson; *Newport Mercury* advert. 1760-70; Piersen)



A sloop sail plan with square sail, and typical of small vessels in the African trade. Approximately 60 - 70 feet at the waterline (WL) and between 50 and 100 tons, these vessels were nearly half the size of their European competitors.

A brig sail plan and vessel typical of the African trade, approximately 60 - 70 feet (WL)
Collection of the Smithsonian Institution

Occupations

The 1774 Newport census is an indication of slave employment by both merchants and craftsmen. The majority of those owning quantities of slaves fall into these two categories. Quantities of slaves were owned by distillery, slave trade and shipping interests, as well as furniture and cabinet-makers, silver/goldsmiths, local builders and stonemasons. (NHS, Richardson; 1774 Census)

Aaron Lopez and his father-in-law, Jacob Rodrigues Rivera, wealthy merchants with slaving interests in European export trade, held 17 slaves in 1774 as well as employing slaves of other owners. Manual labor was required for stevedore/warehousing activities. Lopez and Rivera followed a common pattern of slave use in Newport in the marine trades. Not only were their own slaves employed on Lopez and Rivera-owned vessels, but ship manifests and letter-contracts show the names of slaves rented from other Newport owners. Lopez's and Rivera's interests ranged across a wide spectrum of trade including coastal and trans-Atlantic exchange of goods. Rivera is credited with the introduction of spermaceti candles to Newport trade, a sector that became increasingly significant during the 18th century. (NHS, Aaron Lopez letterbooks; Rotenburg; Chyet)



(Top left) Potter Overmantle (ca. 1740) *The "Narragansett Country" farms or plantations of the eighteenth century were the primary focus of slave labor on the west side of Narragansett Bay. House and field slaves were common on these large agricultural holdings. Farm goods were produced for the export trade with Newport serving as the principal shipping port in the region. This painting, of John Potter and his family, which once hung in a large plantation house in Matunuck, Rhode Island, depicts a house slave or freed black serving tea.* Collection of the Newport Historical Society. (53.3)

(Bottom left) Jacob Rodriguez Rivera House, Washington Street (demolished). *This substantial Georgian house stood in close proximity to the Hunter house on the waterfront. Rivera and his son-in-law, Aaron Lopez, were investors in the slave trade and among Newport's leading merchants in the eighteenth century. His house stood within a compound of warehouses and wharves associated with Rivera's mercantile empire. Rivera owned twelve slaves in 1774, some of which are presumed to have been quartered in the garret of this house.* Collection of the Newport Historical Society.

The Newport rum distillers also owned a disproportionate number of slaves, suggesting that Newport's still houses were operated by slave labor. (Crane p65) . Spermaceti candle makers and merchants owned quantities of slaves -- Charles Handy owned four slaves in 1774 and Henry Collins owned 13 slaves at that time.

Several sea captains involved in slaving operations held quantities of slaves. In 1774 Captain John Mawdsley owned 20 slaves, presumably employed as crew on his vessel or hired out to other interests, sea-going or land-based. Studies of post-Revolution maritime employment indicate high numbers of blacks in marine trade and fisheries, including whaling, perhaps continuing colonial traditions of slave employment. (NHS, 1774 Census; Bolster; Dye; Putney) Craftsmen and builders held quantities of slaves as well although not as many as were employed in trading and distillery interests. Charles Spooner, a builder and son of Wing Spooner (the builder of many of Newport's eighteenth century landmarks) held six slaves in 1774. The Townsend family of fine furniture and cabinet makers held six slaves. The Stevens family of stone cutters and masonry builders held less than three slaves among them Pompe Stevens, who left his signature on two gravestones in the Common Burying Ground. (NHS, 1774 Census; Richardson; Downing). *Newport Mercury* owner and printer Samuel Southwick owned four slaves in 1774.



(Top Right) In 1774 Captain John Mawdsley owned twenty slaves, some of whom may have lived in the garret of this imposing 2-1/2 story, gable-on-hip-roofed Georgian house located on Spring Street near John Street. In 1795, after Mawdsley's death, the house was purchased by slave ship captain and prosperous merchant Caleb Gardner. Gardner had owned African Newport Gardner until he was granted his freedom in 1791. It is presumed that many of Mawdsley's slaves were employed in the maritime trades as ship-board cooks, stewards and seaman. Sources indicate that some slaves were employed on slavers (see Coughtry, Malloy). Collection of the Newport Historical Society.

Pitts Head Tavern, Charles Street, near Washington Square, now located on Bridge Street. This substantial Georgian mansion was built for wealthy merchant and art patron Henry Collins. The mansion was given to his niece Mary Ward and her husband, Ebenezer Flagg in the mid-18th century. Flagg participated with Henry Collins and Samuel Engs in the slave trade, jointly owning the slaver *Africa* in 1755. Flagg was a manufacturer of cordage, owning a rope walk, a business which ostensibly employed slave labor. (Johnston p.136) Collection of the Newport Historical Society.





(Above) The Josiah Lyndon house (demolished) stood on Edward Street after being moved from Washington Street. This imposing house was the home of Caesar Lyndon, the slave secretary and purchasing agent of Gov. Josiah Lyndon. Caesar Lyndon was a prominent figure in Newport's pre-Revolutionary African community. He was the first secretary of the African Union Society. His diaries, now at the Rhode Island Historical Society, give a vivid record of life within the African community, including a description of a Portsmouth outing with friends Zingo Stevens, Phillis Lyndon (Zingo's wife), Sarah Searing, Neptune Sisson and his wife Boston Vose, and Prince Thurston. Lyndon spent 30 pounds (Old Tenor) for the outing. Collection of the Newport Historical Society.

(Below) "The Castle", one of the Brenton homesteads at Hammersmith Farm, was owned by Jahleel Brenton and is reported to have been where African slave Cuffe Cockroach lived. Cockroach was legendary for his culinary art in preparing turtle soup. After gaining his freedom (in the late 18th century) Cockroach is said to have become one of Newport's first successful caterers, organizing, among other events, picnics on Rose and Goat Islands for early summer cottagers. (van Rensselaer, p. 342). The Brentons (Benjamin and Jahleel) owned seven slaves in 1774 together with extensive agricultural holdings in the southern portion of the island. Collection of the Newport Historical Society.



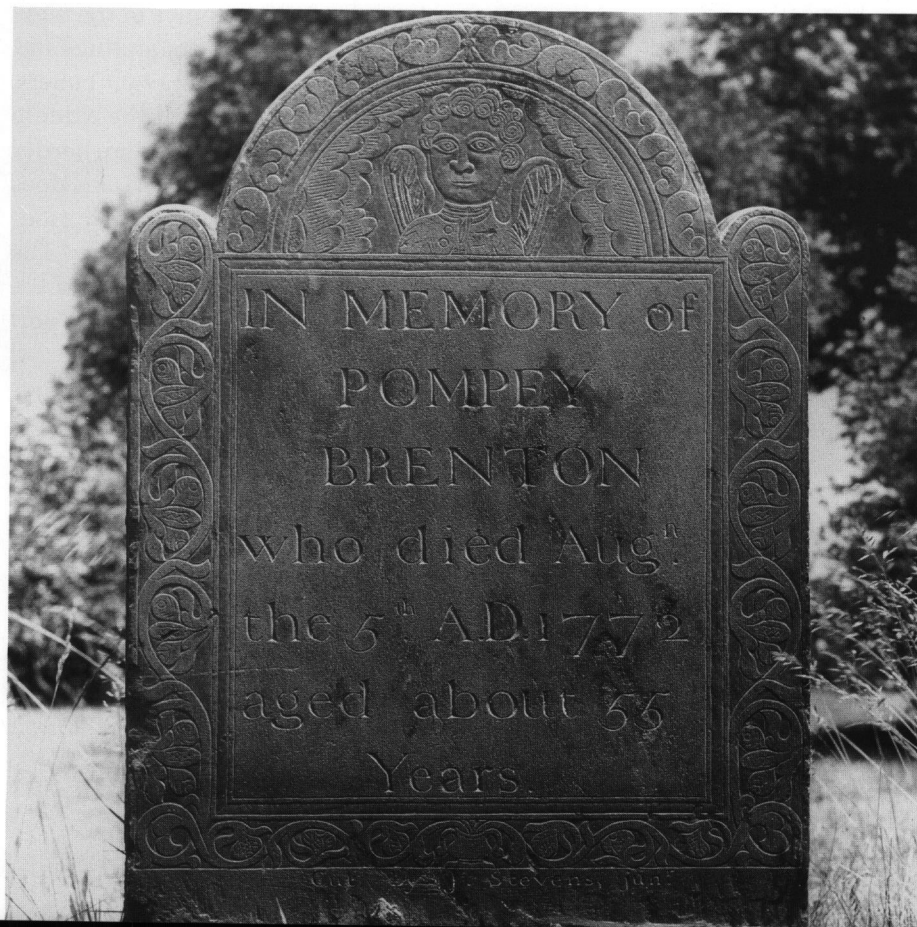


Epitaph

This stone was
cut by Pompe
Stevens in Memo
ry of his Brother
Cuffe Gibbs, who
died (ec.) 27th 1768
(aged) Years

(Left) Cuffe Gibbs stone, Common Burying Ground. African-American Pompe Stevens carved this stone for his brother Cuffe Gibbs and signed it within the epitaph. The John Stevens shop on Thames Street was regionally known for its stone carving and masonry craft. Employed in the shop was Pompe Stevens. Slave labor was presumably utilized for stone carving as well as manual handling of masonry materials. The Stevens shop not only carved and installed gravestones, but was a masonry contractor, building foundations, chimneys, steps and walks. The Cuffe Gibbs stone is one of two signed by Pompe Stevens. Photograph by Robert Foley, courtesy of the Advisory Commission on the Common Burying Ground, City of Newport.

(Below) Pompey Brenton stone, Common Burying Ground. Unlike the generic death's head on the Cuffe Gibbs stone, John Stevens, Jr. attempts a portrait of the deceased with African features. Photograph by Robert Foley, courtesy of the Advisory Commission on the Common Burying Ground, City of Newport.

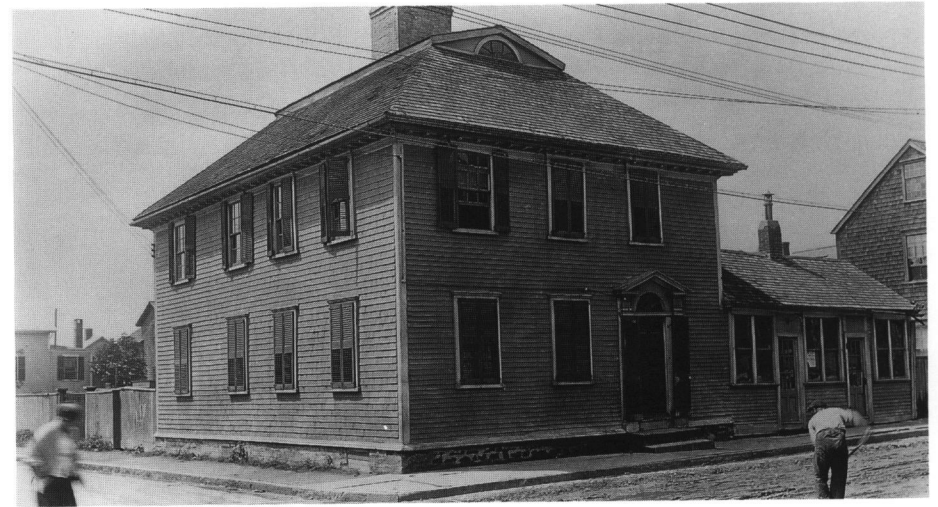
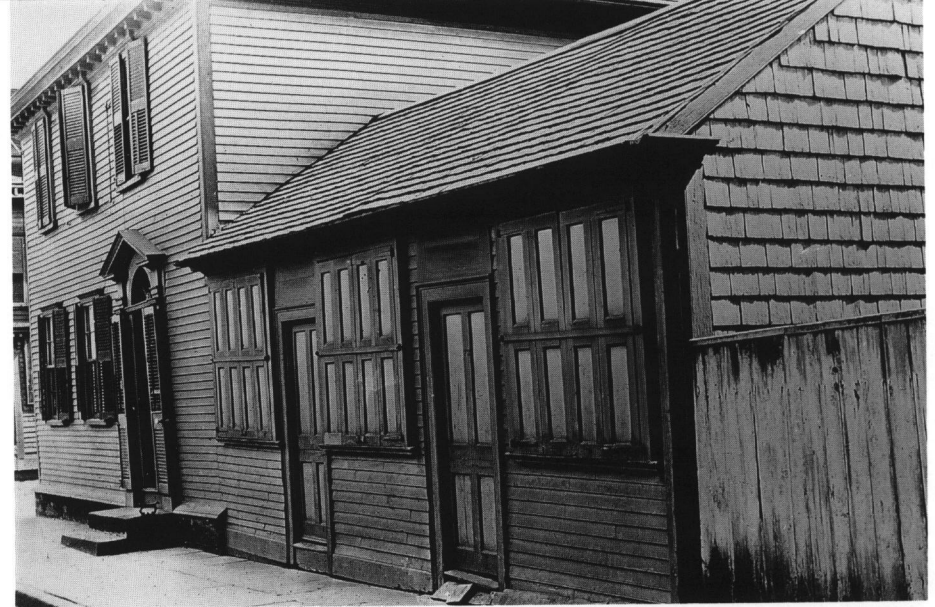


CULTURAL ASSIMILATION

The process of acculturation began on the slave ship. Contemporary accounts describe the anguish of the enslaved Africans once brought aboard, their endurance of the Middle Passage from the African Coast to the West Indies, their arrival, sale and final disposition in the colonies. Significantly, the fear of whites, inhumane treatment, and the expectation that they would be eventually eaten in the New World, as well as a belief that in death they could return to their homeland, drove many to commit suicide during the passage. The common base of the coastal African languages did allow for communication in native tongues. Learning English, however, proved to be a major impediment to initial acculturation. The process of enslavement brought together Africans of diverse backgrounds and stripped them of the freedom to cling to specific practices and beliefs. All these factors made it very difficult for those in bondage to sustain their cultural systems intact and unaltered.

Enslaved Africans from many societies brought together in the New World began to forge a brand new culture out of common understandings and shared crises. This new culture had distinct institutions, religious beliefs, kinship roles and began to take shape during the nightmare of the Middle Passage (Mintz and Price). The fact that distinctly African elements are harder to identify in this new, creative culture of Newport's African Americans does not mean that African Americans failed in maintaining their identity in the face of their enslavement and the racism of the dominant white culture. The strength and resiliency of this new culture, it could be argued, is behind the remarkable successes the African-American community enjoyed in Newport in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Africans who came to Newport *via* the West Indies may have been assimilated in a West Indian-African culture characterized by combinations of native island, African and European customs. Once in Newport, retention of African culture included, for some, retaining African names, African dialects, a predilection for colorful clothing, gaiety during funeral and burial rites, African cooking, market day activities, festival activities (African election day and Thanksgiving), possibly African building traditions and interior room planning, and known medical practices such as self-inflicted small pox inoculations. The christianizing of Africans influenced religious activities, to a large degree, including burial customs. The latter, however, were festival processions led by a "high priest" undertaker, much to the dismay of the white population.



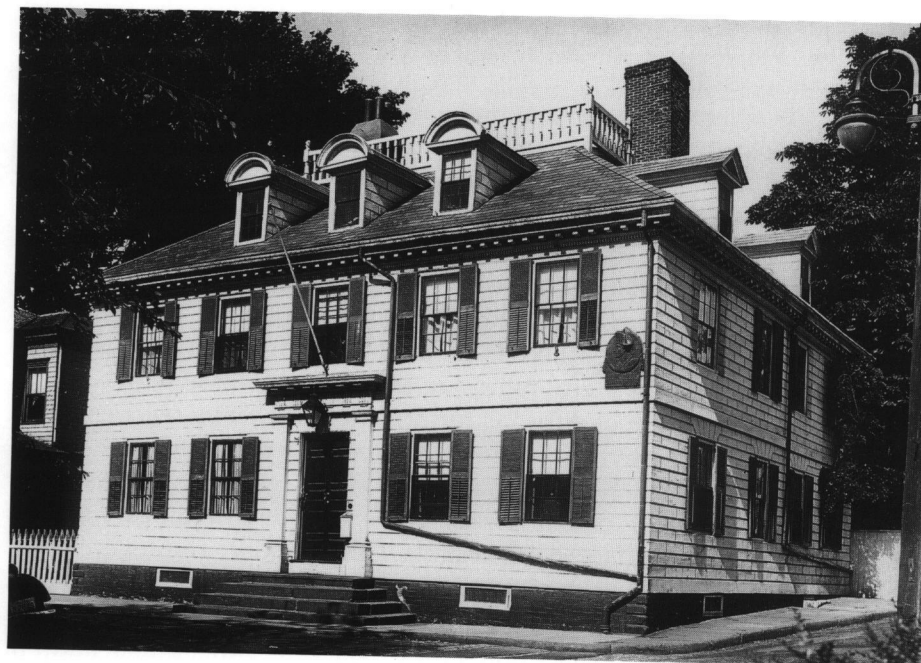
Christopher Townsend house and shop, Bridge Street. This Georgian style house with attached shop/store was built by Christopher Townsend, a member of the well-known Townsend family of furniture makers. Christopher Townsend specialized in house building and cabinet-making as well as maple ship furniture. The Townsend family owned six slaves at the time of Christopher Townsend's death in 1773. Many have presumed that the Townsends, like other local craftsmen, may have employed some skilled and manual slave labor in the production of their furniture, house building and cabinet-making. Collection of the Newport Historical Society.

Living accomodation brought Africans into close associations with white Newporters, causing a more rapid acculturation than occurred in areas where Africans occupied separate housing quarters. (Piersen, Brooks, van Rensselaer)

The dense fabric of colonial Newport housed whites and Africans in close proximity. The garrets of colonial homes provided the primary living space for slaves. Little is known of pre-Revolutionary free black housing. With approximately one third of the white population owning slaves, black residency was scattered throughout colonial Newport. In 1774 there were approximately 153 free blacks residing in 46 black households, overall thirty percent of Newport's population was black at this time. The Jack family, possibly living in the Levin Street area, was a free black family. There were, however, concentrations of merchant families who owned slaves, including concentrations in the Point section, and the "Court End" of Town on lower Thames Street. Here the merchant aristocracy lived in close proximity to wharves, warehousing and distilleries. In addition to these areas were residential areas on the Hill in proximity to the cluster of religious institutions, and along the Parade (Washington Square). Many of these buildings are included in the Historic Resources List in the end of this book. In addition to residence locations, major



(Top) Liberty Tree Park, Corner of Thames and Farewell Street (William Ellery 's house shown at left). Liberty Tree Park is known as the site of African "lection" days in Newport . By the mid-1750s Newport slaves were allowed to hold elections for a black governor in the colonial capitol. In Rhode Island, as in other New England colonies, such elections were significant social events within the African communities. Included in the festivities were parades, dancing, music and socializing. "Lecture" days were considered by many Africans as premier social holidays which allowed for African fellowship. In many New England communities "lection" days were opportunities for African cultural customs to surface including tribal customs such as the ring shout (see Stuckey). In many communities those elected to high office were given a degree of responsibility for controlling members of the local African communities during the year. Collection of the Newport Historical Society.



(Bottom) The Vernon house, Clarke Street. Originally occupied by the Gibbs and Gardner families, this impressive Georgian style house was transformed by Metcalf Bowler who owned the house in 1759. Bowler sold the mansion to William Vernon in 1773. Both Vernon and his son Samuel lived in the house. Between them, they owned ten slaves, some of whom may have lived in the garret. (NHS, 1774 census; Johnston p. 138) Both Vernons were extensively involved in the slave trade with interests in at least 34 recorded slaving voyages and part ownership in 20 slave ships. Today the house is best known as General Rochambeau's headquarters during the Revolution. Collection of the Newport Historical Society.

sites and institutions that were part of the fabric of African life in Newport included the Long Wharf area where slaves were routinely kept in pens awaiting favorable conditions for auction or embarkation for other trading ports; the upper Thames Street, Spring and Mill Street areas; the Colony House and wharf areas where small-scaled slave auctions or transactions occurred. Also included in this list is the Banister's Wharf area where Africans are reported to have sold market produce and baked goods on Sundays. Various religious structures where slaves and free Africans worshipped; key areas where Africans worked (including extant wharf areas, structures, and craft workshops) and God's Acre (the northern corner of the Common Burying Ground), the primary African burial site are important sites of the early period. (Armstead; Battle; Mason; Pierson)

Destabilization

The relatively stable pre-Revolutionary Newport life style, based in large part upon the labor supply of African domestic servants and slaves, destabilized with the outbreak of the Revolutionary War and subsequent British occupation. Not only did the triangle trade and shipping come to an abrupt halt, but many of the Newport merchants and owners of slaves left the area, business declined appreciably and homes were occupied by British soldiers. The effect of the Revolution on the African population was one of rapid change -- from a relatively stable and known pattern of life to an unknown future in an economically unstable and disruptive period. During the next fifty years the African community moved from a dependent society to an independent society seeking freedom and equality. (Crane)

In the years of foment preceding the Revolution, slavery had come under scrutiny by leading church figures and their associates. The pious Sarah Osborn organized a mixed school in the mid 1700s in which she instructed black and white children from a full range of income groups and by 1766 was receiving large numbers of Africans for organized religious services in her home -- the first such activities known in Newport. In the year 1766-67, Mrs. Osborn reported over 300 Africans attending at one meeting, 500 at another shortly thereafter. These meetings occurred on Sunday evenings, Sundays being a traditional day off for the African slave community. The Reverend Dr. Samuel Hopkins, pastor of the First Congregational Church on Mill Street, preached his abhorrence of slavery from the pulpit. The Reverend Ezra Stiles of the Second Congregational Church on Clarke Street was a reluctant but



SARAH OSBORN, Schoolmistress in Newport,
proposes to keep a

Boarding School.

ANY Person desirous of sending Children, may
be accommodated, and have them instructed in Reading, Writing,
Plain Work, Embroidering, Tent Stitch, Samplers, &c. on reasonable Terms

Sarah Osborn House, Osborne Court. This 1-1/2 story gambrel-roofed 18th century house was occupied prior to the Revolution by white female religious leader and school teacher, Sarah Osborn, who held mixed classes for white and African children here. She also held religious meetings for the adult African community with large numbers in attendance at one time. These meetings may have been held in the generous forecourt set back from Church Street. (Armstead) Collection of the Newport Historical Society.

influential supporter of Hopkins' position. The Society of Friends denounced slavery in 1772. Slaves and free Africans sought comfort and hope in the actions of these early abolitionists. It can be argued that the gatherings at Mrs. Osborn's house led to the future organization of the Free African Union Society after the Revolution. (Kujawa, Downing)

The schooling of African children had been undertaken by other churches as well, principally as missionary work. The Reverend Thomas Patten arrived as an Anglican missionary as early as 1754. He was asked in 1760 to give instructions to Africans in Newport under the guidance of the Associates of Doctor Bray. Benjamin Franklin had already recommended the establishment of a Bray school in Newport to conduct Negro missionary work among the Negroes within the town. This early school was to accommodate 30 students. Patten, however, did not stay in Newport long. He was replaced by Marmaduke Brown who opened the school in 1763 under the auspices of Trinity Church. In communication with the Associates in the 1770s, Brown asserted that he had a full complement of students. This early school was taken over in 1770 by the Reverend George Bissett. (RIBHS vertical files, Pennington)

For many Africans, the consequence of destabilization was freedom. Some were granted freedom upon enlistment in the colonists' "Black Regiment," the First Rhode Island Regiment. During the Revolution, in the years prior to occupation, with the encouragement of vocal anti-slavery activists, others had been granted freedom. Some were able to purchase their freedom through earnings and local lottery winnings. Presumably, during the British occupation of the city, departing owners freed slaves or departed with them.



Samuel Hopkins was an outspoken critic of Newport's involvement in slavery and the slave trade. From his pulpit at the First Congregational Church, he preached abolition prior to the Revolution — before it became a popular subject. Hopkins influenced many in Newport and elsewhere in abolitionist endeavors. Of Newport's role in the slave trade he wrote, "I have dared publicly to declare that this town is the most guilty respecting the slave trade, of any on the continent, as it has been, in a great measure built up by the blood of the poor Africans; and that the only way to escape the effects of divine displeasure, is to be sensible of the sin, repent, and reform." (RIHS, Moses Brown Collection, Hopkins to Brown, April 29, 1784). Hopkins has been described by a contemporary source as "dour", with a countenance that seemed "ill-tempered." He was, on the contrary, a very kind man who was "given to charitable deeds." When riding, he often wore a red cap over a wig along with a green-colored robe of calamanco — a glossy woolen material. African Newport Gardner served as Hopkins's personal assistant and was a servant of Hopkins's church. As Hopkins advanced in years, Newport Gardner is said to have escorted him to church and home. (George Gibbs Channing) Collection of the Newport Historical Society



(Left) "Crooked Shanks", a tune believed to have been written by Newport Gardner, one of the African community's most influential citizens. Oral history describes Newport Gardner as teaching music in a hired room on Division Street in the late 1700s. Gardner arrived from the African coast in a slave ship in 1760. His master's wife encouraged him to learn English, French and Western music in a period of four years. He later became a friend of the Rev. Samuel Hopkins, the early Newport abolitionist. Newport Gardner was a founder of the African Union Society in 1780, of which he was the first president. (Mason, Brooks, Battle) Collection of the Newport Historical Society

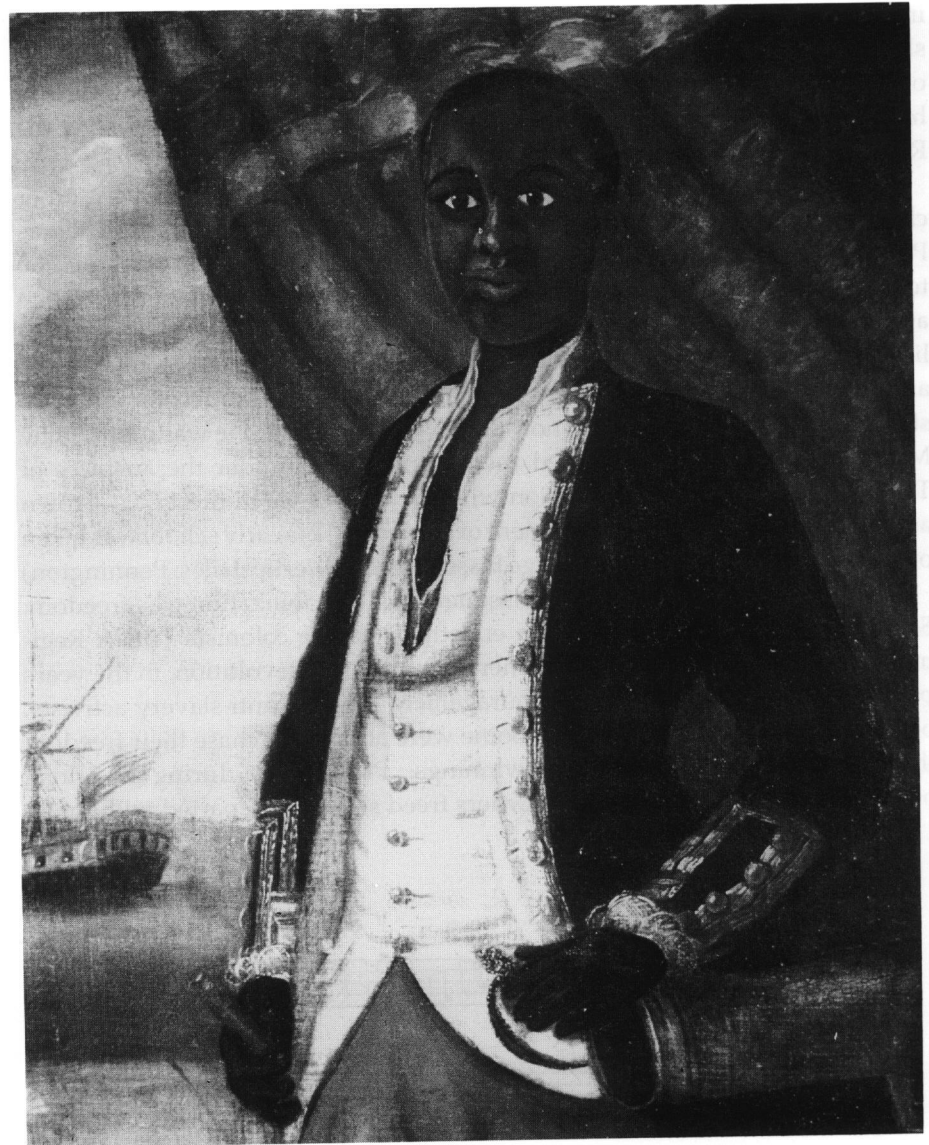
Many Rhode Island slaves left the state, some on their own and many with Loyalist owners. Some 15,000 blacks departed with the British evacuations at Charleston, South Carolina, and New York; some of these may have been from Newport. French officers departing Newport also took manservants back to France. (Robinson)

The jolt of destabilization and a sense of freedom spurred Africans into action during and following the war. By the end of the 18th century, free African social institutions emerged within Newport as vehicles to regain black social stability. The oldest African cultural society in the nation, the African Union Society, was established by the African community in Newport in the early 1780s to encourage record-keeping within the remaining free African community, codify important funeral and burial rites, provide for the learning of trades through apprenticeship, and provide an umbrella for social order and dignity in a climate of developing racial tension.

THE ORGANIZATION OF CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

The African-American community in Newport was the first African-American community in the nation to establish a mutual aid society in the North in the late 18th and early 19th century. Records of the African Union Society indicate that Newport Africans were comparing by-laws with Philadelphia, Boston and Providence African communities and offering support for the establishment of similar cultural organizations in those cities (which developed in the 1790s and early 1800s). Evidence suggests limited monetary support as well. Codification of burial arrangements and funeral activities was of vital concern, as well as keeping track of statistics of births and deaths. Significantly, members were encouraged to buy property and own homes, the result of which is the building of homes by Africans in Newport in several neighborhoods during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Elder Africans - the first generation -- had a principal role in these societies. (NHS, African Union Society records; Stuckey)

The African Union Society in Newport contemplated emigration to Africa in the 1790s. A significant group of core leaders, including Newport Gardner, actually embarked on a return to the African coast in 1826. The trend was experienced throughout the North, lasting through the early and mid-nineteenth century, and was promoted by the American Colonization Society



*Portrait of an anonymous black seaman of the late eighteenth century wearing the attire of a full captain in the Royal Navy of the period, presumably part of a privateer's prize.
Private Collection.*

throughout the Eastern states. (NHS, African Union Society records; Stuckey) Colonization of Africans or repatriation of Africans received early encouragement in Newport with the African missionary proposals set forth by the Reverend Samuel Hopkins and his followers. In the early 1820's, Matthew Galbraith Perry participated in the first expedition to expatriate Africans from Liberia. By 1825, however, the influence of the first generation of Newport Africans was waning. Largely a white attempt (by Henry Clay and others), the American Colonization Society was met with contempt on the part of Northern black abolitionist leaders who advocated that there was more to be gained by remaining American, fighting for manumission, integration, and black nationalism. (Stuckey)

In 1808 members formed the African Benevolent Society to encourage a continuation of the education of Africans which had been initiated by white Newporters prior to the Revolution. Other institutions included the African Humane Society and the African Female Benevolent Society. These institutions exemplified the intelligence, courage and vision of key eighteenth century Africans and early nineteenth-century African Americans (the second generation) within the community, including Isaac Babcock, Abraham Casey, Caesar Lyndon, Newport Gardner, Arthur Flagg, John Quamino, Duchess Quamino,

Charles and Cudjo Chaloner, Bristol Yamma, Nathaniel Rodman, "the Honorable" Mintus, Salmar Nubia, Isaac Rice, Pompey Brinley, John Mowatt, and Zingo Stevens, among others. Not only were institutions developed to maintain customs, both African and African American in origin, but ownership of property was encouraged as a means of ensuring social welfare, renewing stability and gaining equal rights. (NHS, African Union Society records; RIBHS; Battle, van Horne) .

Emerging in the city's landscape in the late eighteenth century were dwellings owned by free Africans and the establishment of small enclaves of Africans living in neighborhoods, such as those on Pope Street, William/Levin/Thomas Streets, Upper Thames Street and Division/School Street. Significantly, these early dwellings followed the mainstream of architectural taste in the late 18th century, primarily of the same asymmetrical four-bay, two-story, center chimney, wood-framed, flank-gable type found elsewhere in the city, in the pre-Revolutionary period. From thenceforth, African-American taste in architecture in Newport appears to conservatively follow contemporary trends.

To all People to whom these presents shall come
I Nicholas Coffin of Portsmouth in the County
of Newport in the State of Rhode Island & Yeoman
do hereby certify that I the s^c. Nicholas do
Manumit & set Free a mulatto man named Jeremiah
Coffin who is my Slave, of & from all bondage Ser-
-vitude & Slavery whatsoever & I the s^c. Nicholas
for my self my heirs Executors or Administrators
do hereby forever renounce & Disclaim all property
in & right to to the person Labour & Service of the
s^c. Jeremiah hereby declaring him to be forever
a free man, in Witness whereof I the s^c. Nicholas
do hereunto set my hand & Seal at Portsmouth this 15th day
of February one thousand Eight hundred & the Twenty
Fourth of the Independance of America

witness Benj^r. Mott
David Buffum

Nicholas Coffin

Chapter 2

Out of Slavery, Establishment of Neighborhoods: 1800--Civil War

With the onset of Revolutionary War and upheaval, the population of Africans in Newport had declined by 1782 to 600 individuals, about half the pre-Revolutionary population. By 1805, the African Union Society had declined in membership from 108 members (male) to only 36. Some 72 members had died since its founding in the 1780s perhaps representing the passing of the first generation of Africans in the city. Black population in Newport continued to decline through 1840, when there were only 423 black individuals residing in the city. The population would not regain its pre-Revolutionary levels until the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The decline of the free African population in Newport followed other local trends. Not only had the local economy been severely disrupted by the Revolutionary War, but decline of the overall population of the city continued. After the War, revival of the triangle trade occurred to only a very limited extent. Migration to growing economic centers such as Providence occurred. Whites and blacks at the low end of the social strata now competed for employment. The members of the African Union Society in Newport suffered

from unemployment and displacement in the workforce. The organization itself came under increased anxiety for its survival and was reorganized as the African Humane Society in 1802. Racial tensions increased. Providence saw a major race riot in "Snowtown" on Gaspee Street in 1832. (NHS, African Union Society records; RIBHS vertical files; Brooks)

Those Africans who remained in Newport became active in the pursuit of livelihoods and social order in the early nineteenth century. Although substantial efforts were made to renew a social order, opportunities arose to return to Africa in the African colonization movement, and free Africans in Newport participated, including Newport Gardner and his son, Ahema Gardner, as well as Salmar Nubia. (RIBHS vertical files; NHS, African Union Society records; Brooks; Battle)

Many Africans presumably continued to live with former owners and were employed as domestic servants, or continued their pre-manumission occupations such as seamen on merchant and fishing vessels (including coastal fisheries and whaling vessels). Others settled in small enclaves or neighborhoods, continued as domestic servants or established themselves in free enterprise as teamsters, laborers, coopers, cordwainers, caterers, blacksmiths, house-painters, and gardeners participating in and supporting Newport's developing resort-based economy. At least two of these neighborhoods have been identified as the William/Levin/Thomas Street neighborhood and the

Manumission paper of Jerimiah Easton, slave of Nicholas Easton, significant in its late date (1824), 16 years after the Gradual Emancipation Act. Collection of the Rhode Island Black Heritage Society

Pope Street neighborhood. In addition, key individuals settled in the upper Thames Street area and in the Division/School Street area.

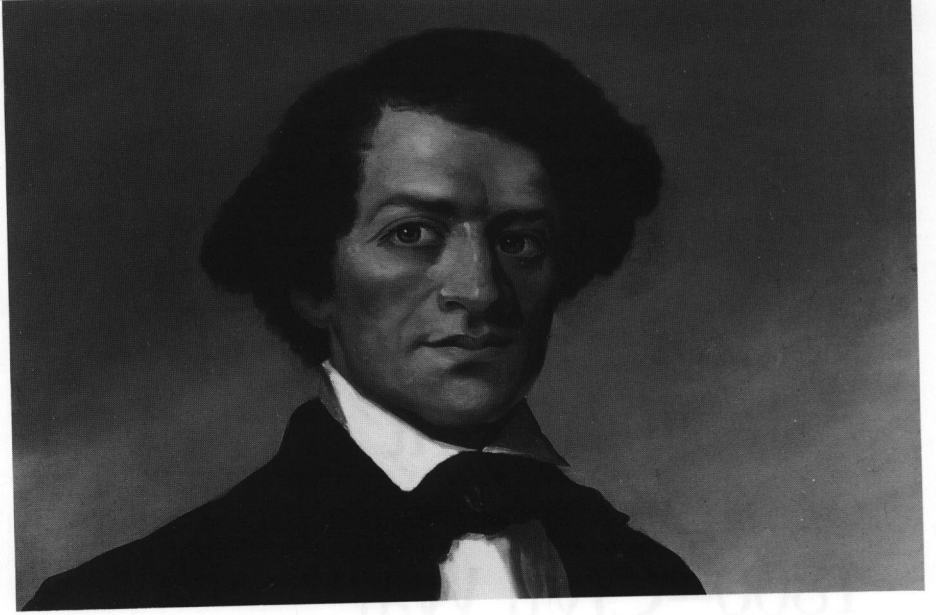
During the period preceding the Jefferson Embargo Act (1801), when blacks made up only seven percent of Newport's population (down from the pre-Revolutionary high of thirty percent), of Newport crew members engaged in merchant ship trade to the West Indies, Europe and Africa, upwards of twenty-one percent were black seaman. This remained a significant population within the marine trades until blacks were squeezed out of the business altogether prior to the War of 1812. Fifty-four blacks served aboard slave ships during this time as seamen or cooks. (Coughtry) The whaling industry was another black employment sector. This industry, known for long, dangerous voyages, offered an employment niche of which blacks took advantage.

The William/Levin/Thomas Street neighborhood

Levin Street was laid out between 1758 and 1777. William and Thomas Streets developed later with many houses built by the Hammetts (father and sons, carpenters) since the first decade of the nineteenth century. (Downing)

Free African residency in the William/Levin/Thomas Street neighborhood is recorded as early as 1780. The African Union Society was formed at a meeting in the home of Abraham Casey on Levin Street in this year. (Battle; Armstead p.51 et seq, RIBHS vertical files, Van Horne)

Perhaps the most well-known family inhabiting the area is the Rice family due to continuous record-keeping, and occupation of the Rice house by successive generations up to today. The Rice homestead, at the intersection of William and Thomas Streets, was built circa 1815. The first occupant of the house, Isaac Rice, was the free stepson of Caesar Bonner. He was born in 1792 in the Narragansett Country on the west side of Narragansett Bay and moved with his family to Newport in the early nineteenth century. The Homestead was built for Rice's stepfather, and given to Isaac Rice shortly thereafter. Isaac Rice became one of Newport's early black entrepreneurs, developing a well-known catering business on Cotton Court off Thames Street. He was also a gardener and was employed by the Gibbs family in landscaping the Gibbs' estate on Mill Street, a portion of which became Touro Park. Rice was involved with local free African-American social organizations in the ante-bellum period, including the African Union Society and the African Benevolent Society. The homestead is said to have been a stop on the underground railroad for southern slaves escaping to freedom. Abolitionist Frederick



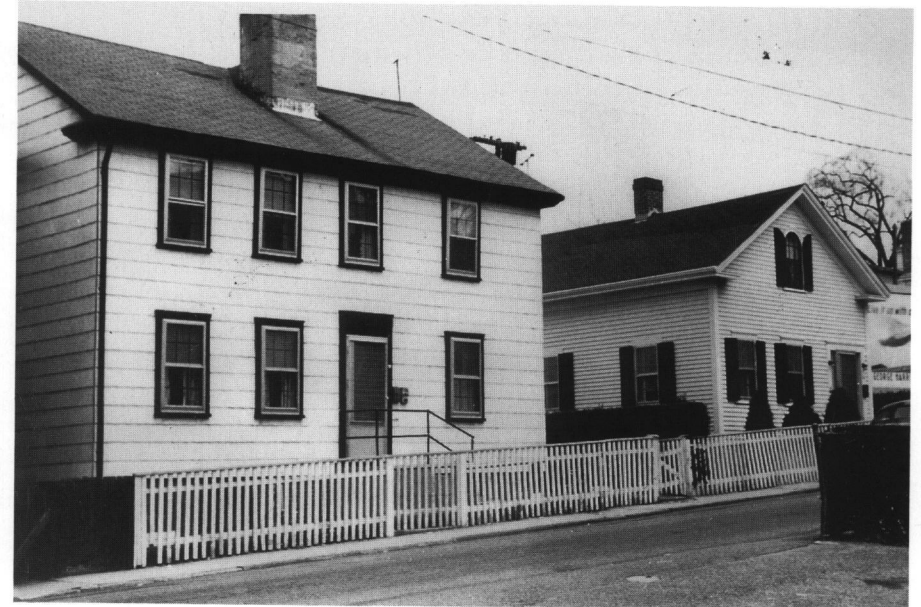
(Top) The noted African-American leader and abolitionist Frederick Douglass is known to have visited Newport as a speaker for the Massachusetts Anti-slavery Society. His association with the Rice family during this period may have been through New Bedford connections. Collection of the Rhode Island Historical Society

(Bottom) Rice Homestead, 24 Thomas Street, c. 1815. Photograph by Richard Youngken

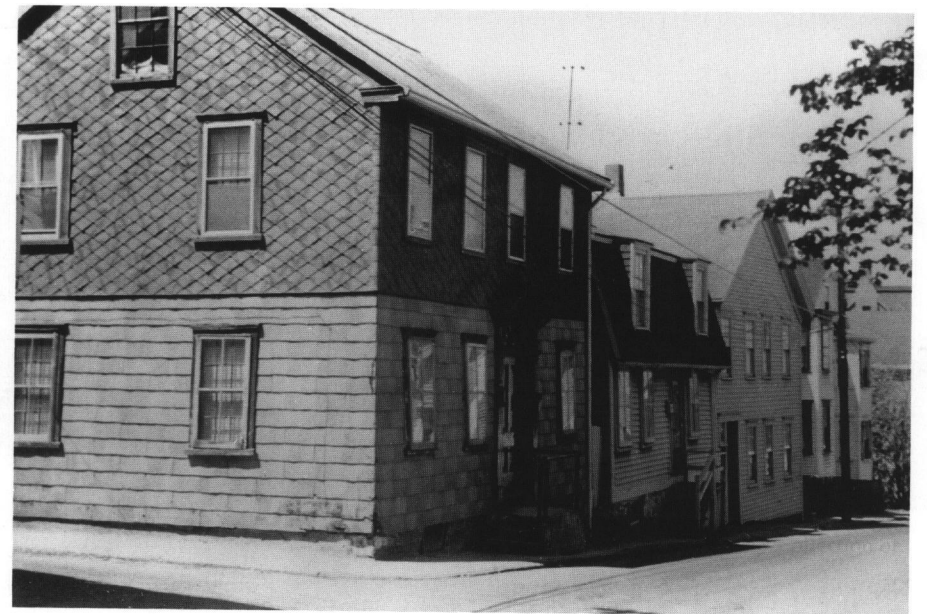
Douglass and Isaac Rice became acquainted, presumably through associations in New Bedford and local African-American entrepreneur and abolitionist George T. Downing. Douglass is said to have stayed at the house in 1843 when he visited Rhode Island to speak on abolition on behalf of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society. It was a key locus within the William/Levin/Thomas Street.

Hannah and Susan Chaloner were living on Levin Street in the 1840s. Other Africans living in the area in the early to mid-nineteenth-century include Francis Chaloner, Hannibal Collins, James Clarke, Alexander Easton, Pompey Brinley, Edward Buchanon, James E. Weeden, Experience Fayerweather, Alexander Jack, Jr. and others.

Nineteenth-century black businessman Silas Dickerson operated a grocery store and rental property in the neighborhood from the mid nineteenth to the early twentieth century. This neighborhood continued as a black enclave until after World War II.



The African-American owned houses in the Levin Street area were typical of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century small houses. These buildings have center chimneys and asymmetrical four-bay facades. There is a focus on the front door with its early fan light and pediment supported by recessed or fluted pilasters.

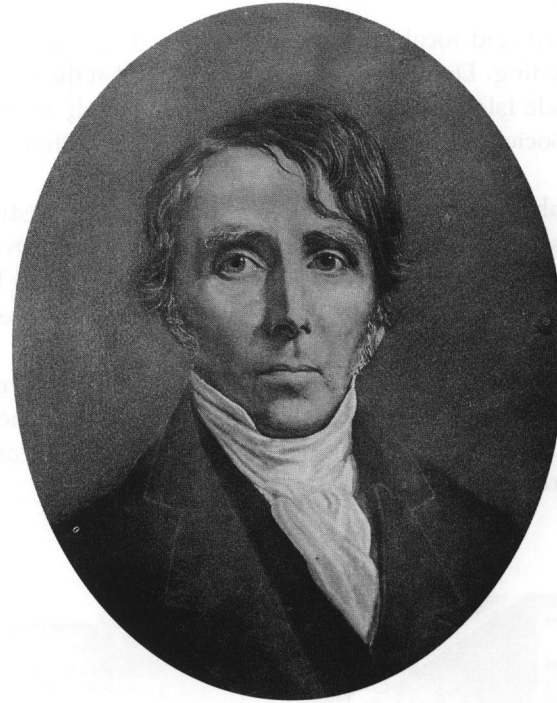




29 Pope Street, Bacchus and Paul Overing House, c.1810 . Photograph by Richard Youngken.

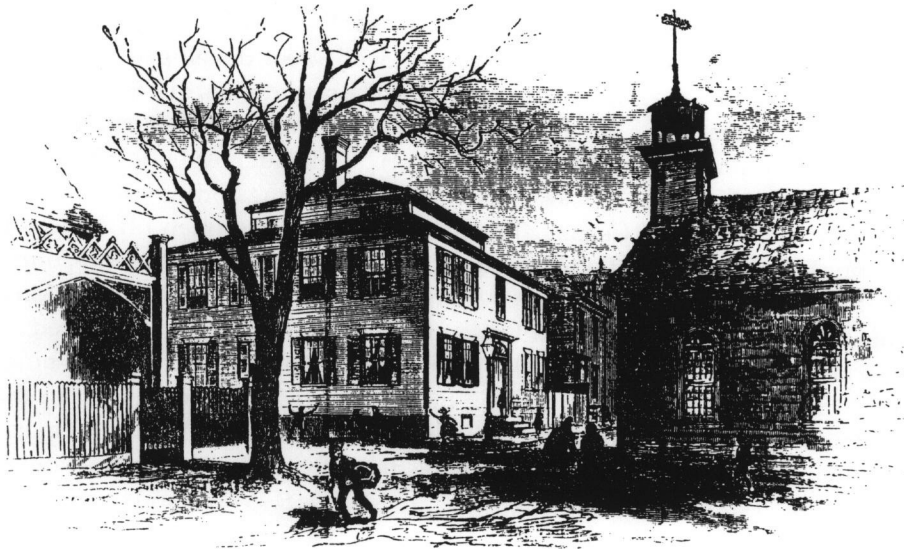
Pope Street neighborhood: Pope Street appears to have been developed before 1777 at the southern edge of the colonial town. (Downing) Free African residency in Pope Street is recorded prior to 1807 when a group of Africans met at Newport Gardner's house to organize the African Benevolent Society. Newport Gardner sold his house and property to Joseph H. Record in 1825. Associates of Gardner located nearby were Bacchus and Paul Overing, Peter Armstrong, and Salmar Nubia. (NHS, African Union Society records; Armstead; RIBHS vertical files; City of Newport property records)

This early community continued after Newport Gardner's departure for Africa in early 1826 but does not appear to have survived as an African enclave into the late nineteenth century. Due to the African population in the area, however, a city school for black children was located on the corner of Pope and East Streets in 1842, close to the property previously owned by Newport Gardner. (NHS, Newport city directories)



William Ellery Channing (1780 - 1842). African Americans in Channing's boyhood household including Charity "Duchess" Quamino, had a profound effect upon his developing views against slavery and his later, more strident, abolitionist stand. Collection of the Newport Historical Society.

William Ellery Channing, the acknowledged founder of the Unitarian Church and nephew of slave ship captain Caleb Gardner, was born in 1780 to a Newport family divided over slavery. Subsequent experiences and associations in Newport with African Americans and early abolitionists, including the Rev. Samuel Hopkins, led Channing to become one of the leading anti-slavery polemicists in the decades before the Civil War. Channing's first published work on the topic, "Slavery", was published in 1835. He wrote "men's worst crimes have sprung from the desire of being masters, of bending others to their yoke . . . Man cannot, without imminent peril to his virtue, own a fellow creature, or use the word absolute command to his brethren." Samuel J. May, an associate of William Lloyd Garrison, later recalled that these words made the anti-slavery movement a fit topic for discussion in the homes of ante-bellum middle-class America.



(Top) The boyhood home of William Ellery Channing, located on the southeast corner of School and Mary streets, opposite the Trinity School. Collection of the Newport Historical Society.

(Bottom) The Shiloh Baptist Church on School Street occupied the site, if not the original late eighteenth century building, known as the Trinity school. This school, possibly organized by the associates of Dr. Bray in the middle of the eighteenth century, continued through the Revolution. The building burned or was demolished during the Revolution. The present structure was erected in 1799 as a school, opposite the boyhood home of William Ellery Channing and occupied by the African-American Shiloh Baptist Church in 1868. The Shiloh Baptist Church was a splinter group from the Union Congregational Church which organized in the home of Esther Brinley on Levin Street four years earlier (1864). Collection of the Newport Historical Society.



Upper Thames Street neighborhood: Upper Thames Street was the site of small-scale slave auctions, African election days, and the shops of key craftsmen employing slaves as artisans prior to the Revolution. (Battle; Mason; Brooks; Crane p.57)

Known occupancy by free Africans following the Revolution includes the home of Arthur Flagg (aka Arthur Tikey). The African Union Society met at his house on upper Thames Street in 1793. Zingo Stevens also owned a house and garden plot near the corner of Third and Poplar Street. (Newport probate records)

The upper Thames Street neighborhood continued to attract additional Africans during the nineteenth century, principally due to its location adjacent to the Point district and the Fall River Line shipyard, the nearby railroad depot and the staging area on Long Wharf. The upper Thames Street area would later be the site of Armstead Hurley's painting business, Olive Matthews' drug store and Dr. Ralph Young's home and office.

Division/School Street neighborhood: Division Street became the focus of African interest prior to the Revolution through Newport Gardner's association with the Reverend Samuel Hopkins, the Reverend Ezra Stiles, the school established by Trinity Church on School Street and other African occupants, including Duchess Quamino, who lived and worked for the Channing family on School Street. (Carpenter)

In the early to mid-nineteenth century, this area became the locus for African religious activity with the purchase of the Fourth Baptist Meeting House (known as the Old Salt Box) on Division Street by the (African) Union Congregational Church in 1835. The structure was enlarged by raising up the building and inserting a basement. Later the Old Salt Box was demolished and replaced with a Carpenter Gothic style church (1871). The Union Colored Church (later renamed Union Congregational Church) was first established in 1824 at a meeting of the African Union Society at Newport Gardner's house on Pope Street. An initial location at the Southwest corner of Church and Division Streets was purchased in 1824 and a structure erected in the same year. By the 1830s the congregation had outgrown this building, acquired the Old Salt Box and moved there. In addition to the Union Congregational Church, the African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church had first organized about 1845 in a carpenter shop on Spring Street near Division. (RIBHS vertical files, van Horne; Battle; Armstead p. 254; NHS, Richardson; Brooks) Africans living in this area during this period included Isaac Babcock on School Street and John Mowatt, on Division Street as early as 1818. Mowatt (or Mewatt) is described in the city directories as a grocer, and is possibly one of a group of early African entrepreneurs. (Battle p.37; Franklin; Downing)

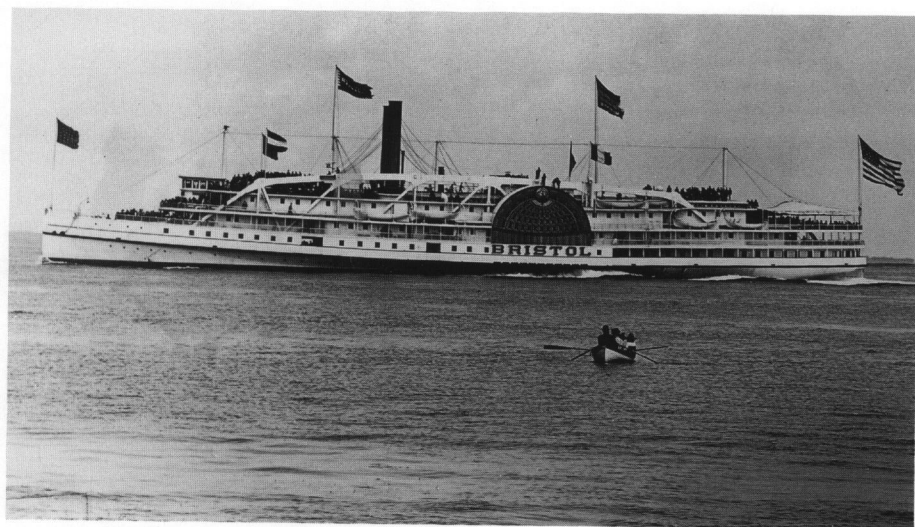


New Town/Kerry Hill/Dr. Marcus F. Wheatland Boulevard (West Broadway) neighborhood:

The Dr. Marcus F. Wheatland Blvd.-to-Warner Street area, northeast of Farewell Street, developed in the mid-nineteenth century as a mixed-ethnic working class residential district. African-American occupation of the area prior to the Civil War included locations on Kingston Avenue (originally Spruce Street), Callender Avenue and Pond Street. Thomas C. Jones, a black waiter, resided on Kingston Avenue as early as 1830. (NHS, 1820/40 Census, directories) Several side streets off Kingston Avenue became small enclaves including Pearl Street (originally Spruce Court), Heath Street and Johnson Court. An off-shoot of the Union Congregational Church -- the African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church -- was located on Johnson Court about 1857. (RIHPHC, survey; NHS, city directories; Downing) For Africans, the principal attraction of the area appears to have been the availability of housing, both for purchase and rental, in proximity to major employment opportunities which evolved with the growing attraction of Newport as a summer resort. (RIHPHC, Dr. Marcus F. Wheatland Blvd. (West Broadway) survey; Armstead)

Two primary industries accommodated and facilitated this attraction to Newport. Improvements in water transportation to the island afforded a reliable, fairly safe and luxurious conveyance of visitors from New York, Philadelphia and points south. The Fall River Line (ships) became the principal carrier, along with railroad links to Providence and Boston. The development of large resort hotels on Bellevue Avenue and in the Kay / Catherine / Old Beach provided significant employment for blacks for nearly a century between the 1840s and the 1930s. The staff of porters, waiters, stewards, and cooks on the Line were all black. (Armstead; McAdam; Robinson)

The Seventh Day Baptist Meeting House was used by the Shiloh Baptist Church between 1864 and 1869. The supports were added under the galleries at this time for additional loads. Gertrude Elliot reported that "to those of you who have attended a New Year's Eve revival meeting of an animated . . . congregation, there is no need to explain the need of extra supports." African customs continued in community and religious life including customs linked to the tribal ring shout. "Animated" services are an indication that African traditions could not be suppressed by slavery. African Americans attended the Seventh Day Baptist Meeting House prior to its occupation by the Shiloh Baptist Church in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Records indicate birth and deaths of Blacks and Indians. The last balcony may have been where they worshipped. Collection of the Newport Historical Society, P 1579. (NHS, Sanford p. 36n. 81)



(Top left) *New England Steamship Company, Fall River Line, Bristol.* The Fall River Line was reported to be among the most luxurious passenger steamers afloat. These side-wheelers plied the waters of Long Island Sound from New York City to Narragansett Bay and Boston via Fall River. The overnight voyage was a key element in enjoyment of Newport summers by wealthy New York businessmen and their families. The staff, essential to providing the ambience these palace steamers were known for was all black. In fact, aside from the ship's captain and officers, the impression one had was that the entire outfit was African-American. Collection of the Newport Historical Society.

(Above) *The Fall River line docks and repair yards in the Point district at Long Wharf were a major source of employment in Newport for artisans and laborers, including African Americans.* Collection of the Newport Historical Society.

(Bottom left) *The Dining Salon aboard a "Palace" liner with African-American waiters functioned as a major attraction for passenger comfort. It was the custom for waiters to double as porters for assisting passengers with room assignments, carrying baggage aboard and general customer service. The Fall River Line prospered for nearly 100 years between the 1840s and the 1930s. By 1937, however, the line folded, a victim of stiff competition from automobiles, passenger trains, the growth of strong unions and new maritime regulations aimed at fire protection which essentially phased out wooden passenger ship construction. African-American employment was hit hard by the demise of the Fall River Line in the depth of the Depression.* Collection of the Fall River Historical Society.



Kerry Hill evolved during the mid-nineteenth century as a mixed working class neighborhood. African Americans settled on Kingston Avenue, a major east-west through street, as well as on side streets such as Shiloh Court, Johnson Court, and Pearl Steet. Many African-American businesses were established in the Kerry Hill area, on Dr. Marcus Wheatland Boulevard (formerly West Broadway) and on Kingston Avenue. Collection of the Newport Historical Society.

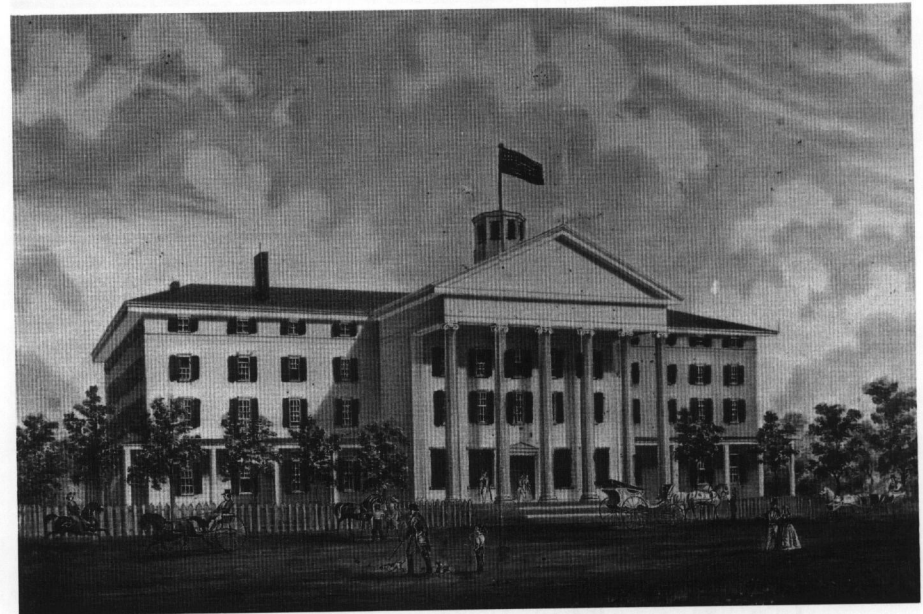
about ten percent of black males worked in skilled crafts, professional pursuits or had proprietary interests. During the Civil War period, nearly all working black women were employed in domestic service. (Robinson)

The Kerry Hill neighborhood provided housing in close proximity to both the Fall River Line yards and the adjoining railroad depot. The popularity of the Point section east of Washington Street and upper Thames Street during the mid-to-late nineteenth century and early 20th century was also a result of employment with the Fall River Line as well as the availability of housing.

Brinley/Fillmore/Fir Street neighborhood: Evolving with the West Broadway area was a neighborhood of African-Americans in the Brinley / Fillmore / Fir Street area in proximity to several large-scale resort hotels developed in the early to mid-nineteenth century off Bellevue Avenue. Boarding houses and apartment complexes in this area were developed to accommodate the large domestic staffs employed at the hotels. (Armstead, NHS, Chace)

The earliest resort hotel in Newport, The Brinley (later renamed the Bellevue House), opened on Catherine Street in 1825, the year prior to Newport Gardner's return to Africa. The Atlantic House (1840s) and the original Ocean House (1820s) were constructed on Bellevue Avenue nearby. The Fillmore House opened on Catherine Street in the mid-1850s. (Chase in RIHPC survey)

At least one source estimates that during the ante-bellum period most African Americans in Newport labored as servants, washerwomen, maids, waiters, porters, dishwashers, bellboys and liverymen. (1860 census) Only

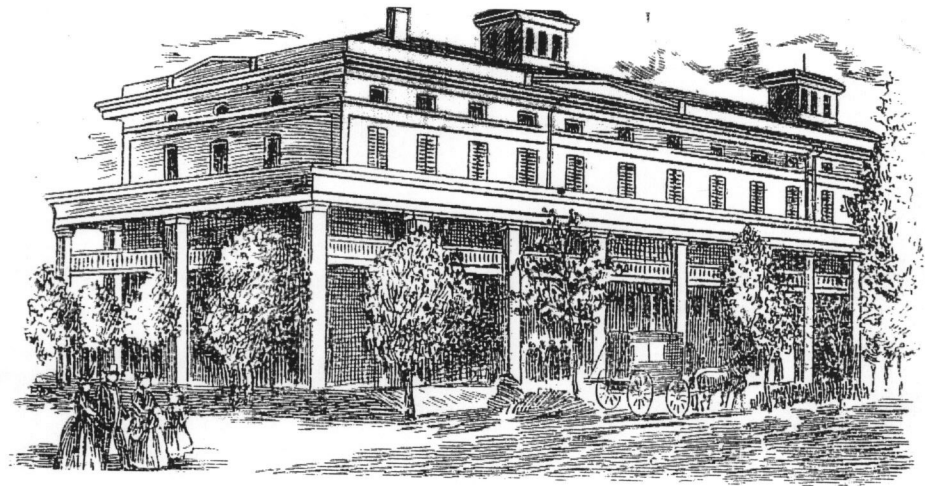


The Atlantic House was one of the grand mid-nineteenth century Newport hotels constructed on Bellevue Avenue in the 1840s. It became a major source of African-American domestic employment. Collection of the Newport Historical Society.

One early black entrepreneur, restaurant-owner and caterer George T. Downing, migrated seasonally from Washington, DC and New York with the resort community, first establishing a summer business in Newport in 1846. Downing developed the Sea Girt Hotel on Bellevue Avenue for the trade in 1854 and later, after the Sea Girt Hotel burned in 1860, he had constructed on the site a large retail commercial block known as the Downing Block. In addition to his entrepreneurial pursuits, Downing was involved in the abolitionist movement and had established political connections with policy-makers in the nation's capitol and with black rights advocate Frederick Douglass. Downing was a vocal opponent of the Reverend Henry Highland Garnet with whom he had been schooled in New York City. Garnet became a leading figure in the black nationalist movement in the mid-nineteenth century, espousing radical approaches to ending slavery, including open slave revolt. Downing apparently resolved to work more closely with the establishment and formed a more integrationist approach. Significantly for Newport blacks of the period, Downing became a role model, helping to achieve both recognition and independence by working within the system as an entrepreneur. Downing held the concession for the U.S. House of Representatives' Capitol dining room. (NHS Obit.; Stuckey, Cottrol)

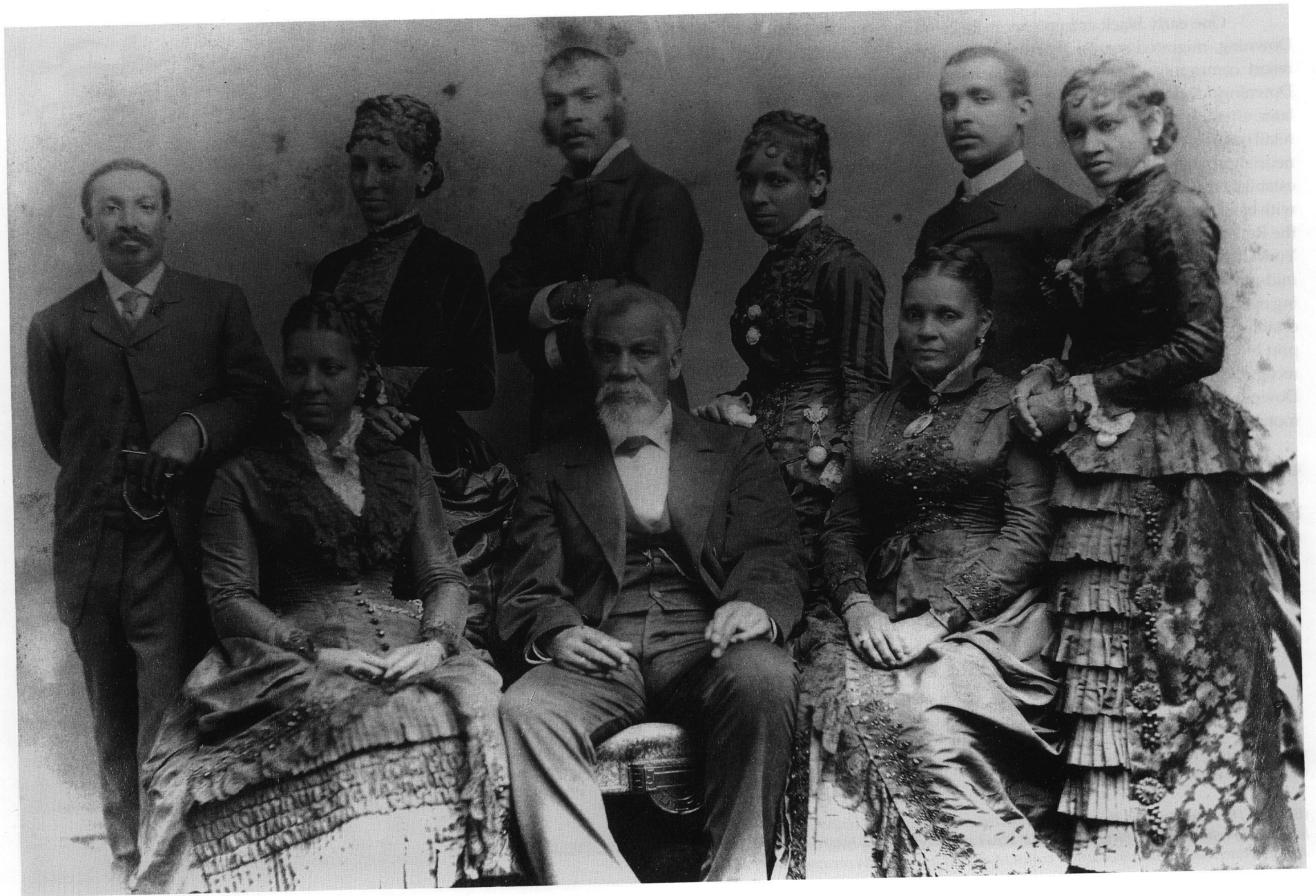
Despite its initial popularity, the hotel trade did not retain its popularity after the Civil War due to a shift to summer cottage residency and fashion.

Blacks continued to occupy the area, however, even after the demise of the large hotels. One black entrepreneur, Thomas Glover, owned at least one block of rental flats occupied by African Americans in the area.



(Top) Bellevue House was one of the earliest Newport hotels, located on Catherine Street in 1825, one year prior to Newport Gardner's departure for Africa. The hotels provided a much needed stimulus to local African-American employment in the mid-nineteenth century. Collection of the Newport Historical Society.

(Bottom) The Fillmore Hotel remains as one of two extant nineteenth century hotels from the hotel era. Located in the Brinley/Fillmore/Fir Street neighborhood, the hotel was a locus for the African-American neighborhood which coalesced around it principally occupying staff quarters and boarding houses nearby. Collection of the Newport Historical Society.



Chapter 3

Civil War -- World War II

Black Independence and Entrepreneurial Pursuits

If the pre-Civil War, post-slavery period provided sources for developing a stable social order and residency in neighborhoods, the post-Civil War period provided fertile ground for the development of individual African-American achievement, independence, political power and personal financial investment for profit. Although the hotel trade declined in the late nineteenth century and blacks in domestic service were not as common at the summer cottages as were European immigrants, transportation services continued to remain a major employment center. In addition, enterprising blacks, including Benjamin Burton (as early as 1850), invested in livery and express companies which later evolved into significant taxi and bus service enterprises, the latter providing Newport with its first mass transit operation. Louis Walker invested in this business in the late 19th and early twentieth centuries.

The demand for labor had increased sufficiently by the mid-19th century to spawn independent black "intelligence" offices or employment services which recruited black workers from various counties in northern Virginia, among other places, after the Civil War. Many African Americans in Newport today claim family ancestors from Culpeper County, VA. The influx of black workers from the South enlivened the local African-American community. Many black residents converted homes to boarding houses, unrelated

George Downing and Family. Collection of the Rhode Island Black Heritage Society

families lived together, and blocks of "cold-water" flats were put up in the New Town/Kerry Hill/ Dr. Marcus F. Wheatland Blvd. and Brinley/Fillmore/Fir Street neighborhoods for housing. The old African families intermarried with the new arrivals. (Armstead, oral sources)

Studies of black employment in Rhode Island between 1866 and 1900 have demonstrated that blacks were outnumbered ten to one by foreign born immigrants -- Irish, German, later Italian and Portuguese, many of whom brought labor skills with them from Europe. (Armstead) The developing industrialization of the regional economy provided a niche for Europeans. It did not provide a niche for unskilled blacks. As late as 1910, blacks were still largely confined to service-oriented and menial jobs such as teamsters, stevedores, laborers, servants and delivery people. Some native-born Rhode Island blacks actually migrated south for work. Newport, however, never developed a substantial industrial base, as did other Rhode Island cities and towns. The developing resort economy provided jobs for the African-American community and it spurred growth in individual black-owned service-related enterprises, black social organizations and black independence. (Aquidneck Island farms provided an employment source for farm-skilled laborers from the south.) (Armstead; oral sources)

By the turn-of-the-century, black investors and entrepreneurs Thomas Glover, Armstead Hurley, David B. Allen, Marcus C. Andrews, Lindsay R. Walker James Johnson had established the Rhode Island Loan and Investment

Company on Washington Square. This small-scaled bank or investment loan company provided funds for black investors. At least two small areas of black business developed: (Armstead p.171; NHS, Newport city directories)

Dr. Marcus F. Wheatland Boulevard (West Broadway) business district:

Small-scale business ventures, primarily service-related, took root in the Dr. Marcus F. Wheatland Blvd. area and, to a limited degree, on Thames Street and Broadway. Included in the collection of black-owned or operated commercial ventures were barber shops, beauty salons, eateries, small grocery stores, tailor shops, shoe repair shops, and livery stables. In addition, coal, fuel oil, and ice distributing services became black enterprises throughout the city. There was at least one black-owned bakery and a drug store within the area. (NHS, city directories)

Memorial Boulevard (Bath Road) business district:

In addition to black-run business areas in the West Broadway area, black entrepreneurs located on Bath Road and to a limited degree in the vicinity of Bellevue Avenue, the Travers Block, and the Downing Block. Silas Dickerson located a grocery store on William Street near Bellevue Avenue. Mary Dickerson (Mrs. Silas Dickerson) was a dressmaker located in the Travers Block. In 1903, Mrs. Dickerson organized the first federation of African-American club women in Rhode Island, which included eleven clubs from throughout the state. Mrs. Dickerson was elected the first president of the federation, the Rhode Island State Federation of Women's Clubs in 1908. David B. Allen owned and operated the Hygeia Spa (at Easton's Beach) with his brother James T. Allen. Later Bath Road (now Memorial Boulevard) became the location of a black-owned grocery store (Clark Brown's grocery store), a liquor store, beauty salon (Bertha Brown's Beauty Shop), and a car repair shop owned by Saxon Robinson, who was known as the city's best auto mechanic. (NHS, city directories; oral sources)

Social Organizations

The progenitor of black religious institutions in Newport, the Union Congregational Church, built a new board and batten, Carpenter Gothic-style edifice on Division Street in the early 1870s. Prior to this, however, a splinter group had formed the Shiloh Baptist Church, located at first in the old Seventh Day Baptist Meeting House (Sabbatarian Meeting House) and later in the original 18th century schoolhouse on School Street.



Dr. Marcus F. Wheatland Boulevard street scenes (known as West Broadway until 1994). This area was an early African-American business district. Collection of the Newport Historical Society.



The African Methodist Episcopal Church was established by 1845. It would occupy several structures including a small church in the New Town/Kerry Hill/ Dr. Marcus F. Wheatland Blvd. neighborhood, on Johnson Court, and later as the Mount Zion Methodist Episcopal Church, in a portion of the second Ocean House dining room moved to a site at the head of Touro Street in the 1870s. (NHS, Chace; Robinson)

The Mount Olivet Baptist Church was formed as a spin-off of Shiloh Baptist Church in 1894. Property was purchased on Thames Street in 1897 and the present church building (79 Thames Street) was constructed as an addition to an existing Greek Revival house.

By the 1900s, these were the four primary black churches in the community, demonstrating the size, strength and character of the African-American community. In addition, Trinity Church established a mission in the Point section off Poplar Street in the 1870s with the involvement of an African American, Peter Quire. A mission chapel was constructed in the early 1870s following organizational and religious meetings in an unoccupied apartment building owned by Peter Quire at the corner of Poplar and Third Streets (no longer extant). The church evolved into Saint John the Evangelist with a mixed congregation. (NHS, St. John Church histories; Mason)



(Top) The Chapel Street area east of Bellevue Avenue and north of Memorial Blvd. was an African-American neighborhood. Located near large Bellevue Avenue hotels, this neighborhood, similar to the Brinley/Fillmore/Fir Street area to the north, provided housing for African-Americans employed in the hotel trade and in the Memorial Blvd. (Bath Road) African-American business district to the south. African-American George T. Downing's Sea Girt Hotel was located just west of here in 1854. The Chapel street area was popular from the mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth century. It was largely demolished for construction of subsidized low income housing in the 1960s. Collection of the Newport Historical Society.

(Bottom) The Union Congregational church was built in the early 1870s on Division Street to replace an earlier structure. This church was the progenitor of all African-American churches in Newport. Organized in a meeting at Newport Gardner's Pope Street house in 1824, the church first occupied the Fourth Baptist Meeting House on this site in 1835. Collection of the Newport Historical Society.



The African-American population participated in the fraternal movement in Newport, developing a number of black fraternal organizations and clubs prior to 1920. By 1930 ten black masonic chapters existed in Newport. Unfortunately the black Masonic Hall on John Street has been demolished. An Odd Fellows Hall known as the "Sweat Box" was organized on Caleb Earl Street in the Dr. Marcus F. Wheatland Blvd. area prior to 1885. During this period the Boyer Lodge #8, the Canonchet Lodge #2439 (with a Woman's Auxiliary by 1890), the Heroines of Jericho #3 (Masonic), the Households of Ruth #501 (Odd Fellows) organized. Three additional freemasonry chapters were organized by 1895 including the Stone Mill Lodge, the Salem Royal Arch Chapter #6, and the B.F. Gardner Commandery #6. In 1900 another masonic lodge was formed - the Mount Calvary Commandery. Other lodges formed in 1900 were the Knights of Pythias, Hope Lodge #3 and the Court of Calantha. In 1910 two masonic women's orders were established - the Sheba Court #3 and the Esther Lodge

Mt. Olivet Baptist church on Thames Street was opened in 1897. It was formed by dissatisfied members of the Rev. Jeter's Shiloh Baptist church congregation, at the home of Deacon Andrew Tabb in 1894. Mt. Olivet was one of four primary African-American churches in Newport in the early twentieth century, each of which could attract over 200 parishioners on a Sunday. Oral tradition reports that in fact there was a greater cohesiveness within the black community than four individual churches would seem to indicate. The congregations were fluid and did not represent specific neighborhoods. Members of one congregation would attend services at any one of the four churches, particularly for special events. As the community declined in the mid- to late twentieth century, Mt. Olivet and Shiloh Baptist combined to form the Community Baptist Church now located on Dr. Marcus F. Wheatland Boulevard. Collection of Rhode Island Black Heritage Society.

Portrait of the Rev. William B. Reed and his family, Pastor of the Mt. Olivet Baptist church 1910-1916. Originating with the Union Congregational Church in the early to mid-nineteenth century, many of the pastors who came to Newport were dynamic and well-connected African-Americans both regionally and nationally. Included within the pantheon of local religious leaders were the Rev. William James Lucas (who founded the local branch of the NAACP), the Rev. Henry N. Jeter, the Rev. Mahlon van Horne and others. These individuals brought progressive and positive thinking to Newport's African-American community, providing an inspiration through their ministry for local achievements, pride and self reliance. The center of African-American life during the early nineteenth to mid-twentieth century period was the church; and the individuals who led the congregations provided strong leadership. Collection of the Newport Historical Society (detail).



#11. The Mount Olivet Consistory #39, the Aleppo Temple of the Mystic Shrine, and Watson's Masonic Beneficial Association were also formed. By the 1920s, the Lodge of the Good Samaritans and the black women's and men's Elk's Lodges had been established. The number of social organizations represents a network of social organizations and a mutually dependent black community operating to some degree independently of the white community. These organizations and the black churches provided social and recreational activities for the black community. The African-American social clubs remained segregated from white fraternal orders throughout the period, although the Masonic Lodge building on School Street was utilized by the African-American community for major cultural events and performances.



(Top left) Mt. Zion African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) church at the head of Touro Street occupied this building in the late half of the 19th century. It was the former dining room of the Ocean House hotel. The Mt. Zion A.M.E. church originated in a former carpentry shop on Spring Street in 1845. It occupied a small building in the Kerry Hill neighborhood in Johnson Court in the mid-nineteenth century, moving to this location off Bellevue Avenue in the 1870s. The location of the church here brought it closer to the Brinley/Fillmore/Fir Street neighborhood. Collection of the Rhode Island Black Heritage Society

(Bottom left) Interior of the Mt. Zion A.M.E church. Note the decorative arched windows retained from former building use as a hotel dining hall. Collection of the Rhode Island Black Heritage Society

(Above) Rev. Paul Johns, center, pastor of Union Congregational Church. with his flock. Collection of the Rhode Island Black Heritage Society



(Armstead p.231 et seq., oral sources)

African-American educational activities were desegregated by 1866 under pressure from influential black businessmen, including George T. Downing, as well as Newport resident Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson, a well-known abolitionist, historian, intellectual and colleague of Julia Ward Howe. Colonel Higginson commanded a black regiment in the Union Army during the Civil War and took up residence in Newport to recover from a war wound. Black-only schools were abolished as a result of Downing and Higginson's efforts. In 1877, Josephine Silone Yates was the first Newport African American to graduate from the integrated high school. (Battle p.33, Stuckey p.27-30, 361 n.29)

Education of Africans had originated in Newport during the eighteenth century. Schools for blacks were developed in the city before the Revolution. The earliest school for Africans, established by Trinity Church in 1785, was located in the building that Shiloh Baptist Church later occupied on School Street. Another school was established after the Revolution (by 1845) on Spring Street. A city school for blacks may have been located on Pope Street by 1842. A school for black children was opened at the corner of Kingston Avenue and Johnson Court in 1858. These schools were segregated black-only schools. (Johnson p.143; Battle p.15,20,21; Franklin p.11)

Professionals, Artists, Entertainers, Athletes, Politicians, Diplomats, Educators, Businessmen, and Religious Leaders

The ascendancy of blacks as businessmen and community leaders affected their standing in the political, social and cultural arena. Desegregation of the city's schools is one indication of the African Americans growing political influence in the 19th century. Among the best known educators who lived in Newport and served as role models for the African American community were Lillian Triplett, Dione Jackson, Louisa van Horne, Bernice Jackson and Helen Speedwell who worked in the Newport public school system and were greatly honored for their contributions. Dr. Rose Butler Brown, who left Newport early in her career as an educator, remained a mentor for the local community. Throughout the mid-to-late twentieth century, Dr. Browne received degrees from The University of Rhode Island, Rhode Island College and Harvard University. Specializing in psychology and education during her academic



(Top) Mt. Olivet Baptist Church Sunday School. Collection of Eleanor Keys.

(Above left) Mable Jackson, daughter of William A. Jackson. Collection of Avis Paige.

(Above right) Gwendolyn Williams. Collection of Eleanor Keys.



(Top left) Gaines Brothers, World War II. George, John and Albert. Collection of Paul Gaines.

(Top right) James A. Ray was appointed to the Newport police department as a driver in the early 1900s. African Americans were employed in city service as early as 1890. Collection of

(Bottom) Bernard Kay, policeman, 1924. Collection of Regina Parker.

career, she held positions at Virginia State College, West Virginia State College, Bluefield College and North Carolina Central University. Many African Americans in Newport in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries became well-respected professionals, including Dr. Marcus F. Wheatland, M. Alonzo van Horne and Daniel A. Smith, Jr., all of whom specialized in medicine. Wheatland was elected a member of the City's council representing the Fourth Ward, an area then containing a heavy concentration of blacks. Mahlon van Horne, pastor of the Union Congregational Church between 1868-1897, later became a member of the Rhode Island legislature and was appointed United States Consul to the Danish West Indies by President William McKinley. George A. Rice became legendary as a Fall River Line steward, managing the huge kitchen and dining staffs on the palace steamers *Puritan* and *Pilgrim*, among others.

Black policemen came into city service by 1890, exemplifying not only the presence of a sizable black constituency but an awareness on the part of city officials of individual talent and community needs. Oliver Dewick served from 1890-1922; James Ray was appointed in 1906. Bernard Kay served from 1914-1918. Frank "Percy" Wheeler was appointed in 1918, Frank Rice in 1925, Oliver Burton in 1929, and Jessie Scott served in the mid-twentieth century. (Armstead p. 22 et seq; oral sources)



Edward Mitchell Bannister, prize-winning African American artist. painting a Newport harbor scene from Battery Park, late nineteenth century. Bannister summured in Newport and enjoyed sailing his catboat around the harbor. An accomplished artist with a residence and studio in Providence, Bannister won much acclaim among his peers both locally and nationally. Collection of the Newport Historical Society.



(Top) The Rev. Mahlon van Horne (seated at left), was the pastor of the Union Congregational Church following the Civil War. Following his tenure at the church, van Horne was appointed U.S. counsel to St. Thomas, West Indies by President McKinley. The portrait to his right is of the Haitian revolutionary, Toussiant L'Ouverture. Collection of Rhode Island Black Heritage Society. Stokes Collection.

(Bottom) Pierre-Dominique Toussiant L'Ouverture emerged out of the Haitian slave revolt of 1791 as a leader of the Haitian people in their new independence from French rule. In 1801 he took control of the former Spanish colony on the island and proclaimed himself governor-general for life. Napoleon reclaimed the island in 1801 and imprisoned L'Ouverture in France where he died in 1803. The Haitian revolutionary loomed large, however, in the history of the region's oppressed black population, as well as elsewhere. It is not surprising that van Horne would have L'Ouverture's portrait in his parlor; he may have had George Washington's as well. Collection of the Rhode Island Black Heritage Society



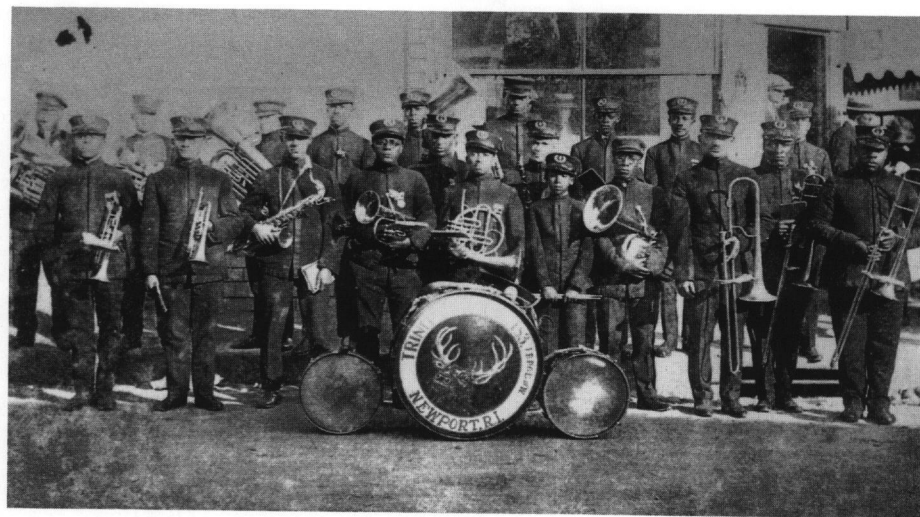
African Americans also worked for the Postal Service. Arthur Townsend and Herbert Wosencroft worked for the service in the 1920s.

Noted Rhode Island black artist Edward Mitchell Bannister chose Newport as his seasonal home and painting subject. Another black artist, Lili M. Kelley, maintained a studio in her Newport home on Warner Street. Kelly specialized in the graphic arts and textiles. Lawrensetta Hicks also chose painting as a profession. William Stanley Braithwaite, the African-American poet and literary critic, resided on Prospect Hill Street.

The African-American community developed its own entertainment programs centered on church-related activities, social clubs and fraternal organizations, and, to a lesser degree, on black-owned restaurants, taverns and coffee houses, such as George Seaforth's club on Long Wharf. Plays were performed at Shiloh Baptist and Mount Olivet churches. The large Masonic Lodge on School Street was used for major events. Among the outstanding local performers in the early twentieth century were Miss Gwendolyn Williams, a contralto singer, and the Reverend Henry Jeter's very musical family. Among the African American community bands were the Trinity Lodge (of Elks) Band, and the Lincoln Band.

In the 1920s and 30s at least two baseball clubs existed in Newport. The Union Athletic Club played Sunset League baseball at the "basin," now Cardines Field. Participants included Harold Riley, Harold Williams, Arthur Trent, Ernest Jenkins, Herbert Wosencroft, and Clarence Butler. African-American Edward "Chick" Suggs was a well known bantam weight/feather-weight boxer who gained national attention in New York. He was the New England featherweight champion in the early 1920s. His brothers Louis and Oscar Suggs were also boxers.

These individuals were not the only notables among African Ameri-



(Top) Lincoln Band. Collection of Eleanor Keys.

(Left) Louis Walker with Boy Scout Band, Memorial Day, 1937, Thames Street. Collection of Eleanor Keys

(Bottom) NAACP float in parade at Washington Square. Collection of Elsie Yates.

cans in Newport. The array of small and large-scaled black business and entrepreneurial activities of this period indicates a growing independence and affluence which provided a black community support base. The majority of these pursuits were in providing the black and white community with essential services.

Black-owned enterprises of the late nineteenth-mid-twentieth centuries

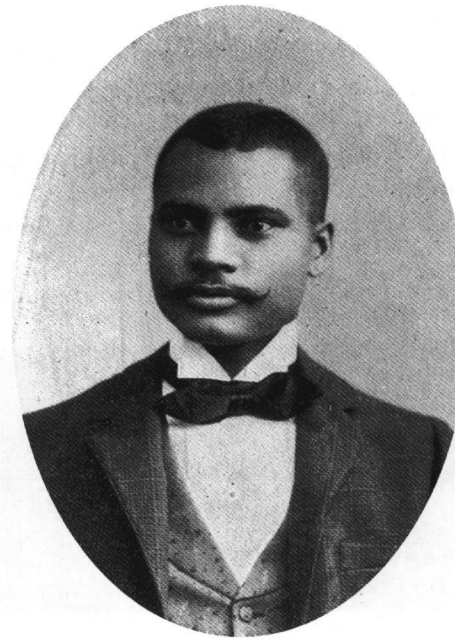
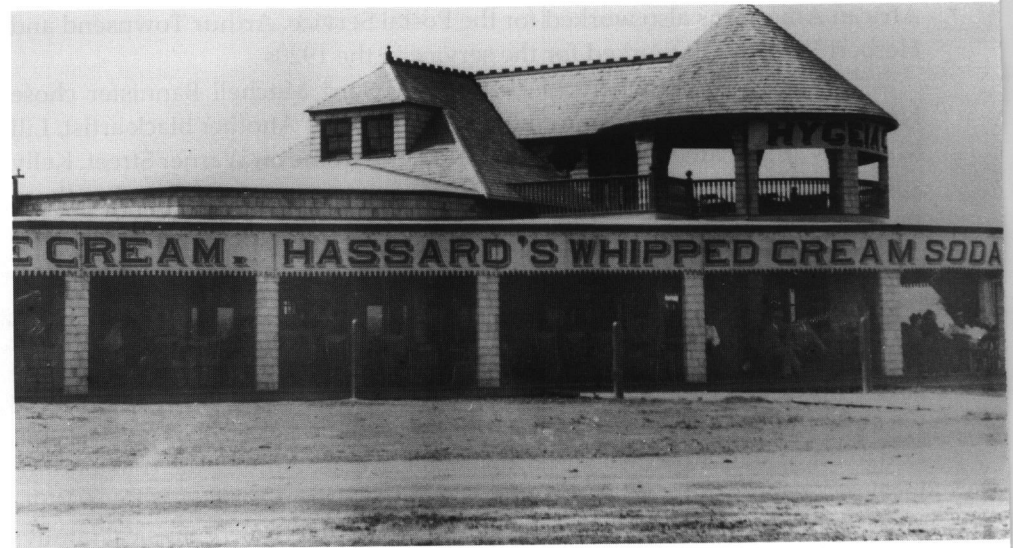
(oral sources; city directories, city maps RIBHS files)

Banking services:

The Rhode Island Loan and Investment Company; D.B.Allen, Thomas Glover, Marcus C. Andrews, James Johnson, Lindsay R.Walker, Armstead Hurley; Washington Square

Restaurants, Catering and Grocery services:

Addison's Corner Grocery; Point Section
 The Allen Restaurant, Hygeia Spa; J.T. Allen and David B. Allen;
 Thames/Marlborough Streets, Easton's Beach
 David Allen Bakery and Catering; David Allen;
 Heath Street, later Equality Park
 Clark Brown's Grocery Store; Clark Brown,
 Memorial Blvd (formerly Bath Road)
 Cinderella Tea Room;
 Broadway
 Ralph Cook/Lyle Matthews variety store;
 Levin Street (Now Memorial Blvd.West)
 Lizzie's Fish Shack, "Fish Lizzie's;" Lizzie Cross;
 Dr. Marcus F. Wheatland Blvd. (formerly West
 Broadway)
 which became:
 Daniel's eatery;
 Dr. Marcus F. Wheatland Blvd. (formerly West Broadway)



(Left) J.T. Allen settled in Newport in 1893, setting up a restaurant and catering business with his brother H.L. Allen, a "distinguished" baker. Their Hygeia Spa at Easton's beach was a well known cafe at the turn-of-the-century. He also located a restaurant with three private dining rooms at the Perry Mansion on Washington Square. Collection of the Newport Historical Society.

George Downing Catering; George T. Downing;
Bellevue Ave

Joseph Dorsey Confectionary Shop; Joseph Dorsey;
Warner Street

Golden Fingers; Abraham Ash;
Holly Tree Coffee House; Daniel A. Smith;
Franklin Street

Richard B. King Coffee Shop; Richard B. King;
William Street

Lisbon's Store; Ed Lisbon;
Callender Ave/ Dr. Marcus F. Wheatland Blvd.
(Formerly West Broadway)

Red Deer Restaurant;
William Street

Laura Ricks Restaurant
Dr. Marcus F. Wheatland Blvd.

Bobby Robertson's general store
(AKA Robertson's neighborhood store);
Kingston Ave/Heath Street

Seaforth's Restaurant; George Seaforth;
Long Wharf

Smith's Lunch Room; D. H. Smith;
Thames Street

Smith's Variety; Frank Smith;
Kingston Ave./Heath Street

Alphonso Smith's eatery;
Dr. Marcus F. Wheatland Blvd.
(Formerly West Broadway) nr.Edward Street

Aura Spencer's Chicken Shack; Aura Spencer;
Dr. Marcus F. Wheatland Blvd. (Formerly West Broadway)/
Pond Avenue

Ton Ton's Eatery;
Dr. Marcus F. Wheatland Blvd. (Formerly West Broadway)

Thomas G. Williams Catering Business; Thomas G. Williams;
Levin Street (Now Memorial Blvd. West)

Williams' Restaurant;
Pond Ave

Barber Shops and Beauty Salons:

Battle's Barber Shop; Charles Battle;
Dr. Marcus F. Wheatland Blvd. (Formerly West Broadway)
(between Tilden and Burnside)

Tom Boyer's Barber Shop
Memorial Blvd.(formerly Bath Road)

Bertha Brown's Beauty Shop; Bertha Brown;
Memorial Blvd (Formerly Bath Road)

Daisy Tonsorial Parlor; Fred E. Williams;
Bellevue Ave

Davis Barber Shop;
Marlborough Street

Pearl Douglas Beauty Shop; Pearl Douglas,
Pearl Street/ Kingston Ave

Emmett's Barber Shop; Emmett, Turner
Dr.Marcus F. Wheatland Blvd. (Formerly West Broadway)

Evelyn's Beauty Shop; Evelyn Minor;
DeBlois Street

Joyce Beauty Shop;
Oak Street

Marion's Beauty Shop; Shuford's Barber Shop;
Dr. Marcus F. Wheatland Blvd. (Formerly West Broadway)

Anthony Peel's Barber Shop (whites only); Anthony Peel;
Franklin Street

William Pierce Barber Shop (whites only);
Church Street

Ernest Stewart Barber Shop;
Pelham Street

Thompson's Barber Shop
Spring Street

Marion Thompson's Hair Salon;
Dr. Marcus F. Wheatland Blvd. (Formerly West Broadway)

Nathalie Trent's Beauty Salon; Nathalie Trent;
Dr. Marcus F. Wheatland Blvd. (Formerly West Broadway)

George Washington's Barber Shop; George Washington;
Bellevue Ave

Theodore West Barbershop; Theodore West;
Marlborough Street
Mrs. Williams' Beauty Salon;
Spring Street

Pharmacy services:

Olive Matthews Drugs; Olive Matthews;
Thames Street
Cromwell West Drugstore; Cromwell West;
Dr. Marcus F. Wheatland Blvd.
(Formerly West Broadway)/
Caleb Earle Street

Transportation services:

Bert Anthony Taxi Service; Bert Anthony
Broadway Garage (w/ B. Burton), Paramount Bus Co., City Taxi,
Louis Walker; Broadway, Bridge Street, Friendship Street
Burton Transfer Express Co.; Benjamin Burton;
Guinn Crt/ Fillmore Street
Charles Fayerweather Blacksmith Shop; Charles Fayerweather;
Kingston Ave



(Top) Louis Walker's City Taxi Garage on Bridge Street, built in 1947 by Walker himself of concrete block. Walker was the son of Lindsay R. Walker, one of Newport's 19th century entrepreneurs who moved to Newport from Culpeper, Virginia. Collection of Eleanor Keys.

(Bottom) Paramount Bus Company coaches ready for passengers. The Paramount Company, founded by Louis Walker, was a primary transportation service within the community. Collection of Eleanor Keys.

(Left) William A. Jackson Moving Company. Collection of Elsie (Gert) Henry.



Jackson Moving Company; William A. Jackson;
Warner Street
James and Ellen Jenkins;
Fillmore Court
Tom Jenkins Taxi Service
Calendar Avenue
Stephen Payne's Livery Stable; Stephen Payne;
Broadway
Eddie Richard's Taxi Service; Eddie Richards;
Saxon R. Robinson's Auto Repair; Saxon R. Robinson;
Memorial Blvd
Martin Sutler Express Services; Martin Sutler;
Chapel Street
Andrew Tabb Livery Stable and Express; Andrew Tabb;
Edgar Crt
Nathanial Tate Blacksmith Shop; Nathanial Tate,
DeBlois/ Chapel Street
Owl Garage, Edwin L. Walker
Friendship Street

Black Employment services:

Elias, Jr. Intelligence Office; Jonas Elias;
Levin Street (Now Memorial Blvd. West)
Cradle's Intelligence Office; Susan Cradle;
Spring Street
Owens Intelligence Office; Sarah Ellen Owens;
William Street
Ray's Employment Service; Mary Ray;
Bellevue Avenue
Walker's Intelligence Office; Lindsay Walker;
Friendship Street
West Broadway Employment Agency; Mary Williams;
Dr. Marcus F. Wheatland Blvd. (West Broadway)
Winston's Intelligence Office; Mildred Winston;
Kingston Ave

Medical and Nursing home services:

Brown's Nursing Home; Nellie Brown;
Brinley Street
Theodore Fleming; DDS
Pilgrim Rest; Elizabeth Canavan;
William Street
D.H. Smith, MD;
Mary Street
M. Alonzo van Horne, DDS;
Division Street, and Broadway
Marcus F. Wheatland, MD;
John Street
Ralph Young, MD;
Thames Street

Fuel and Ice services:

Archie Brown Ice Service; Archie Brown;
Burnside Ave



Russell Herbert Phillips' gasoline and oil fuel or hauling and delivery business, pictured here on Stewart Street in the Kerry Hill neighborhood, early twentieth century. Collection of Evelyn Phillips Golden

Jenkins Oil Company; Thomas Lynn Jenkins;
Fillmore Street

Fred Nalle Ice;

Russell Herbert Phillips Oil Business; Russell Herbert Phillips;
Stewart Street

Martin Sutler Ice; Martin Sutler;
Chapel Street

Frank and John Wigington's Ice, Coal, Oil Business; Edgar Court
Louis Walker's Oil Business;

Friendship Street

Young Brothers (Frank, Melvin and William) Ice Company

Tailoring, Dressmaking, Shoe Repair services:

Mary H. Dickerson's Dressmaking; Mary H. Dickerson;
Bellevue Ave

Freeman's Shoe Repair; Henry Freeman;
Levin Street (now Memorial Blvd. West)

Payne Tailor Shop; Stephen G. Payne;
Broadway

John Gaines' Shoe Repair
Oak Street

Arthur Tinsley's Shoe Repair; Arthur Tinsley;
Spring Street

Cleaning services:

E.G. Dinkins Cleaning; E.G. Dinkins

Mrs. Henry's Laundry; Mrs. Henry;
Levin Street (Now Memorial Blvd. West)

Solomon Mallory's Laundry;
Elm Street

Painting services:

Armstead Hurley Paint and Wallpaper; Armstead Hurley;
Bridge / Cross Streets

ARMSTEAD HURLEY, House, Sign and Ornamental PAINTER

— AND DEALER IN —

Paints, Varnishes, Japans,
Wall Papers, Etc.

**BRIDGE STREET, COR. CROSS STREET,
NEWPORT, R. I.**

Boarding Houses and Land Development:

Downing Block; George T. Downing

Thomas Glover rental housing; Thomas Glover;
Brinley Street

Nolan's Boarding House;
Brinley Street

Lindsay Walker's boarding house; Lindsay Walker;
Friendship Street

Building, Contracting, Building Supplies:

Anthony M. Penna (slate, tile, gravel, shingles); Anthony Penna;
Johnson Court

Robert Beckwith (steamfitter, radiators); Robert Beckwith;
Broadway

Philip Thomas Coriander (Plasterer)

Decline

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries African Americans continued to be employed in large numbers by the Fall River Line. The Depression, however, brought a decline in African-American business ventures. Many small businesses, dependent upon the resort trade, were compelled to close. The Fall River Line itself ceased operations in the mid 1930s. It is from this point onward that the African-American community lost momentum in its social stability and independence, although businesses in the Dr. Marcus F. Wheatland Blvd. area survived into the war years as support for the Navy Base located nearby. (Armstead; McAdam)

Navy interests built a USO facility for black Navy personnel in the West Broadway area in 1944 (now the Martin Luther King Center). During this period the Friends' Meeting House on Farewell Street nearby was used by the black community as a recreation center. (oral sources)

A local NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) chapter was organized in 1919. The Reverend William James Lucas, pastor of the Mount Olivet Baptist Church (1917-1923) was the founder and president of the local chapter. (NHS, church history)

Urban renewal programs have taken a toll on African-American neighborhoods. Whole areas have been cleared and replaced with low income housing, including Chapel Street. Many buildings in the Dr. Marcus F. Wheatland Boulevard area have been demolished. Memorial Boulevard West removed portions of Levin Street and the houses, although saved, have been scattered throughout the city by the Newport Restoration Foundation.

EPILOGUE

The time frame for this study is 1700 - 1945, a period determined by historic resource survey methodology programmed to inventory physical resources potentially eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The heritage of African Americans in Newport does not end here, however. Since 1945, the city's black community has continued to participate in education and government. Its cohesive character has been affected by the immigration of large numbers of African Americans seeking housing in Newport's low-income housing developments built since World War II. Many Newport African Americans who were educated locally left the area in pursuit of jobs in professional occupations. Nurses Alice Jackson Fairclough, Ruth Buchanan, Lillian Addison and Cornelia Lewis sought employment elsewhere after graduating from Lincoln University Hospital in New York. Others

including Audrian Triplett and Lorraine Butler enlisted in the Armed Services Nursing Corps. Lloyd Jackson, a grandson of William H. Jackson, Sr. graduated from Xavier University in New Orleans and went on to teach high school classes in Racine, Wisconsin. The Hicks sisters, Marguerite Hicks Hayden and Mildred Hicks Reed, left Newport to pursue teaching careers. Dr. Martin R. Sutler, jr., a grandson of the Rev. Henry Jeter became a distinguished surgeon in Cleveland, Ohio. Dr. Marshall Ross who played in the Lincoln Band with Persey Wheeler left Newport to practice medicine in New York City.

Many stayed and pursued local careers. Mora Hammonds taught school in the city school system. Paul Gaines, a grandson of William H. Jackson, Sr. was elected Mayor of the city in 1981. Keith W. Stokes, a grandson of George Barclay, served on the City Council in the 1980s. Thornton B. Drummond, Jr. (Newport's first black lieutenant) and Oliver C. Burton, Sr. were two of Newport's first black police officers. In 1989, an elementary school was named after African-American school committee member George H. Triplett who grew up in the Kerry Hill neighborhood.

The local chapter of the NAACP has played an impressive role in recalling the heroic deeds of African Americans. This organization received its charter from the national NAACP in January 1920, making it one of the oldest chapters nationally. Edward Dinkins was the first treasurer and local historian Charles Battle, the first secretary of the chapter. Among the many people who served as president in its 75 year history are two women, Beatrice H. Suggs and Barbara R. Jackson.

For many years, the Newport chapter of the NAACP has honored the Rhode Island Black Regiment. During the Bicentennial in 1976, the chapter dedicated a permanent monument to honor the Regiment in Portsmouth.

The Community Baptist Church formed from a merger of the Shiloh Baptist and Mount Olivet Baptist Churches during the ministry of the Rev. Robert Louis Williams, in the early 1970s. Williams was an associate of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in the Civil Rights Movement. In 1972, the Community Baptist Church, under the leadership of Pastor Williams, joined the Channing Memorial Church to support the Black Heritage Month assembly at Rogers High School. Each February, during Black Heritage Month, two awards are given. The George T. Downing Award is given to an adult in Newport who has contributed to integration. The Dr. Marcus F. Wheatland Award is given to a Rogers minority senior for leadership. Following Pastor Williams' death, the program was named in his honor: The Rev. Robert L. Williams Black History Award Assembly.

Many continue to keep the history of Newport's African American community a living tradition. The Paul Laurence Dunbar Club, founded at the Mt. Olivet Baptist Church in 1948 and kept intact at the Community Baptist Church, has remained active, preserving African-American cultural and historical records. Club activities include, displays, art exhibitions and educational programs.

Members of the Mount Zion A.M.E. Church created the first black history museum in Rhode Island at their church in the early 1970s. Many continue to keep the history of Newport African Americans a living tradition. Their names can be found in the acknowledgments and bibliography of this book.

For over three centuries, Newport's African American community has produced women and men who have provided leadership and inspiration. Young and old, rich and poor will find inspiration in the endeavors of these people.

Frank Carpenter

To continue to foster the oral and written documentation of African Americans in Newport, the last pages of this book have been reserved for notes and the recording of individual family histories.

Key Representative African Americans in Newport's heritage

Slavery 1700 -1800

Arthur Flagg (Aka Arthur Tikey)

Arthur Flagg was born in 1739. He owned property in Newport following the Revolution and was a ropemaker and a free man in 1801. He was an influential member of the African Union Society and used the name Arthur Tikey during the 1780s and 90s, -- presumably he was a free man at this time. In 1789 he was a judge and a treasurer of the Society. Meetings of the African Union Society were held at his house in the 1790s. (NHS, African Union Society records) In 1800, Arthur Flagg lived on the west side of Thames Street south of William Ellery. (RIBHS). He died in 1816 at 77 years of age. A son, Soloman Nubia Tikey, died in 1785. The family is buried in God's Acre at the Common Burying Ground. Other property owned by Flagg included lots at the corner of Third and Poplar Streets and at Cross and Thames Streets. Whether or not Flagg was owned by the Ebenezer Flagg family is not known at this time. Ebenezer Flagg was a partner in the Collins, Flagg and Engs mercantile business which participated in a minor way in the slave trade. Flagg was a manufacturer of cordage. His son Ebenezer, Jr. is said to have been killed with Colonel Christopher Greene at the ambush of Point's Bridge along with members of the Rhode Island Black Regiment who defended him. (Downing)

Newport Gardner

One of the community's most well-known and influential Africans, Newport Gardner arrived in Newport from the African coast on a slave ship in 1760, apparently to acquire an education, but was enslaved in the service of Caleb Gardner, a slave ship captain and one of Newport's major slave merchants. In four years Newport Gardner learned English, French, and Western music, and was converted to Christianity. He did not, however, forget or lose his African language

or culture. He became a friend of Samuel Hopkins, the abolitionist pastor of the First Congregational Church. He taught music in a hired room on Division Street, wrote and published music, and taught African children at the school of the African Benevolent Society of which he was a founder. Following the Revolution, Newport Gardner appears to have been employed as a school teacher and blacksmith. Although he was not freed by Caleb Gardner until 1792, he was the first president of the African Union Society, the first black cultural society in the nation (formed in 1780). Newport Gardner founded the Union Congregational Church, the first African church in the city. He retained his African name - Occramar Mirycoo (or Marycoo). He and his wife, Limas, raised 13 children born between 1778 and 1800. He owned his own home on Pope Street as early as 1807. Later in life he became involved in the African Colonization movement, returning to his homeland in 1826 with his sons, fellow members of the African Union Society and African Pope Street neighbors. Unfortunately he and his followers succumbed to an African coast - related sickness soon after arriving.

Quarco Honeyman (Jack Sisson)

Quarco Honeyman, a former slave, is best known for his Revolutionary War exploits as a Rebel informer. Local tradition attests to his employment with General Prescott's staff at the Banister House in Pelham Street during the British occupation. He is reported to have informed the colonial rebel forces as to the General's movements, leading to Prescott's capture by Colonel Barton in Portsmouth.

Caesar Lyndon

Caesar Lyndon was a highly articulate and literate slave of Josiah Lyndon, a colonial governor of Rhode Island, and was employed as a purchasing agent and secretary. He became a scribe and secretary for the African Union Society early in its organization. He died in 1794.

John Quamino

According to Ezra Stiles, John Quamino was originally sent to Rhode Island from Africa as a child by his father to obtain an education in about 1755 (this is not the only such story). Apparently he was enslaved in the process. After sending

him to school, the ship captain entrusted with his welfare sold Quamino as a slave. He is reported to have been educated by Mrs. Osborn, the noted colonial school teacher in Newport. In 1769, Quamino was the slave of Captain Benjamin Church. Quamino was able to purchase his freedom in about 1773 with lottery winnings. About this time he was recruited by Samuel Hopkins, the pastor of the First Congregational Church, and Ezra Stiles, the pastor of the Second Congregational Church, to embark upon Christian missionary work in Africa. Having been interviewed by Hopkins and Stiles, Quamino had been selected for the project because of his keen intellect. He is reported to have retained knowledge of the African languages and was keen to return to Africa. Quamino and another free African, Bristol Yamma, were sent to Princeton College to be further educated in preparation. These two Africans were apparently the first blacks to attend college in the colonies. The Revolutionary War interfered with the missionary plans. John Quamino attempted to earn funds to buy his wife (Charity "Duchess" Quamino) and family out of slavery by enlisting with a privateer. He died shortly thereafter in a skirmish aboard the privateer in 1779. Meanwhile, the missionary project was abandoned.

Charity "Duchess" Quamino

Duchess Quamino was the slave of William Channing living on School Street. She married John Quamino in 1769, Quamino then being the slave of Captain Benjamin Church. After her husband died in 1779, Duchess Quamino managed to gain her freedom within a year. In the late 18th century, she became well known throughout the region as a pastry cook, using the ovens of the Channing house for her cooking. She may have moved to Second Street later in her life. At least one source states that she remained in a small School street house until her death. Through her domestic work in the Channing household, it is presumed that Duchess Quamino had an influence upon William Ellery Channing from his boyhood on. Duchess Quamino died in 1804. William Ellery Channing had an inscription carved on her grave stone celebrating her intelligence, industriousness, affection, honesty and exemplary piety. Duchess Quamino was a member of the Palls and Biers of the African Union Society in 1792. (Carpenter) (George Gibbs Channing)

Nathaniel Rodman

Nathaniel Rodman was an influential former slave living on Warner Street who, following the Revolution, helped organize the African Benevolent Society to provide educational facilities for the emerging African-American community. Rodman's house was moved to Second Street after 1960.

Bristol Yamma

Bristol Yamma is described as a free African in the late 18th century who was selected with John Quamino by Samuel Hopkins and Ezra Stiles to be sent on an experimental Christian missionary expedition to Africa. He was educated with Quamino at Princeton College for the project. Unfortunately outbreak of the Revolutionary War and Quamino's untimely death aboard a privateer caused the project to be quickly terminated. Bristol Yamma was involved in the organization of the African Union Society until his death in Providence in 1793.

1800 - Civil War

Isaac Babcock

Isaac Babcock was a free African-American living on School Street in the early nineteenth century. He is listed as a gardener in the 1858 city directories. Babcock was instrumental with Isaac Rice, John Mowatt, Francis Chaloner and Benjamin Weeden, among others, in acquiring the Fourth Baptist Meeting House on Division Street for use by the Union Congregational Church. He was listed as a member of the African Humane Society (aka African Union Society) 1823-1843.

Pompey Brinley

Pompey Brinley, a former slave, living on Levin Street (now Memorial Blvd. West) during the early nineteenth century helped organize the African Benevolent Society in 1808 for the schooling of African-American children. His home was later the site of the organization of the Shiloh Baptist Church. A member of the African Union Society, he died in 1813. (Armstead)



Oliver Hazard Perry and Hannibal Collins (center rear) at the Battle of Lake Erie. Collection of the Newport Historical Society

Benjamin J. Burton

Born in 1826 in Connecticut, Benjamin J. Burton first arrived in Newport in 1845 working as a teamster for coal dealers (Gifford and Devens) on Commercial Wharf. He left Newport for California during the Gold Rush and returned with enough funds to launch a successful express company, the "Original Express," in the 1850s. This was one of the earliest black-owned express businesses in the city. His obituary reported that Burton suffered from racial tensions over his initiative, describing frequent setbacks; horses being maliciously injured, harnesses cut, and wagons damaged by competitors. But Burton succeeded and his efforts launched African-American entrepreneurial pursuits in the business of transportation. Burton was the originator of the Bellevue Avenue omnibus line as well as lines on the

Point and on Broadway. He also developed a successful baggage transfer service catering to the summer resort population. Burton committed suicide in 1885, although there had been speculation that he was murdered. The transportation industry and livery business advanced during the 19th century and early 20th centuries under black ownership to include taxi and bus services. The express business continued in the Burton family after Burton's death.

Hannibal Collins

Hannibal Collins apparently enlisted in the Colonists' First Rhode Island Regiment, the "Black Regiment," during the Revolution, to gain his freedom. He escaped the slaughter of the regiment (at the ambush of Points Bridge) by being wounded at the battle of Rhode Island and returning to Newport to recover. He enlisted in the War of 1812, and accompanied Oliver Hazard Perry to the Great Lakes, fighting under Perry's command in the Battle of Lake Erie. Later he was under Perry's command in South America.

1865 - World War II

Edward Mitchell Bannister

Edward Mitchell Bannister was a well-known late 19th century painter of the Barbizon and Impressionist schools who lived in Providence but frequented Newport during the summer. Bannister won a bronze medal at the Centennial Exposition (Philadelphia) in 1876, launching his influential career in Rhode Island. He participated in founding the Providence Art Club and his circle founded the Rhode Island School of Design. He died in 1901.

William Stanley Beaumont Braithwaite

William Stanley Braithwaite came in contact with Newport in the early 1890s when his widowed mother moved the family to the city to establish a tourist home. The family lived on DeBlois Street. Braithwaite married Newporter Emma Kelley.

Braithwaite was a nationally known African-American poet and literary critic in the early to mid-twentieth-century. He was a distinguished college professor for ten years at Atlanta University and a personal and literary friend of major American poets Robert Frost, Edgar Arlington Robinson, Amy Lowell, James Weldon Johnson, Counter Cullen, and black nationalist/scholar W.E.B. DuBois, among others. Braithwaite became known at the turn of the century in American literary circles as a critic for the *Boston Transcript*. Through his literary work, Braithwaite strove to demonstrate that a black writer could be the equal "of any other man in possession of the attributes that produce a literature of human thought and experience." He was the editor of anthologies of selected American verse for 17 years (1913-1929). He also edited four long lasting anthologies of period English poetry and three volumes of his own poems. He died in 1962.

Silas and Mary Dickerson

During the mid- to late nineteenth century Silas Dickerson owned and operated a successful grocery store on William Street. He was the Chairman of the Board of the Union Congregational Church during the construction of the present structure in the early 1870s. His wife, Mary, operated a dressmaking shop on Bellevue Avenue. In 1903, Mrs. Dickenson organized the first federation of African-American club women in Rhode Island.

Jacob Dorsey

Dorsey came to Newport from Maryland in 1851 at the age of thirty. He and his wife operated a confectionery business on Warner Street between 1851-1900. He was also listed in the city directories as a whitewasher (painter) in the 1880's and 1890's.

George T. Downing

George T. Downing was an early entrepreneur in resort accommodations including restaurants, catering services, hotel accommodations, and retail services in Newport. He opened the Sea Girt Hotel on Bellevue Avenue in 1854 and later the Downing Block of retail stores. Downing was influential

in local policy-making and a success symbol to the black community. In addition to his entrepreneurial pursuits, Downing was involved in the abolitionist movement and had established political connections with policy-makers in the nation's capitol and with black rights advocate Frederick Douglass. Downing was a vocal opponent of the Reverend Henry Highland Garnet with whom he had been schooled in New York City. Garnet became a leading figure in the black nationalist movement in the mid-19th century espousing radical approaches to ending slavery, including open slave revolt. Downing apparently resolved to work more closely with the establishment and formed a more integrationist approach. He used his influence to gain desegregation of the city's schools in 1866 and was a keen supporter of the abolitionist movement at the national level. His principal restaurant-catering enterprise was the dining services at the Capitol for the U.S. House of Representatives. (Stuckey; NHS, Obit. ; Cottrol)

Charles Fayerweather

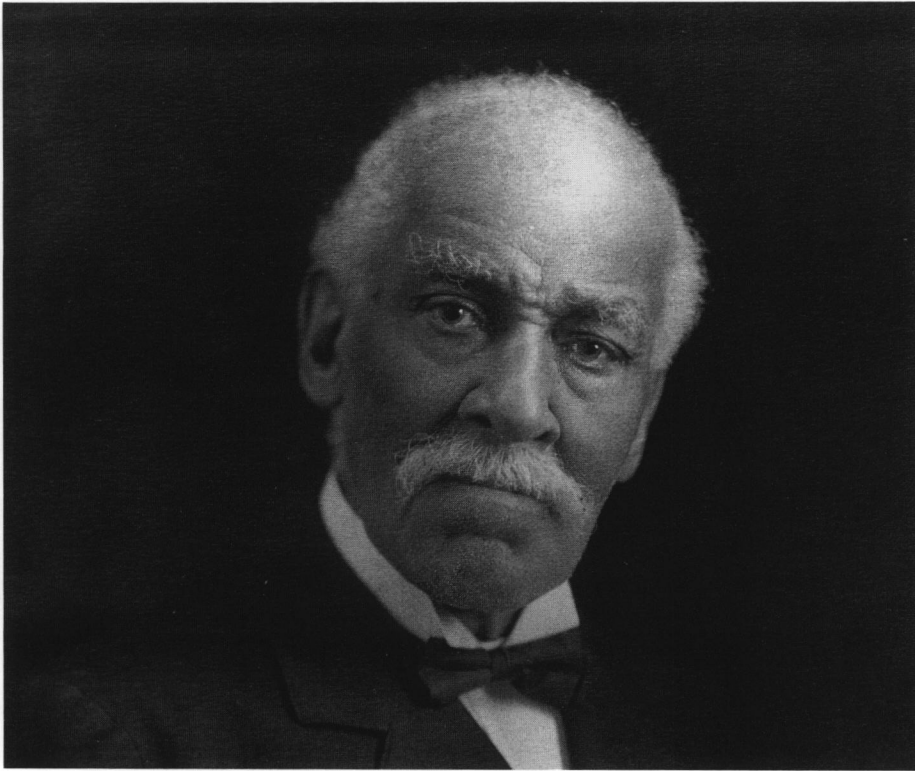
Charles Fayerweather was a successful blacksmith who lived and worked in the Kingston Avenue/Pearl Street area in the late 19th century. He was chosen to attend the National Negro Business League Convention in 1880 (held in Baltimore) and gave the opening address as a Newport delegate.

Thomas Glover

Thomas Glover was active in the late 19th and early 20th centuries in Newport as a real estate developer and housing landlord. Among other properties, he owned boarding houses and flats which he rented to African Americans. Glover was a partner with other black entrepreneurs in the Rhode Island Loan and Investment Company, located on Washington Square. This small African-American-owned bank provided resources for black entrepreneurs.

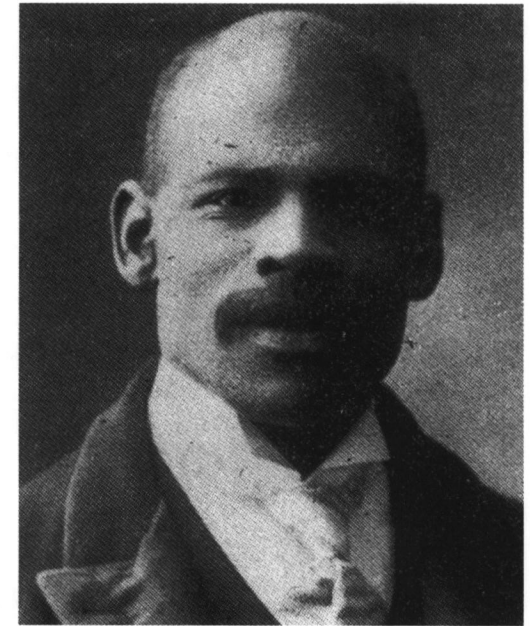
Armstead Hurley

Armstead Hurley was born into slavery in Culpeper County in 1854 and was freed following General Lee's surrender. He came to Newport



George Downing. Collection of the Rhode Island Black Heritage Society

from Virginia in 1886 as a painter and glazier, operating a painting and wallpapering business in the upper Thames Street area. The business he established became one of the largest and most prosperous painting concerns in Newport during the city's Gilded Age. Hurley was a partner in the Rhode Island Loan and Investment Company with David B. Allen, Thomas Glover, Marcus C. Andrews, Lindsay R. Walker and James Johnson. This black-owned banking firm loaned funds to black businessmen and investors. Hurley employed family members and invested in rental property on Division and Mary Street. He was the treasurer of the Shiloh Baptist Church in the early 1900s.



Armstead Hurley. Collection of the Rhode Island Historical Society

William H. Jackson, Sr.

William H. Jackson, Sr. (born in Petesburg, Virginia) was involved in the late 19th century in local and state politics. He was employed by the Rhode Island House of Representatives as sergeant-at-arms for over two decades, both at the Colony House in Newport and after 1900 at the State House in Providence. He was a member of the city's representative council from the Second Ward and active in Republican political circles. In 1932 he was appointed a sergeant-at-arms to serve at the Republican national convention in Chicago where he authored an anti-lynch plank for the Republican platform.

The Reverend Henry N. Jeter

Henry Jeter, the son of a Virginia slave, was born into slavery in Charlotte County, Virginia in 1851. After the Civil War, he was employed in a boot and leather business in Lynchburg, VA and studied theology at night.

He was baptized in 1868 in the African Baptist Church in Lynchburg. Jeter entered the Wayland Seminary in Washington, D.C. in 1869, where he studied for six years under the direction of the Reverend G.M.P. King, D.D.. Jeter married Thomasinia Hamilton, the daughter of Thomas Hamilton, the editor and proprietor of the *Anglo-African*, a weekly African-American paper published in New York City during the period. He was hired by the Shiloh Baptist Church in Newport upon his graduation from Wayland and became one of the most respected African-American pastors in Newport. Jeter's family (8 children) became widely known for their musical talent, giving performances locally and as far away as Washington, DC. Henry Jeter was an influential pastor of the Shiloh Baptist Church from 1875 until after 1916. Following his pastorate, he became known for work in race relations and humane endeavors. Jeter died in 1938. (Jeter, RIBHS, vertical files)

John Mowatt (John Mewatt)

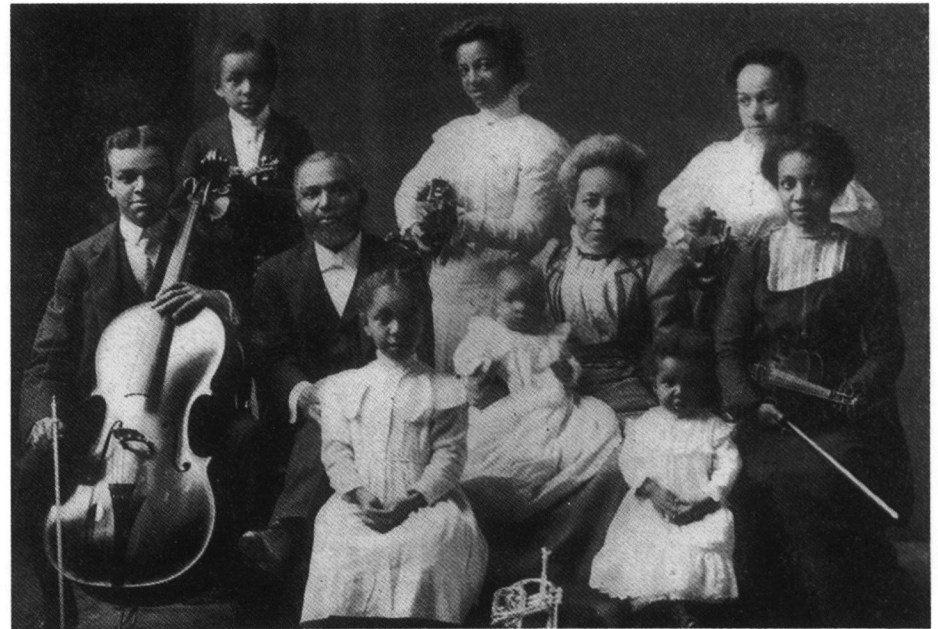
John Mowatt was an early free African entrepreneur who is listed as a grocer early in the 19th century living on Division Street. He was a founding member of the Union Colored Church (aka Union Congregational Church). The first meeting to organize the black masonic lodge was held at his house in 1849. Mowatt owned two adjoining properties on Division Street as early as 1809. He died in 1859 at the age of 81 and was described as a "respectable coloured man." His wife, Patience, described as a mulatto, died in 1867. (Franklin; NHS, Gould Day Book #1324)

Peter Quire

Peter Quire was born in Baltimore in 1806. He came to Newport from Philadelphia with his wife and became active in the establishment of a Trinity Church mission on the Point in the 1870s. The first meeting of the mission was held in a room in an unoccupied house owned by Peter Quire at the corner of Third and Poplar Streets. He died in 1889, leaving one half of his residual estate (\$419) to the church. His wife, having died in 1883, was the first person to have a funeral in the church.

The Jeter Family. Rev. Jeter at center. Collection of the Rhode Island Historical Society.

William H. Jackson, Sr. Rhode Island Black Heritage Society, Paul Gaines Collection





Peter Quire. Collection of St. John's Church

Daniel A. Smith and Dr. Daniel A. Smith, Jr.

Daniel Arthur Smith was born in Washington, D.C. and came to Newport after the Civil War. He operated the Holly Tree Coffee House on Franklin Street, then a restaurant in the Bateman Building, and later dining rooms at his house on Mary Street. Dr. Daniel A. Smith, Jr. was born in Newport in 1881. He was a physician in Wilmington, Del. before establishing a practice in Newport in 1931, one year prior to his mother's death. Dr. Smith occupied his Mary Street house/office until his death in 1971. (NHS, Obit.)

Isaac Rice

Isaac Rice was the free stepson of Caesar Bonner. He was born in 1792 in the Narragansett Country on the west side of Narragansett Bay and moved to Newport in the early 19th century. The Rice Homestead on William and Thomas Streets was built for Caesar Bonner about 1815 and given to Isaac Rice shortly thereafter. Isaac Rice became one of Newport's early black entrepreneurs, developing a well-known catering business on Cotton Court off Thames Street. He had also been a gardener and is known to have worked for Governor George Gibbs at his estate on Mill Street (including present day Touro Park). Isaac Rice was involved and influential in the establishment of free African social organizations in the ante-bellum period and has been credited by many as Newport Gardner's successor as a leader of Newport's African-American community before the Civil War. He was an active abolitionist and a "conductor" of the underground railroad. He was a secretary for the African Benevolent Society during its initial development and a member of the African Union Society in 1810. Rice continued as an influential member of the African Human Society (aka African Union Society) in the early to mid-1800s. Rice also assisted George T. Downing and Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson in their efforts to desegregate Newport schools in the 1860s. Rice was a friend of abolitionist Frederick Douglass, who is said to have stayed at the Rice Homestead in 1843 when he visited Rhode Island to speak on abolition for the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society. (Robinson, Battle; Oral Sources)

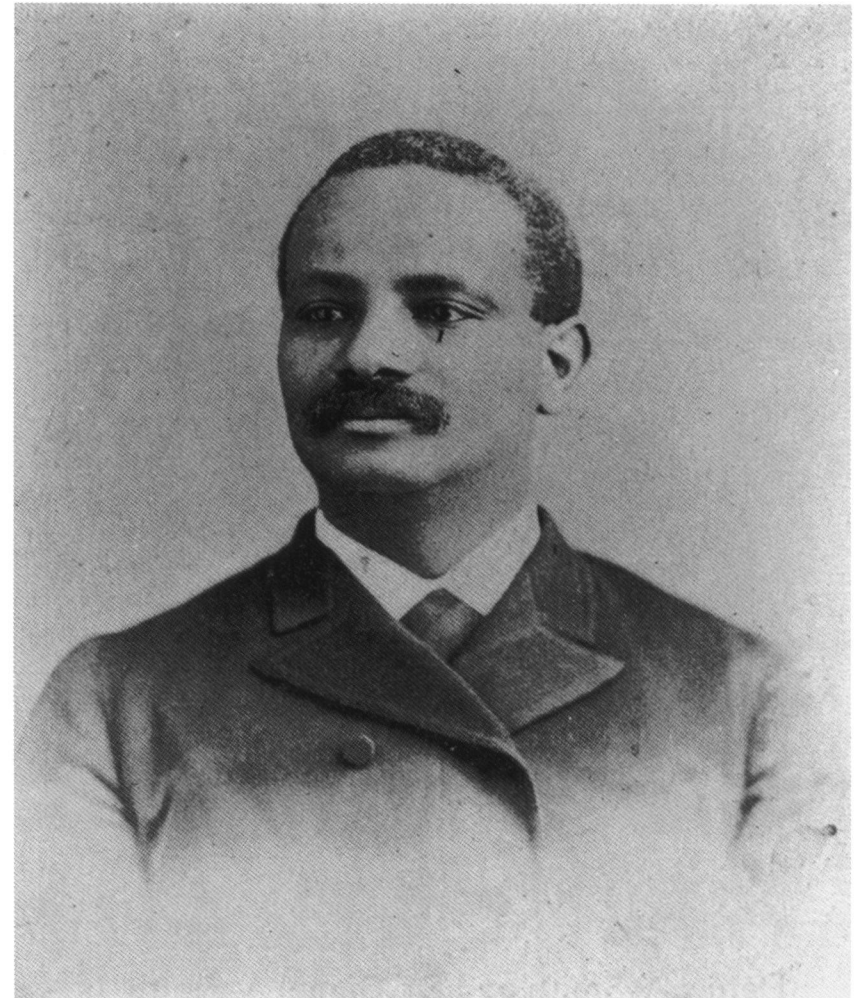
George A. Rice

George A. Rice was a chief steward on the Fall River Line during its height in popularity in the mid-to late nineteenth century. He was the principal organizer of service aboard several of the Line's premier palace steamships including the *Puritan*, *Pilgrim* and *Priscilla*. Rice was well-known by the celebrities using the Line and often sought after. The porters, waiters and kitchen staff aboard the steamships were predominantly African-Americans. These were floating hotels with overnight accommodations and large dining facilities serving complex menus. Rice was able to educate his two daughters and son, George Rice. The latter graduated from Dartmouth College in 1869, applied for admission to the College of Physicians at Columbia, but was rejected apparently because of his race. Undaunted, Rice's son went to Scotland

to study at the University of Edinburgh and to Paris, eventually practicing medicine in London. Later he became the head of a hospital in Kent.

The Reverend Mahlon van Horne

Born in 1840, Mahlon van Horne became the pastor of the Union Congregational Church in 1869, immediately following his graduation from Lincoln University (PA) in 1868. Van Horne had been a school teacher in Huntington, Long Island and in Charleston, S.C. He continued as pastor of the Union Congregational Church for 28 years, until 1896 when he was appointed U.S. Counsel to St. Thomas, W.I. by President William McKinley. He later became a missionary in Antigua in the West Indies and died there in 1910. Van Horne's pastorate included the period in which the present Union Congregational Church structure was constructed (1871) to its financial decline in the late 1890s. Van Horne was the first black to serve on the Newport School Committee. He held terms between 1873 and 1892. Van Horne was also the first black to serve in the Rhode Island legislature. He was elected a Representative



Mahlon van Horne. Collection of the Rhode Island Historical Society



Dr. Marcus F. Wheatland. Collection of the Newport Historical Society

Dr. Marcus Fitzherbert Wheatland

Marcus F. Wheatland was a well-respected late nineteenth to early twentieth-century black physician who lived on John Street. Wheatland maintained his practice for over 40 years and was regarded as an authority in the use of X-ray equipment in the diagnosis of ailments.

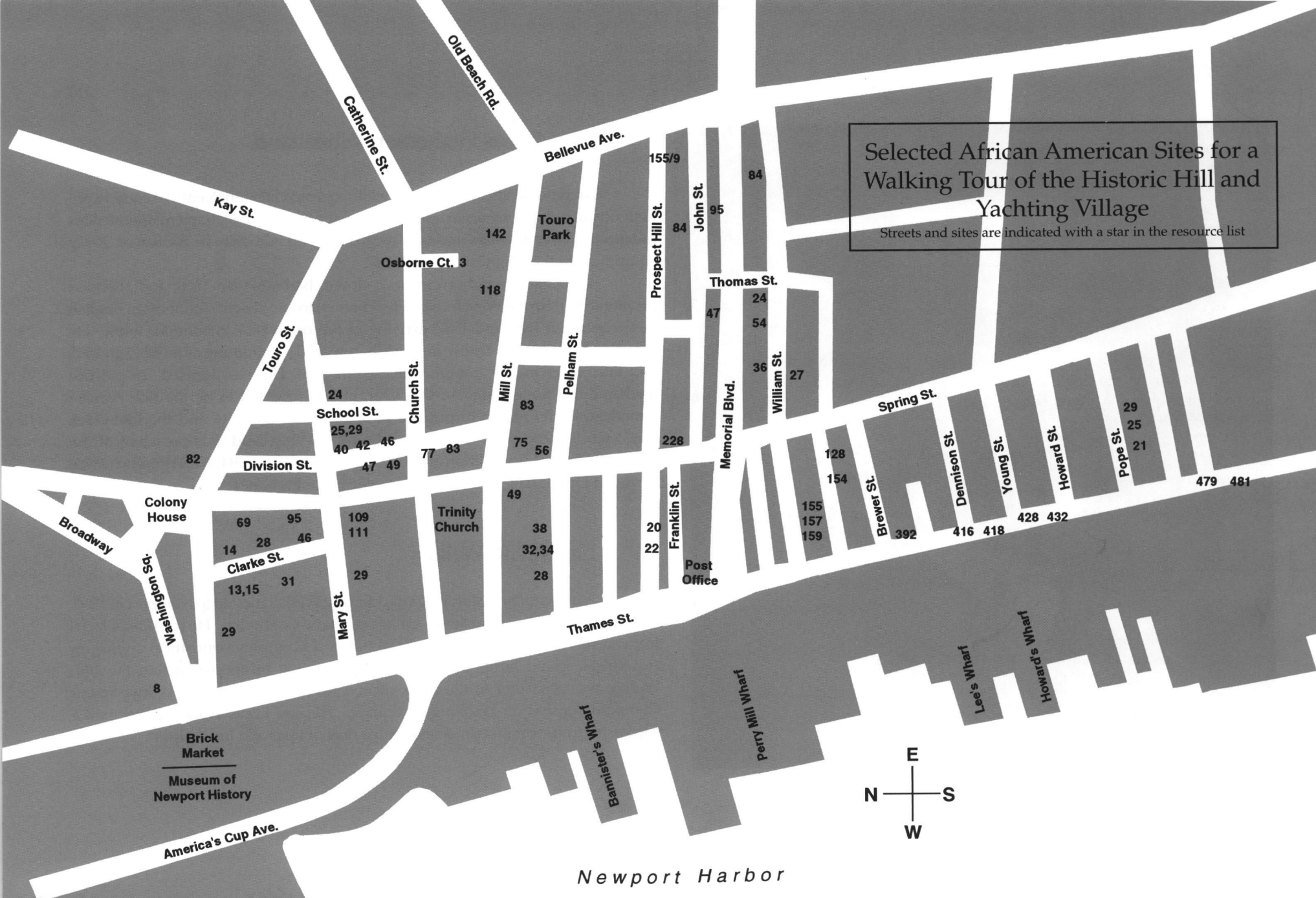
Wheatland was born in Bridgetown, Barbadoes in 1868, and attended private schools in the West Indies. He is known to have been a sailor on an English vessel between 1884 and 1887, arriving in Boston in 1887 looking for work. He attended Howard University in Washington, D.C., graduating as an M.D. in 1895 and later receiving an honorary degree in 1908. He was licensed to practice medicine in Rhode Island in that year, and is reported to be the first African American in the nation to practice radiology as a specialty and the first black physician to practice on Aquidneck Island. Wheatland was president of the National Medical Association in 1910. He died in 1934. In 1994, West Broadway was renamed Dr. Marcus F. Wheatland Boulevard in his honor.

Lindsay R. Walker

A native of northern Virginia, Lindsay Walker moved to Newport in 1860. He was employed as a gardener and occasionally as a butler. He recruited blacks from northern Virginia (through a Washington, DC employment office) to work on Aquidneck Island farms and in the transportation businesses within the city. Walker was a partner in the black-owned Rhode Island Loan and Investment Company located on Washington Square. His son Louis Walker developed a successful transportation business with a fleet of taxis and limousines.

Selected African American Sites for a Walking Tour of the Historic Hill and Yachting Village

Streets and sites are indicated with a star in the resource list



Newport Harbor

Historic Resources List

The following is an extensive, but not exhaustive, list of places, buildings and sites associated with the heritage of African Americans in Newport. Many of these resources are listed in the National Register of Historic Places either within districts or individually. One area, the Pope Street neighborhood, is potentially eligible for listing in the National Register as an early Africa-American neighborhood surviving with considerable architectural integrity.

Bellevue Avenue

32 Bellevue Avenue, AP 25, Lot 61:

Muenchinger-King Hotel, c.1840, 1870, 1890: a complex 3-1/2 story, mansard-roofed, clapboard, Second-Empire style hotel which was enlarged and remodeled during the late nineteenth century. The hotel employed African Americans living in the vicinity during the mid-to-late nineteenth century period of Newport's prominence as a hotel resort. The building is one of only a few surviving examples of the hotel era.

Bridge Street

1,3,5 Bridge Street, AP 17, Lots 56,57:

Joseph House Stevens, prior to 1750: a two-story, gable-roofed, clapboard and shingle, Georgian style house with 2 interior brick chimneys. The building was owned by Joseph Stevens

prior to 1750. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the house was owned and occupied by black businessman Armstead Hurley who had his successful paint and wallpapering business and store in an addition facing Thames Street. A concrete block outbuilding was used for storage. Armstead Hurley was an investor in the Rhode Island Loan and Investment Company, a local black bank supplying funds for black businesses. His paint and wallpapering business served the elite during Newport's gilded age.

13 Bridge Street, AP 17, Lot 260:

City Taxi, 1947: a 2 story, gable-roofed, concrete block early - twentieth century commercial structure which functioned as the Bridge Street locus of black businessman Louis Walker's taxi service. Walker invested in numerous transportation-related business ventures including a limousine service, a garage and a bus company (located on Friendship Street and on Broadway).

31 Bridge Street, AP 17, Lots 31, 29:

Stephen Ayrault House, c.1790: a 2-story, gable-roofed clapboard and shingle, Federal style house moved to the site from Walnut Street in 1884. The house was owned by slave trader and slave ship owner Stephen Ayrault in 1790. In 1774, Ayrault owned five slaves, some of whom may have been employed as seamen aboard his ships. In 1773-74

Ayrault owned the slaver *Fanny* which undertook a voyage to the Guinea Coast and transported 112 slaves to Charleston, S.C.

70 and 72 Bridge Street, AP 16, Lots 75,78:

John Townsend House and workshop, c.1750: a small, 2-story, gable-roofed clapboard and shingle, Georgian house with a central chimney. Attached to the house is a large 2-1/2 story, mansard-roofed, clapboard structure. John Townsend was an influential member of the Townsend family of cabinet and furniture makers. This house was occupied by Townsend before 1758 and the adjoining gambrel-roofed building was used as a workshop. In 1774 John Townsend owned three slaves. Whether or not slaves were employed as laborers in the cabinet and furniture-making shop is not known at this time. (see 74-76 Bridge Street)

74-76 Bridge Street, AP 16, Lot 74:

Christopher Townsend House, c.1725: a 2-story gable-on-hip-roofed, clapboard and shingle, center chimney, Georgian style house with an attached single story, gable-roofed office/store/shop. The house and shop were built by Christopher Townsend, a house-joiner and cabinet-maker who specialized in maple ship furniture. A member of the Townsend family of furniture and cabinet-makers, Christopher Townsend died in 1773. The Townsend family at the time of his death owned a

total of six slaves. Whether or not slave labor was employed in the furniture and cabinet making business requires further study.

77 Bridge Street, AP 16, Lots 60,61:

Pitt's Head Tavern, c.1725, 1744: an imposing 2-1/2 story, gambrel-roofed, clapboard, Georgian style house built for merchant and patron of the arts Henry Collins. The house originally stood on Washington Square and was enlarged in 1744. The house may have been given by Collins to his niece Mary Ward on her marriage to Ebenezer Flagg, who was a manufacturer of cordage and became a business associate of Collins. Flagg participated with Collins and Samuel Engs in the slave trade, jointly owning the slaver *Africa* in 1755; however, the firm was forced into bankruptcy by the early 1760s. Ebenezer Flagg died in 1762. Whether or not this family owned Arthur Flagg, an influential free black in the 1790s has not been verified. Downing/Scully's *Architectural Heritage of Newport, Rhode Island* reports that both sons of Ebenezer and Mary Flagg were killed in action during the Revolution. Ebenezer Flagg, Jr. was killed with his Commanding Officer Christopher Greene in a surprise attack by British Forces in Westchester County, New York. Christopher Greene was in command of the Rhode Island Black Regiment. He was killed in an ambush at Points Bridge, N.Y. with nearly all of his black troops who heroically attempted to defend him.

90 Bridge Street, AP 16, Lot 69:

Brenton Counting House, c.1748, 1976: a 2-1/2 story hip-gambrel-roofed, clapboard, Georgian style, commercial building associated with the mercantile empire of the Brenton family. In 1774, the Brentons (Benjamin and Jahleel) owned seven slaves.

The counting house, originally located at Champlin Wharf and Thames Street, was the center of the family's extensive trading activities. The Brentons owned extensive property in the southern portions of the island. Because they were Loyalists during the Revolution, an angry mob carried off 1000 sheep and 40-50 head of cattle from their farm (Hammersmith Farm) during the British occupation. Cuffe Cockroach, a noted colonial cook was one of the Brenton slaves.

Brinley Street

21 Brinley Street, AP 25, Lot 29:

Nellie Brown's Rest Home, (aka Golden Age Rest Home), c.1860: a 1-1/2 story, mansard-roofed, Early Victorian style house possibly used as a boarding house during the Newport hotel era, with Samuel Engs proprietor. In the twentieth century, this structure and 23 Brinley Street were utilized by black businesswoman Nellie Brown as a rest/retirement/nursing home popular with the African-American community.

23 Brinley Street, AP 25, Lot 29:

Nellie Brown's Rest Home, c.1860: a 2-1/2 story, mansard-roofed, Second Empire style building which may have been a boarding house or apartments used for housing during the Newport hotel era under the proprietorship of H.H.Swinbourne (1883) and before by Joseph Tew (1876). The building was later utilized in the twentieth century as a part of black businesswoman Nellie Brown's rest home property. The building was connected with 21 Brinley Street at one time.



24 Brinley Street. Photograph by Richard Youngken

24 Brinley Street, AP 25, Lot 30:

Nolan's Boarding House, c.1850: a 3 story, flat-roofed, Early Victorian style residential building which may have been built as a boarding house. In 1870 Philip Rider was the proprietor. The building may have provided staff housing for nearby hotels during Newport's hotel era. In the mid twentieth century the structure was known as Nolan's Boarding House catering to African Americans.

26 Brinley Street, AP 25, Lot 38:

Boarding House, c.1870: a 3 story, flat-roofed, Late-Victorian style boarding house which may have been associated with housing staff for the hotels located nearby. Philip Rider was the proprietor of the building in 1870. In the early twentieth century, the building was owned by Thomas Glover, an influential black businessman and property owner who, with Armstead Hurley, David B. Allen, Marcus C. Andrews, James Johnson and Lindsay Walker formed the Rhode Island Loan and Investment Company, a black-owned bank on Washington Square. The boarding house was one of two properties owned by Glover in the immediate neighborhood. It is presumed that African-American families were the principal tenants in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Catherine Street

22 Catherine Street, AP 25, Lot 39:

Fillmore House, c.1856: 3-story, flat-roofed, wood-framed, Early Victorian, Italianate, bracketed hotel originally connected to and similar to 24 Catherine Street with mid-section removed. The hotel was an employment center for African-Americans prior to the Civil War, catering to Newport's developing hotel resort trade. This building is one of only a few hotel structures remaining from the period.

24 Catherine Street, AP 25, Lot 37:

Fillmore House, c.1856: 3-story, flat-roofed, wood-framed, Early Victorian, Italianate, bracketed hotel originally connected to and similar to 22 Catherine Street. See 22 Catherine Street entry.

★ Clarke Street

★ 14 Clarke Street, AP 24, Lot 302:

Ezra Stiles House, c.1756/65: 2-story, gambrel-roofed, clapboarded, Georgian house, built for the Second Congregational Society as a parsonage. The Reverend Dr. Ezra Stiles lived in the house during his term in Newport as pastor of the Second Congregational Church prior to the Revolution. Stiles and the Reverend Samuel Hopkins joined forces to launch an early attempt at encouraging Africans in missionary work in their homeland. Here he is supposed to have interviewed John Quamino for a missionary position, with a semester at Princeton College. Stiles is known to have had at least one African slave as a body servant.

★ 13,15 Clarke Street, AP 24, Lot 48:

Second Congregational Church, 1735, 1847, 1874: a 2-story, gable-roofed, clapboard meeting house/church originally designed in the Georgian style, with Greek Revival additions. The structure was built by Cotton Palmer.

Ezra Stiles was the pastor of this church prior to the Revolution.

★ 28 Clarke Street, AP 24, Lot 74:

Caleb Hollingsworth House, (aka Joseph Burrill House), c.1705, 1755: a 2-1/2 story, gambrel-roofed, clapboard and shingle, Georgian style house owned by Caleb Hollingsworth, a saddler in the early eighteenth century. Peter Easton owned the house in 1712 and it remained in the Easton family until after 1727. A Peter Easton is recorded to have had a slave in Newport as early as 1691. Prior to the Revolution (1755-1801) it was owned by Joseph Burrill, a tin craftsman, who owned five slaves in 1774. Some of the Africans in the household may have been employed as laborers in the tin business. Africans may have lived in the garret of the house.

★ 31 Clarke Street, AP 24, Lot 73:

Robert Stevens House, c.1742-1755: a 2-1/2 story, gambrel-roofed, clapboard and shingle, Georgian style house apparently built for Robert Stevens who lived in the house prior to the Revolution. Stevens was an upholsterer and ship chandler who owned five slaves in 1774, presumably employed as domestic servants and laborers in his mercantile operations. These Africans may have lived in the garret rooms of the house.

★ 46 Clarke Street, AP 24, Lot 93:

Vernon House, c.1708, 1760: an imposing 2-1/2 story, hip-roofed, Georgian style house with rusticated wood siding, possibly designed by Peter Harrison. Portions of the building may date to the late 17th and early 18th centuries. Possibly built for William Gibbs, the house was occupied by the Gibbs-Gardner family and was owned by Metcalf Bowler in 1759. Bowler was a successful merchant engaged in the West Indies trade, and a colonial official. Metcalf Bowler transformed the house from its earlier form to the Georgian mansion it is today. Prior to the Revolution (in 1773), Bowler sold the house to the prominent Newport merchant William Vernon. Both William and his son Samuel were extensively involved in the slave trade. In 1774, William Vernon owned five slaves. Between 1737 and 1807, the Vernons (principally William and Samuel) held interests in at least 34 slaving voyages and ownership of 20 slave ships over the period, including *Titt Bitt*, *Cassada Garden*, *Venus*, *Marygold*, *Greyhound*, *Hare*, *Royal Charlotte*, *Reynard*, *Little Sally*, *Whydah*, *Othello*, *Adventure*, *Eagle*, *Polly*, *Active*, *Don Galvez*, *Washington*, *Pacific*, *Ascension* and *Mary*. These voyages transported over 3000 slaves to various North American ports. (Coughtry) Samuel Vernon, William's son, occupied the house during this time and after his father's death. In 1774, Samuel Vernon owned five slaves. After William's death in 1806, Samuel Vernon was known as one of the richest men in town. It is supposed that many of the Vernon slaves lived in the garret of the house and were employed in the Vernon-owned mercantile businesses or in marine-related trades as seamen.

Cross Street

6 Cross Street, AP 17, Lot 31:

Thomas Walker/King's Arms/ Samuel Barker House, c.1713:

a 2 story, center-chimney, hip-roofed, clapboard, Colonial style house used as a coffee-house/tavern before the Revolution. The building has been associated with tannery operations in the early eighteenth century. The building was owned by successful black businessman Armstead Hurley at the turn of the twentieth century. Hurley owned and operated a painting and wallpapering firm nearby (1,3,5 Bridge Street) and was a partner in the Rhode Island Loan and Investment Company, a bank located on Washington Square.

★ Division Street

★ 20 Division Street, AP 24, Lot 82:

Daniel Carr House, c.1712, 1725: a 2-story, gable-roofed, Georgian style house presumed to be the oldest extant house in Division Street. This house was occupied by the Reverend Dr. Ezra Stiles prior to living in the Second Congregational Church parsonage in Clarke Street (before 1765).

★ 40 Division Street, AP 24, Lot 108:

Lucas-Johnston House, c.1720, 1745/50: an imposing 2-1/2 story, gable-on-hip-roofed, clapboard, Georgian style house built for Augustus

Lucas and enlarged significantly by Lucas' grandson Augustus Johnston. As early as 1711, newspaper advertisements relate the sale of slaves, both Indian and Negro, from the Colony House with pre-auction viewing at the home of Augustus Lucas. In 1774 Augustus Johnston owned six slaves. Johnston was a lawyer who was appointed Stamp Master for Newport in 1765. Along with the homes of Martin Howard, Jr and Dr. Moffat, Johnston's house was attacked during the Stamp Act Riots of 1765; he soon resigned his post and moved to Charleston, South Carolina. The house was sold to Matthew Robinson, Johnston's stepfather, in 1766. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the house was owned by African-American businessman Armstead Hurley and was used as an investment rental property. Hurley owned at least one other such property in the immediate area.

★ 42 Division Street, AP 24, Lot 126:

Capt. George Buckmaster House, (aka Ailman House), prior to 1748: a 2-story, gable-roofed, clapboard and shingle, Georgian style house Buckmaster purchased from slave ship captain John Jepson in 1748. Jepson undertook slaving voyages in 1735, 1736, 1738, 1743, 1745, 1749, 1750, and 1752. In 1745, Jepson was in command of the slave ship *Bonetta* owned by John Thurston.

Buckmaster acquired wealth and position as a merchant ship captain and property owner/investor. He was influential in the First Congregational Church and sold the house and lot to the south for use as a church parsonage in 1786. He had three marriages, the first of which was to Abiah Franklin in 1743. Captain Buckmaster owned three slaves in 1774.

★ 46 Division Street, AP 24, Lot 129:

Hopkins House, c.1750: a 2-story, gambrel-roofed house with end gable to the street, sold to the First Congregational Church by Captain George Buckmaster for use as a parsonage in 1786. The Reverend Samuel Hopkins occupied the house after this time. Hopkins was an early Newport abolitionist first speaking out from his pulpit against slavery before the Revolution. He was an influential friend and mentor of Sarah Osborn, an early white school teacher of black students. He was also a friend of African Newport Gardner. Hopkins and the Reverend Ezra Stiles collaborated on plans to send educated former slaves Bristol Yamma and John Quamino to Africa as missionaries just prior to the Revolution. Both pastors supported efforts by the African population to obtain education and a degree of independence, including religious acculturation.

★ 47 Division Street, AP 24, Lot 130:

Bours House, prior to 1765: a 2-story, gable-roofed house, end gable to street. The house was rented out after 1767 by the owners, the widow of Peter Bours and her second husband, the Reverend Samuel Fayerweather of Narragansett. It is possible that an early school to instruct Negro children in reading and sewing were conducted here with a Mrs. Brett as the instructress. Records of the African Union Society indicate a worship service meeting held (in the house of Peter Bours) here in 1781. Newport Gardner is said to have given music lessons in this house as well (possibly in the garret). These various sources indicate the house may have been rented by individuals interested in the African cultural cause in the years prior to the Revolution and after.

★ **49 Division Street, AP 24, Lot 144:**

Union Congregational Church, 1871: a 2-story, cross-gable-roofed, board and batten, Carpenter Gothic church built for the Union Congregational Church on the site of an earlier eighteenth century Baptist meeting house (Fourth Baptist Meeting House c1783). This earlier building was purchased by the Union Colored Church in 1835 for use after the congregation outgrew the first church building constructed at the southwest corner of Division and Church Streets c.1825 (no longer extant). The "Old Salt Box" (as the Fourth Baptist Meeting House was known) was enlarged in 1845 by raising up the building and inserting a basement. In 1871, the Old Salt Box was demolished and the present structure erected. Several pews from the Fourth Baptist Meeting House used by the African-American congregation are said to survive in the building. The Union Congregational Church was founded by members of the African Union Society, the oldest African-American cultural organization in the nation (formed in 1780). Three additional African-American churches formed from the Union Congregational Church in the nineteenth century were the African Methodist Episcopal Church (1845), the Shiloh Baptist Church (1864), and the Mount Olivet Baptist Church (1897).

★ **77 Division Street, AP 24, Lot 193:**

Norton Wilbor House, prior to 1811: a 2-story, gable-roofed, clapboard and shingle, Federal style house once owned by African-American businessman John Mowatt (prior to 1850).

★ **83 Division Street, AP 24, Lot 219:**

John Mowatt House, prior to 1818 (possibly as early as 1809): a 2-story, gable-roofed, clapboard and shingle, Federal house with a large cen-



83 Division Street

tral brick chimney owned by African-American businessman John Mowatt in 1818. Mowatt was a grocer by trade and a trustee of the Union Colored Church who participated in the purchase of the Fourth Baptist Meeting House site to the north. He also owned the property immediately to the north (77 Division Street, Norton Wilbor House) in 1850. He died in 1859 at his house on Division Street.

7-9 Elizabeth Street/3 Centre Street,

AP 25, Lot 28: Nellie Brown's Rest Home, c.1850/1890: a complex 2 and 2-1/2-story, hip-roofed, aluminum clapboard, Early-Late Victorian style building with an early (Colonial) wing. The building was a boarding house or apartments (most likely occupied by African-Americans working at the nearby hotels) in the mid-late nineteenth century under the proprietorship of Nathan Barker. In the twentieth century it became a part of African-American Nellie Brown's rest home complex which

included similar boarding house buildings on Brinley Street, nearby on adjoining property. The building has been severely damaged by fire.

Farewell Street

16 Farewell Street, AP 17, Lot 154:

Whitehorse Tavern, prior to 1693: a 2-story, gambrel-roofed, clapboard and shingle, Georgian and Postmedieval style tavern originally built as a house in the late 17th century, perhaps by Francis Brinley. During the eighteenth century this landmark building was converted to a tavern by the Nichols family. Prior to the Revolution, Benjamin Nichols was the proprietor. In 1774, Nichols is listed as holding four slaves — some of whom were employed in the tavern as domestics.

During the mid-to-late eighteenth century the Whitehorse Tavern was the center of local affairs with many political meetings taking place under its roof. The *Newport Mercury* of the period carried frequent references to the inn as a place of meeting under the proprietorship of Jonathan Nichols and later Benjamin Nichols.

56 Farewell Street, AP: 12, Lot 140:

Almy-Taggart House, c.1710,1735: a 2 story, gambrel-roofed, clapboard, Georgian style house set end to the street. The house was owned by Walter Challoner in the mid-late eighteenth century. In 1774, Walter Challoner held six slaves. He is listed as a sheriff in the 1774 census and is known to have invested briefly in the slave trade in the mid-eighteenth century. It is possible that African-Americans Hannah and Susan Chaloner, living in

Levin Street in the 1840s, were descendants of Walter Challoner's slaves.

57-59 Farewell Street, AP 18, Lot 161:

William and Joseph Cozzens House, c.1760: a 2-story, gambrel-roofed, beaded clapboard, Georgian style, double house built for brothers William and Joseph Cozzens, both of whom were hatmakers, before 1770. In 1774, William Cozzens held four slaves. Joseph Cozzens is not listed in the census. It is possible that some of Cozzens' slaves were employed in the hat-making business.

Farewell Street, AP 13, Lot 53:

God's Acre, the northern portion of the Common Burying Ground, 17th, eighteenth century — site of slave and African-American burials during the period, many with slate headstones, some carved by the John Stevens shop, several identified as the work of Pompe Stevens. Among the African Americans buried here are Duchess Quamino, Newport Gardner's wife and two of his children, and Arthur Flagg/Tickey and his family. God's Acre is the last remaining sizable eighteenth century burying place of African-Americans in the nation that retains its integrity.

Fillmore Court

7-9 Fillmore Court, AP 25, Lot 31:

Glover's Boarding House, c.1850: a 2-story, pitched-roof, end gable structure with twin 3-story, flat-roofed, tower additions on the street front. These towers are executed in the Italianate style with heavy cornice brackets. The building was used as a

boarding house or apartments during the nineteenth century and continues in this use today. In 1870 it was managed by proprietor Philip Rider. In the early twentieth century the building was owned by African-American businessman Thomas Glover, who owned rental property throughout Newport. The building was occupied by African Americans who were employed at the nearby resort hotels.

16 Fillmore Court, AP 25, Lot 14:

Jenkins Garage, c.1870: a 2-1/2-story, end gable, brick and clapboard, Late Victorian style commercial/residential building which was used as the site of African-Americans James and Ellen Jenkins' oil and transportation business in the early and mid-twentieth century.

20 Fillmore Court, AP 25, Lot 14:

Jenkins Garage, c.1875: a 2-1/2-story, end gable, Late Victorian style residential building originally built as a stable by Henry B. Hazzard and later occupied by African-American James and Ellen Jenkins as the site of an early-mid-twentieth century transportation business in association with 16 Fillmore Court.



26 Fillmore Court, AP 25, Lot 127:

Nellie Brown House, early to mid-nineteenth century: a 2 story, gable-roofed, clapboard, Federal style house which was the residence in the mid twentieth century of African-American Nellie Brown, the owner of Nellie Brown's Rest Home nearby (Elizabeth, Brinley Street area).

★ Franklin Street

★ 20,22 Franklin Street, AP 27, Lot 50:

John Gidley (aka Holly Tree Coffee House), c.1740: a 2-1/2 story, gambrel-roofed, clapboard, Georgian style house which has a commercial first floor. The house may have been built for Benjamin Hicks, who is listed in the mid-eighteenth century as a ship captain undertaking slaving voyages in 1761, 1763, 1771 and 1772. It was owned prior to 1744 by John Gidley, an early rum distillery owner (c.1732). After Gidley's death in 1744, the house was occupied by Captain John Jepson until the Revolution. Jepson undertook slaving voyages in 1735, 1736, 1738, 1743, 1745, 1749, 1750, and 1752. In 1745, Jepson was in command of the slave ship *Bonetta* owned by John Thurston. In the early twentieth century, the commercial first floor was occupied by the Holly Tree Coffee House operated by African-American businessman Daniel Arthur Smith, who moved to Newport from Washington, D.C. after the Civil War. The Holly Tree Coffee House was one of many African-American cultural institutions within Newport during the period. Smith later opened a restaurant in his home on Mary Street (see Christopher Fowler House, 29 Mary Street)

20/22 Franklin Street. Photograph by Richard Youngken

Friendship Street

63 Friendship Street, AP 11, Lot 64:

Lindsay Walker House, c. 1890, a 2-story, gable roofed, vinyl clapboard, late nineteenth century vernacular Victorian house with a 3 story addition. The house and adjoining property to the corner of Kay Street has been occupied by the Walker family for three generations. Lindsay Walker purchased the house and property from the Chase family in 1891.

65 Friendship Street, AP 11, Lot 423:

Walker House, c. 1925, a 2-story, gable-roofed, vinyl clapboard, early twentieth century multiple dwelling built by the Walker family and enlarged over time as a rental property.

Guinn Court

7 Guinn Court, AP 25, Lot 9:

Richard B. King House, mid-nineteenth century: a 1-1/2-story, gable-roofed, composition shingle, workman's cottage which may have been occupied by Richard B. King, a successful African-American businessman in the early twentieth century. King operated a coffee shop on William Street during the period.

Heath Street

1 Heath Street, AP 18, Lot 72, 73:

Easton-Shay House, c. 1870, 1876: a 2-story, gable-roofed, asbestos shingle and brick, nineteenth century vernacular style house which was occupied

by African-American John P. Easton and Mary Shea in the mid 1870s. Heath Street in the late 19th and 20th centuries was a black residential enclave. John P. Easton is listed in the city directories as a coachman.

4 Heath Street, AP 18, Lot 67:

Barney House, c. 1845: a 2-story, gable-roofed, shingle, nineteenth century Vernacular style house occupied by the Benjamin Barney, an African American. Heath Street in the late 19th and 20th centuries was a black residential enclave. His widow, Marcy Ann Barney, is listed in the 1867 city directory.

5 Heath Street, AP 18, Lot 71:

John T. Bush House, 1859/1870: a single story, shingle, gambrel-roofed house with end gable facing the street. The house was owned by African-American businessman Armstead Hurley in the early twentieth century (1907 atlas map) and was presumably a rental investment property.

★ John Street

★ 47 John Street, AP 28, Lot 68:

Constant Tabor House, c. 1750, 1803: a 2-story, clapboard and shingle, gambrel-roofed, Georgian style house with a large central chimney and pedimented doorway. The house was possibly moved from another location to this site in 1803 for Constant Tabor who bequeathed it to the Six Principles Baptist Church. The church sold the house to the Reverend Mahlon van Horne in 1894. Van Horne, a prominent African American, had become the pastor of the Union Congregational Church in

1869. He retired from this position in 1896 when he was appointed US Counsel to St. Thomas, West Indies by President William McKinley. Van Horne was the first black to serve on the Newport School Committee. He held terms between 1873 and 1892. He was also the first black to serve in the Rhode Island legislature. He was elected a Representative to the General Assembly representing Newport three times in 1885, 1886, and 1887. He died in Antigua in 1910. Later, the house on John Street was occupied by his son Alonzo van Horne, a dentist.

★ 80 John Street, AP 28, Lot 43:

Isaac Peckham House, c. 1810: a 2-story, gable-roofed, clapboard, Federal style house which belonged to George E. Vernon, a white businessman in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Vernon owned and operated a large furniture-making operation in the vicinity between John

47 John Street. Photograph by Richard Youngken.



Street and Levin Street which employed large numbers of African Americans from the surrounding neighborhood. This house and others nearby are remnants of Vernon's property in the area, most of which was taken for the development of Memorial Boulevard.

★ **84 John Street, AP 28, Lot 44, 45:**

Weeden House, 1825,1850: a 2-story, hip-roofed, clapboard, Greek Revival style double house which was owned by Dr. Marcus F. Wheatland, a well-respected late 19th and early twentieth century African-American physician who specialized in early X-Ray technology and application. Wheatland owned the house in 1907. He died in 1934. He maintained his practice from the house for 40 years.

87 John Street, AP 28, Lot 61:

Austin House, 1825,1850: a 2 story, gable-roofed, Greek Revival style house with an end gable facing the street, owned by furniture manufacturer George E. Vernon. This building is a remnant of the property Vernon owned in the vicinity between John and Levin Street, most of which was taken for the development of Memorial Boulevard.

★ **95 John Street, AP 28, Lot 59:**

George E. Vernon House, 1825,1850: a 2 story, gable-roofed, clapboard, Greek Revival style house built for George E. Vernon, a white businessman and furniture manufacturer who owned considerable property in the vicinity between John Street and Levin Street. The furniture factory located nearby employed African Americans in the 19th and early 20th centuries.



84 John Street. Photograph by Richard Youngken



3 Johnson Court. Photograph by Richard Youngken

Johnson Court

3 Johnson Court, AP 18, Lot 47:

Old African Methodist Episcopal Church, c.1857, 1883: a 1-1/2-story, gable-roofed, clapboard and plain, Early-Victorian style church building, end gable facing the street. The African Methodist Episcopal Church was formed from within the Union Congregational Church community in 1845. Early religious meetings were held on Spring Street in a former carpentry shop just to the West of the Union Congregational Church building (Old Salt Box) at 122-126 Spring Street. In the late nineteenth century the church moved to a site at the head of Touro Street, East of Bellevue Avenue (the building is no longer extant). Location of an African-American church in Johnson Court in the mid-nineteenth century is representative of the black enclave in the area, including Kingston Avenue and Heath Street. By 1890 the church then known as the Mount Zion

A.M.E. Church, drew 350 worshippers a week, outgrowing the Johnson Court building and forcing the move to Touro Street.

8 Johnson Court, AP 18, lot 22:

Slaughterhouse, c.1850: a single story, gable-roofed, shingle, nineteenth century vernacular style house formerly used as a slaughterhouse; owned at one time by Peter Wheelbanks, an African-American cook who lived in 1867 on Kingston Avenue near Warner Street. The building was moved to its present location in 1851.

10 Johnson Court, AP 18, Lot 21:

John H. Vernon House, c.1858: a single story, gable-roofed, clapboard, nineteenth century vernacular style house. John H. Fisher was an African American whose widow, Elizabeth, lived in the house in the mid-late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

14 Johnson Court, AP 13, Lot 71:

Riggs and Booth Tenement, 1893,1907: a 3-story, shingle and clapboard, flat-roofed, Late Victorian style tenement/apartment building which provided housing for African Americans living in the neighborhood during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This was the birthplace of Paul Gaines, Newport and Rhode Island's first African-American mayor . The original owner of the building appears to have been James Irish, a white owner of rental property and "cold water" flats.

Kay Street

98 Kay Street, AP 11, Lot 240:

Louis Walker House, c.1921: A 2 1/2-story, gable-roofed, shingle and clapboard, American 4-square style house built by Louis Walker as a 3-family dwelling. Adjacent to the house is a rusticated concrete block garage also built by Walker. Both buildings were designed and built by Louis Walker on property purchased from his father Lindsay Walker, completing a compound of family homes and rental property within the block.

Kingston Avenue

18 Kingston Avenue, AP 18, Lot 107:

G. Lawton House (aka Pearl Douglas Beauty Shop), c.1780,1830: a 2-story, gable-roofed, shingle, Federal style house with a commercial first floor. African-American Pearl Douglas established her beauty shop in the building in the early to mid-twentieth century here as one of several Kingston



General view, Pearl Street, off Kingston Avenue.
Photograph by Richard Youngken

Avenue businesses which serviced the African American and ethnic Kerry Hill Neighborhood.

20 Kingston Avenue, AP 18, Lot 91:

Simmons House, c.1850: A mid-nineteenth century house occupied by African-Americans Edward Simmons, a house painter, his wife Elizabeth Simmons and two related boarders, Henry Simmons, a hack driver, and John Simmons, a painter. These individuals are recorded in the 1867 city directory.

29 Kingston Avenue, AP 14, Lot 49:

Nancy Eldridge House, c.1859,1870: a 1-1/2-story, gable and flat-roofed, nineteenth century vernacular style house occupied by African-American (Miss) Nancy Eldridge in 1867 and 1876 (atlas map and city directory). The house was later owned by William Bradford, a well-known local African-American who lived in the house after 1929.

30 Kingston Avenue, AP 18, Lot 89:

C. Smith House, c.1859, 1870: a 2-story, gable-roofed, shingle and clapboard, nineteenth century vernacular house, occupied in the mid-to-late nineteenth century by a Constant Smith, a laborer and later a clerk. The Ray family (a locally prominent African-American family) occupied the house in the 1920s. Joseph T. Ray is listed as a watchman in the 1907 city directory. He was a veteran of the Civil War serving the Union Army in the 118th Infantry. He was also a member of the Board of Stewards of the Mount Zion A.M.E. Church for over 40 years. He died in 1943. In 1920, the Ray family living at 30 Kingston Avenue included Alberta Ray, Bertha M. Ray, a cook; Federick G. Ray, a porter; Joseph T. Ray, a porter; Maria F. Ray, a domestic; and Rita E. Ray, a domestic. Other members of the extended family included James and Bernard Ray who were Newport policemen before the First World War, living on William Street.

38 Kingston Avenue, AP 18, Lot 69:

Macomber, Elijah House, c.1859,1870: a single story, gable-roofed, shingle and clapboard, nineteenth-century vernacular style house typical of the neighborhood.

39 Kingston Avenue, AP 14, Lot 47:

Eugene O'Connell House, c.1870, 1876: a 2-story, gable-roofed, clapboard, nineteenth century vernacular style house, typical of the neighborhood.

42 Kingston Avenue, AP 18, Lot 68-1/2:

Bobby Robinson's Store, c.1845: a 2 story, gable-roofed, aluminum clapboard and brick-sided, nineteenth century vernacular style commercial/residential building on the corner of Kingston Avenue and Heath Street. The building was owned by a Benjamin Bryer of New York City in 1876. The building appears to have been designed for a mixed use with a commercial store on the ground level. Robinson's neighborhood variety store was popular in the early to-mid-twentieth century within the African-American community as a black-owned business.

55,57 Kingston Avenue, AP 14, Lot 12:

Henry Johnson House, c.1845: a 2-story, gable-roofed, shingle, nineteenth century vernacular style house, built prior to 1850 and occupied by the African-American Johnson family in the mid-to-late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Henry Johnson, a black farmer, lived in the house in 1867. Catherine Johnson, widow of Henry Johnson was living in the house in 1876. In 1883, Samuel C. Johnson, a laborer, was living at 57 Kingston Avenue, a William R. Johnson was living at 55 Kingston Avenue. In 1921 Amelia A. Johnson, widow of William R. Johnson was living at 55 Kingston Avenue.

★ **Mary Street**

★ **29 Mary Street, AP 24, Lot 113:**

Christopher Fowler House, c.1801: a 2-1/2-story, gambrel-roofed, clapboard, Georgian style house with fanlight door and fine early nineteenth century mantels, built for Christopher Fowler.

Fowler entered a business partnership with Audley Clarke in the early nineteenth century, distilling rum and trading in slaves from Howard Wharf. Between 1804 and 1807, the partnership financed slaving voyages accounting for the transport of 767 slaves. The house was later occupied by Daniel A. Smith, an African-American who moved to Newport after the Civil War from Washington, DC. Smith was living in the house in 1893. Smith operated the Holly Tree Coffee House on Franklin Street, then a restaurant in the Bateman Building and later dining rooms at his house in Mary Street. His son, Daniel A. Smith, Jr., was born in Newport in 1881, trained as a physician and established a practice in Wilmington, Del. before moving back to Newport in 1931. Daniel A. Smith, Jr. occupied the house until his death in 1971.

★ **Mill Street**

★ **49 Mill Street, AP 24, Lot 226:**

Alexander Jack Jr. House, after 1811: a 2-1/2-story, gable-roofed, clapboard, Federal style house, moved from 59 Levin Street. The house is attributed in ownership to Alexander Jack, Jr., a cordwainer, presumably related to a family of free Africans who are recorded as living in Newport in the mid-1770s.

62 Mill Street, AP 24, Lot 224:

Joshua Sayer House and Bakery, 1807: a 2-1/2-story, gable-roofed, clapboard, Federal style house with end gable to street, owned by Joshua Sayer, a baker, in 1810. The house was the home of African-American Mrs. Edward O. Nelson in the early twentieth century.

★ **75 Mill Street, AP 24, Lot 264:**

John D. Johnston Mill, (aka J.T. O'Connell Mill), c.1900: a 3 story, brick, Late Victorian industrial building which housed a millworks shop and small lumber mill operation for the J.T. O'Connell Company. The mill was a source of employment for African-Americans in the early to-mid-twentieth century

★ **83 Mill Street, AP 24, Lot 265:**

First Congregational Church, c.1729, mid-nineteenth century: a 2-story, gable-roofed, Greek Revival style structure designed and built initially by Cotton Palmer which, in the late eighteenth century, was the platform for the Reverend Samuel Hopkins' early abolitionist sermons. This is apparently the church where Newport Gardner and other Africans were given religious services.

★ **118 Mill Street, AP 25, Lot 84:**

Lawton, Robert House, c.1809: a 3-story, hip-roofed, brick, Federal style house. Robert Lawton was a successful Newport sea captain and merchant who was involved in the slave trade after the Revolution. He died off the coast of Africa in 1818.

★ **142 Mill Street, AP 25, Lot 87:**

Gov. John Tillinghast House, c.1758: a 2-1/2-story gable on hip-roofed, clapboard, Georgian style mansion located across from Touro Park. The house was purchased by George Gibbs in 1803 and remained in the Gibbs family until 1874. George Gibbs employed African-American Isaac Rice as a gardener for this property and the associated land which later became Touro Park across Mill Street. Rice is reputed to have planted several of the specimen trees in the park.

Memorial Boulevard West/ Levin Street

**20 Memorial Boulevard West,
AP 28, Lot 83: Noah Barker House, c.1790.**

This house was owned in the late nineteenth century by Silas Dickerson, a local African-American entrepreneur who owned and operated a neighborhood grocery store nearby on William Street as well as several rental properties.

**28 Memorial Boulevard West,
AP 28, Lot 140: Silas Dickerson House,
c.1850:** a single story, clapboard and shingle, nineteenth century vernacular style cottage owned by African-American businessman Silas Dickerson in the 1870s and later. Silas Dickerson owned and operated a successful neighborhood grocery store nearby (to the south) on William Street within the William/Thomas/Levin Street neighborhood during the mid-to-late nineteenth century. He was Chairman of the Board of the Union Congregational Church during the construction of the present church structure on Division Street during the early 1870s. His wife, Mary, operated a dressmaking shop on Bellevue Avenue. Mary H. Dickerson was influential in the establishment of the Women's Newport League, a black women's organization, as well as the Rhode Island State Federation of Women's Clubs in 1903.

**32,34 Memorial Boulevard West,
AP 28, Lot 80: Pompey Brinley House,
(aka P. White House),** prior to 1813: an altered, 2-story, hip-roofed, clapboard and shingle, Federal style house with later commercial additions. The

property was owned by Pompey Brinley's heirs in the mid-late nineteenth century and is presumed to be the site where Esther Brinley, Pompey Brinley's widow, hosted an organizational meeting for the founding of the Shiloh Baptist Church in 1864. Pompey Brinley died in 1813. The house was demolished in 1997.

★ Osborne Court/ Church Ct.

★ **Unit 3 Osborne Court, AP 25, Lot 56:**

Sarah Osborn House, prior to 1770: a 1-1/2-story, gambrel-roofed, center chimney, Georgian style house originally set in a small courtyard. This house was occupied prior to and during the Revolution by Sarah Osborn, a white religious leader and school teacher, who held mixed classes for white and African children and was a friend and colleague of the Reverend Samuel Hopkins. During the religious revival of the mid 1760s, Osborn hosted religious meetings for the African community and is reported to have had over 500 Africans attending at one time. Antoinette Downing reports, however, that this house was moved from another location.

Pearl Street/ Spruce Court

14 Pearl Street, AP 14, Lot 209:

Nancy Eldridge House, prior to 1850: a single story, mansard-roofed, clapboard, Second Empire style cottage, which was owned by African-America Nancy Eldridge in 1876. In the 1880s and 90s, the house may have been occupied by African-American Charles Fayerweather, a blacksmith whose business was located in Kingston Avenue.

26 Pearl Street, AP 14, Lot 52:

Nelson Taylor House, prior to 1850: a 2-1/2-story, gable-roofed, shingle, Early Victorian style house, which was occupied by African-American Nelson Taylor, a whitewasher (painter), in the 1860s and 1870s.

★ Pelham Street

★ **28 Pelham Street, AP 24, Lot 257:**

**Anthony Stewart Livery Stable,
(aka Charles Handy
Spermaceti Candleworks),** mid-eighteenth century, c.1880: a 2-story, gambrel-roofed, barn-like building constructed in two parts. The rear portion of the structure is a smaller, gable-roofed, shingle building on a stone rubble foundation which appears to be an earlier building pre-dating the front portion built c1880. This early portion of the building may be Charles Handy's spermaceti candleworks or factory. In 1774 Handy held four slaves, some of whom may have been employed in the business. According to Downing, deeds show that Charles Handy owned the factory before 1781, together with his house just to the east.

28 Pelham Street. Photograph by Richard Youngken.



★ **32,34 Pelham Street, AP 24, Lot 258:**

Langley-King House, c.1711: a 2-1/2-story, gambrel-roofed, clapboard, Georgian style house presumably built for Nathaniel Langley in the early eighteenth century. It was owned by Charles Handy before 1781; he owned four slaves in 1771 and operated a spermaceti candle factory just to the west. It is possible some of the slaves were employed in the factory as laborers. Handy is presumed to be responsible for much of the Georgian embellishment of the house.

★ **38 Pelham Street, AP 24, Lot 259:**

John Gidley House (aka The Pelham), c.1744 : an imposing, 3-story, gable-roofed, clapboard, Georgian style house built for John Gidley and occupied before the Revolution by James Honeyman, a lawyer and an owner of six slaves (in 1774). John Honeyman inherited the house in 1778. The African slave Quarco Honeyman may have been owned by James Honeyman.

★ **56 Pelham Street, AP 24, Lot 263:**

John Banister Townhouse, 1751-54: a 2-1/2-story, gambrel-roofed, clapboard, Georgian style house built for merchant/smuggler and slaver John Banister and occupied during the Revolution by British General Prescott. Local tradition states it was here that African Quarco Honeyman (aka Jack Sisson) was employed as a servant and rebel informer during the Revolution. His information on Prescott's movements later assisted in the General's ignominious capture in Portsmouth.

Pond Avenue

14 Pond Avenue, AP 14 , Lot 71:

George Triplett House, c. 1870: a 2-story, mansard-roofed, shingle and clapboard, Italianate style house with a 2-1/2 story tower. The property was occupied by the Triplett family in the twentieth century. A son, Ernest Triplett developed a well-known catering service in Newport.

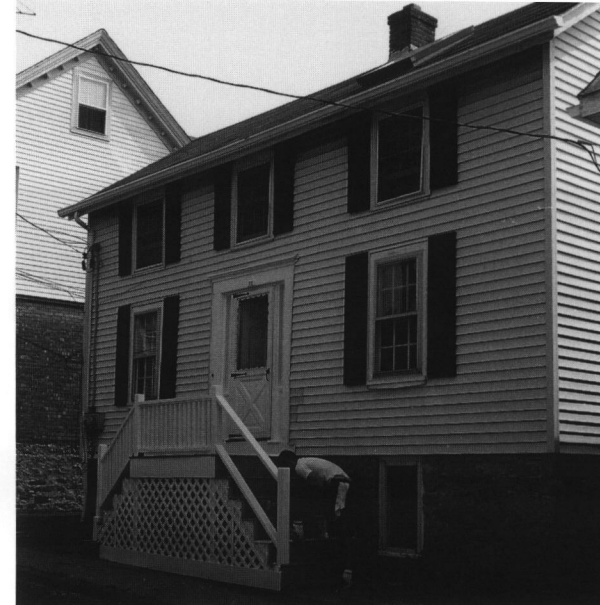
★ Pope Street

★ **21 Pope Street, AP 32, Lot 117:**

Salmar Nubia House, c.1800: a 1-1/2 story, gable-roofed, vinyl clapboard, Federal style house on a raised granite foundation. The property was owned in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century by African Salmar Nubia (aka Jack Mason), a friend of Newport Gardner and a member of the African Union Society. In 1789, Nubia was a first representative and secretary of the society, recorded to be living on Pope Street as early as 1790. He lived there until 1825 when he sold his property to Benjamin Taylor and joined Newport Gardner to return to Africa. In the December 2, 1825 deed, Newport Gardner is listed as the eastern abutter.

★ **25 Pope Street, AP 32, Lot 116:**

Newport Gardner House, c.1810, c.1850: a 2-story, cross-gable-roofed, aluminum clapboard and brownstone, Gothic style house believed to have been owned and occupied by African Newport Gardner prior to 1825. The building appears to have been extensively rebuilt in the mid to-late-nineteenth century. The raised foundation walls and heavy timber construction of the first floor supports appear to be from an earlier period.



21 Pope Street. Photograph by Richard Youngken.

★ **29 Pope Street, AP 32, Lot 115:**

Bacchus and Paul Overing House, c.1810: a 2-story, gable-roofed, clapboard, Federal style house with a central chimney owned by African-American Bacchus Overing in the early nineteenth century. Probate records indicate that Bacchus Overing died in 1819 and was a "free black man and a distiller." Paul Overing inherited the house at this time and is listed as a cook living on Pope Street in the 1858 city directory. He was a member of the African Union Society until he was dismissed in 1810 for not paying his dues.

38 Pope Street, AP 32, Lot 88:

Elliot-Armstrong House, c.1810: a large, expanded, 2-story, gable-roofed, Federal style house with mid to-late nineteenth century additions and a recessed doorway. The property was owned by African-American Lincoln Elliot in the 1790s. Peter Armstrong is listed as living in Pope Street on the

north side in the 1840 census and may have been living here by 1820. Probate records indicate that Armstrong was a mariner and insolvent when he died in 1851. Peter Armstrong was a member of the African Union Society in 1789.

★ Prospect Hill Street

128 Prospect Hill Street, AP 28, Lot 17:

William Stanley Braithwaite House, c.1750-60: a large, 2-1/2-story, gambrel-roofed, clapboard and shingle, post-Medieval English style double house occupied by African-American poet and literary critic William Stanley Beaumont Braithwaite in the early to mid twentieth century.

154 Prospect Hill Street, AP 28, Lot 147:

Jackson House This house was occupied by William H. Jackson, Sr. at the time of his death in 1946. Jackson was involved in the late nineteenth century in local and state politics. He was employed by the Rhode Island House of Representatives as sergeant-at-arms for over two decades, both at the Colony House in Newport and later (after 1900) at the State House in Providence. He was an active member of the city's representative council from the Second Ward and active in local Republican political circles. In 1932, he was appointed a sergeant-at-arms to serve at the Republican national convention in Chicago.

★ 155-157-159 Prospect Hill Street,

AP 28, Lot 29-3/4: Bellevue Avenue Hotel, c.1870,1965: a group of flat-roofed, clapboard nineteenth-century Italianate style, connected commercial/residential buildings. These buildings composed the Bellevue Avenue Hotel and Garden in the

mid to late nineteenth century. The complex represents one of a few remaining hotels and boarding houses of the nineteenth century which employed African-Americans as domestics, porters and waiters.

★ School Street

15 School Street, AP 24, Lot 98:

Isaac Babcock House, c.1825,1850: a 2 story, gable-roofed, clapboard and shingle, Greek Revival style house which was owned by Isaac Babcock, a free African-American listed as a gardener on the 1858 city directory. Babcock was instrumental in acquiring the Fourth Baptist Meeting House in Division Street for use as the Union Congregational Church with African-Americans Isaac Rice, John Mowatt, Francis Chaloner, and Benjamin Weeden, among others.

★ 24 School Street, AP 24, Lot 105:

William Ellery Channing House, c.1750: a 2-1/2-story, mansard-roofed, clapboard, Georgian style house with Federal, mid-nineteenth century and late twentieth century additions. The house is the birthplace of William Ellery Channing (b.1780). It was also the home of African Charity "Duchess" Quamino who was the slave of William Channing, William Ellery Channing's father. Duchess Quamino was known regionally for her pastry-cooking. After obtaining her freedom, it is reported that she used the ovens of the Channing house for her culinary business. Duchess Quamino married African slave John Quamino in 1769. Although John Quamino was able to purchase his freedom with lottery winnings by the mid-1770s, he was unable to gain freedom for his wife. He was chosen by the Rever-

end Samuel Hopkins and the Reverend Dr. Ezra Stiles for African missionary work, educated briefly at Princeton, but unfortunately died in a Revolutionary War skirmish aboard a privateer soon afterward (1779). He was attempting at the time to earn funds to free his wife. Duchess Quamino was characterized by William Ellery Channing as an intelligent, industrious, affectionate and honest woman. She was a member of the Palls and Biers of the African Union Society in 1792. William Ellery Channing may have been influenced by the Africans in his early home. He was an anti-slavery advocate and founded the Unitarian movement in America in 1835.

★ 25, 29 School Street, AP 24, Lot 106:

Trinity Church School House (aka Shiloh Baptist Church and Parsonage), 1799, 1894, 1897, 1907: a complex of two connected buildings. The church is a single story, gable-roofed, clapboard, Georgian style building with a spire in the end gable facing School Street. The parsonage is a 2-1/2-story, mansard-roofed, clapboard and shingled, Second Empire style house attached to the church. The site was occupied as early as 1741 by a school for poor children endowed by a gift to Trinity Church by benefactor Nathaniel Kay, a Queen's customs collector who died in 1734. The original school house is said to have been burned and/or demolished during the Revolution. Whether or not this building is the structure utilized for the education of African children prior to the Revolution is conjectural. A school established by the Associates of Doctor Bray, was run by Marmaduke Brown, may have been in this building. Likewise a free school for blacks is said to have been in existence in the vicinity under the direction of Mrs. Mary Brett, the

wife of Dr. John Brett in 1773. The present structure was erected in 1799. The African-American Shiloh Baptist Church occupied the building in 1868. A parish hall was added on the south elevation in 1884. The entrance was remodeled in 1897. Shiloh Baptist Church began out of the Union Congregational Church in the late 1860s with a Baptist orientation. Organizational meetings were held in the home of Esther Brinley on Levin Street. The Reverend Henry Jeter was perhaps one of Shiloh Baptist's most well-known pastors in the late nineteenth century.

Second Street

13 Second Street, AP 16, Lot 59:

Nathaniel Rodman House, c.1717, 1770, moved 1963: a 1-1/2-story, gambrel-roofed, beaded clapboard, Georgian style cottage, which was moved to the site from Warner Street in the early 1960s. The house was occupied by African-American Nathaniel Rodman (who was freed after the Revolution) prior to 1836. Rodman helped organize the African Benevolent Society in the early nineteenth century to provide educational facilities for the African-American community.

19 Second Street, AP 16, Lot 41:

John Townsend House, c.1773/77: a 2-story, gambrel-roofed, beaded clapboard, Georgian style house built for John Townsend, a member of the well-known Townsend furniture-making family which occupied property and dwellings within the block formed by Second, Third, Elm and Bridge Streets. In 1774, John Townsend owned three slaves. The extended Townsend family -- Job, Christopher, Edmund and John -- together held seven

slaves. Prior to the construction of this house Townsend owned 70 and 72 Bridge Street, a large house and workshop which he occupied before 1758. Whether or not slaves were employed in the furniture-making aspects of the Townsend enterprises is not known at this time, although that they may have been, using woodworking skills learned in their West African homeland or in the West Indies.

81 Second Street, AP 12, Lot 17:

John and Thomas Goddard House, prior to 1758, moved in the late nineteenth century: a 2-story, gambrel-roofed, clapboard house which was occupied in the eighteenth century by John and Thomas Goddard, makers of fine furniture. The Goddards and the Townsends produced some of Newport's finest cabinetry and furniture prior to the Revolution. Whether or not slaves were employed in the furniture-making aspects of the Townsend-Goddard enterprises is not known at this time, although there is speculation that they may have been. In 1774, there were apparently 15 individuals in the John Goddard household (including 7 under the age of 16). There were no blacks listed as living in the household, however.

Spring Street

69 Spring Street, AP 24, Lot 26:

William and Abraham Redwood House, c.1759: a 2-story, gable-roofed, clapboard and shingle, Georgian and Federal style house with brick end gables. The house was owned by William Redwood, Jr. prior to 1778 and later was transferred to Abraham Redwood's daughter-in-law and Newport heir Mehitable Ellery. The Redwood family in

Newport held slaves and, prior to the Revolution, Abraham Redwood held more slaves than any other merchant in Newport, largely due to ownership of a sugar plantation, the Cassada Garden plantation in Antigua. Redwood financed at least one slaving voyage in 1739-40 and owned the slaver *Martha and Jane*. In 1766, Abraham Redwood owned 238 slaves. At the time of his death in the late 1780s, he bequeathed seven slaves to two of his children; the rest living at Cassada Garden were bequeathed to his son William Redwood, Jr. and Jonas Longford Redwood and their heirs.

William Redwood, Jr. financed several slaving ventures with his brother Jonas and William Vernon between 1756 and 1758 with ownership of the slavers *Titt Bitt*, *Cassada Garden*, and *Venus*. (Bolhouse, Coughtry, Pierson, Luce)

95 Spring Street, AP 24, Lot 84: House, eighteenth century: a 1-1/2-story, gambrel-roofed, clapboard, Colonial house moved to the site from 57 Levin Street, a area occupied in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth-centuries by African Americans.

109,111 Spring Street, AP 24, Lot 111:

John Odlin House, after 1705: a 2-1/2-story, gable-roofed, clapboard, Georgian house with a brick gable end wall built for John Odlin after he purchased the land in 1705. The house was occupied by Jonathan Otis, a Newport goldsmith who held three slaves in 1774.

228 Spring Street, AP 27, Lot 67:

Bull-Mawdsley House, c.1680,1748: an imposing, 2-1/2-story gable on hip-roofed, clapboard, Georgian style house, the original rear portion of

which is a 2-story, two room post-Medieval English style wing occupied by Jireh Bull in the late 17th century. The house was added on to for Captain John Mawdsley, who was born in England in 1721, arrived in Newport about 1740 and specialized in privateering and other maritime trade pursuits, including slaving..

In 1774, Captain Mawdsley owned twenty slaves, presumably employed in the marine trades or hired out for other work. He owned at least one slave vessel. In 1795 after Mawdsley's death, the house was purchased by slave ship captain and prosperous merchant Caleb Gardner (who had owned African-American Newport Gardner until the latter was granted freedom in 1791). The fanlight doorway and possibly the marble steps were installed for Captain Gardner.

★ Thames Street

Intersection Thames/Farewell Streets, AP 17, Lot 18: Liberty Tree Park (aka William Ellery Park), eighteenth century: a small triangular park formed by the intersection of Thames and Farewell Streets used for annual election day gatherings of the eighteenth century African slave community. By the mid-1750s Newport slaves were allowed to hold elections for a black governor. In Rhode Island, slave elections were held the third or last Saturday in June. Elections were significant local social events within the community and included parades, dancing and general celebration in addition to voting into office a community leader for the year. "lection" days occurred throughout New England and within slave communities in North America. They were important as holidays

which could be celebrated by Africans in fellowship — allowed by the authority of the white community.

29 Thames Street, AP 17, Lot 33:

John Stevens Shop, c.1757: a 2-story, gable-roofed, clapboard, Georgian style house and commercial shop in which the John Stevens stonecutter shop was located during the mid-late eighteenth century. The earliest records indicate the business was underway by 1705 (elsewhere) and located here after 1757. In 1774, John Stevens (III), stone mason and carpenter, held only one slave. Evidence of the work of the shop indicates that African slave Pompe Stevens (aka Zingo Stevens) worked at the shop and produced at least two signed headstones (one for a fellow slave, his brother, Cuffe Gibbs) in the late eighteenth century. He may have produced more unsigned work located in the Common Burying Ground

30 Thames Street, AP 17, Lot 303:

John Stevens House, c.1709, 1758: a 2-story, gable-roofed, clapboard, Georgian style house occupied by the Stevens family since the early eighteenth century. This house is where African slave and stonecutter Pompe Stevens may have lived along with members of the Stevens' household. Pompe Stevens worked at the Stevens' stone cutting shop and probably on stone masonry and carpentry work undertaken by John Stevens in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Following the Revolution, Pompe Stevens was active in the African Union Society. Presumably he changed his name to Zingo upon achieving freedom prior to 1800. In 1802, he was president of the African Union Society when the society changed its name to the

African Humane Society. In the early nineteenth century, Zingo Stevens was living in the Point section in his own home near the corner of Third and Poplar Streets.

34 Thames Street, AP 17, Lot 46:

Stevens Philip House, c.1750 : a 2 story, gable-roofed, beaded clapboard and shingle, Georgian style house owned by members of the Stevens family. Rejected gravestones were found in the back yard during the 1960s' restoration indicating that this area may have been used for stone cutting work prior to the building of the Stevens Shop across Thames Street. African Pompe Stevens was employed as a slave in the Stevens Shop as a mason and stonecutter during the eighteenth century.

36 Thames Street, AP 17, Lot 45:

Roas-Covell House, 1746-1760: a 2-story, end gambrel-roofed, clapboard and shingle, Georgian style house, originally owned by Richard Roas. In 1760, Roas sold the house and lot to James Keith, a slave ship captain and merchant. Keith may have been the captain of the slaver *Mermaid* in 1750. He may have made another trip to the African coast in 1753. In late 1755, he was captain of the snow *Annamabo* transporting 126 slaves from the African coast to Jamaica. In the 1774 census, James Keith is listed as holding three slaves. According to at least one source, Keith is listed as an importer of rum and molasses connected with the slave trade. (NHS, Richardson)

42 Thames Street, AP 17, Lot 58:

Nicholl, James House, c.1750: a 2 story, gambrel-roofed, clapboard and shingle, Georgian style house owned by James Keith prior to 1759.

James Keith is mentioned as a merchant and as Dr. James Keith by Alexander Hamilton, a visiting Scottish physician, in *Itinerarium*. It is possible that this is the same James Keith who is listed as occupying 36 Thames Street, the adjacent house to the north, after 1760.

58 Thames Street, AP 17, 86,

Captain William Read House, c.1760: a 2-story, gambrel-roofed, clapboard, Georgian style house which belonged to Captain William Read before the Revolution. Read gave the Liberty Tree park lot to the town. In 1774, Captain Read owned four slaves. Read was a merchant and a ship captain.

79 Thames Street, AP 17, 141, 326:

Dr. Henry Jackson House and Mount Olivet Baptist Church, c.1840, c.1897, 1933: a 2-story, gable-roofed, clapboard and brick, Greek Revival and Classical Revival style house and church. The Mount Olivet Baptist Church was formed as a spin-off of Shiloh Baptist church in 1894. The Church occupied this location by 1897 and the present facility was built as an addition to the Greek Revival house located here. The local chapter of the NAACP was organized by the Reverend William James Lucas, the pastor of Mount Olivet in 1919.

315-317 Thames Street:

Site of Honeyman Wharf slave pen, mid-18th century: according to George Richardson's notes a slave pen formerly stood on the site of a building mentioned here in 1952 (a much altered, square two-story, hip-roofed house on the West side of Thames). (Downing, p.513; NHS, Richardson))

392 Thames Street, AP 27, Lot 279:

Francis Malbone House, c.1758 - an imposing, 3 -story, hip-roofed, brick masonry, Georgian style mansion with an attached, single story, gable-roofed, brick masonry, Greek Revival style office. The structures were built for Francis Malbone, a cousin of Godfrey Malbone, and also a successful slave ship captain, slave trader and merchant. The buildings are presumed to have been designed by Peter Harrison and were constructed by local builder/carpenters Samuel Greene and Wing Spooner, possibly employing slave labor. In 1774, Francis Malbone owned ten slaves. This house and office are one of the few remaining examples of the eighteenth century merchant town house type on lower Thames Street where many were located including those of Abraham Redwood and Godfrey Malbone. Many of these edifices were located on the water side of Thames Street with extensive wharfs and outbuildings. The Francis Malbone House is said to contain an underground passage beneath Thames Street to the wharf area, possibly used for smuggling. In 1755, Malbone was captain of the slaver *Othello*. He was a merchant owner of slave ships, an importer of rum and molasses and a rum distillery owner. According to tax records, in 1772, he was one of the wealthiest of the Newport merchant princes, surpassed only by eleven other Newport merchants. (Downing, Crane)

416-418 Thames Street, AP 32, Lot 12:

Samuel Whitehorne House, 1811, possibly 1804 : an imposing, 3-story, hip-roofed, brick masonry, Federal style mansion built for Captain Samuel Whitehorne, Jr., a successful late eighteenth century Newport merchant, with interests in an iron foundry, a distillery, banking, shipping and slave-trading.

428-432 Thames Street, AP 32, Lot 46:

Hunter-Whitehorne House, c.1750: a 2-story, hip-roofed, clapboard, Georgian style house built for Henry Hunter in the mid-eighteenth century and later owned by merchant John Whitehorne in 1794. Hunter operated a rum distillery on the property during the mid to-late eighteenth century. In 1774, Hunter owned five slaves, presumably employed in the distillery operation. In 1771, Newport merchants Aaron Lopez and Jacob Rivera purchased 20,069 gallons of rum for their slaver *Cleopatra* from fourteen different distilleries. Among the three largest orders was that of Henry Hunter — for 1998 gallons. In this voyage, 257 slaves were purchased and transported to Barbados, a large number for a single venture. (Coughtry, Crane)

★ **479-481 Thames Street, AP 32, Lot 151:**

Store/House, eighteenth century: a 2-1/2-story, gambrel and gable-roofed, shingled, connected commercial structure with multiple additions in the Georgian style owned by the Overing family before the Revolution. Henry Overing sold the building and property to Thomas Voax in 1804. In 1774, Henry John Overing held eight slaves and was involved in a rum distillery operation possibly connected with this property. African Paul Overing may have been one of Henry Overing's slaves prior to the Revolution.

Thomas Street

24 Thomas Street, AP 28, Lot 95:

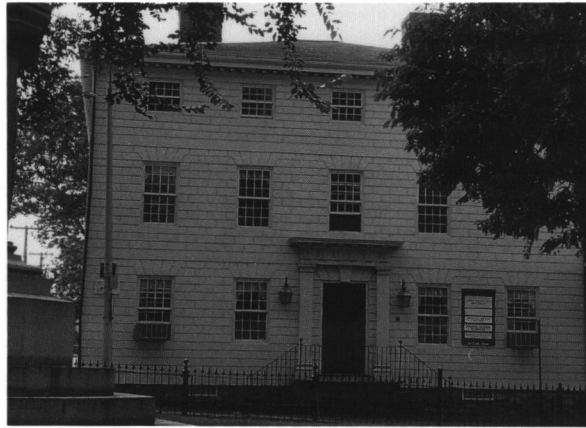
Rice Homestead, c.1815: a 2-story, gable-roofed, clapboard and shingle, Federal style house, owned by the African-American Rice family since construction. The house is associated with 54 Wil-

liam Street on adjoining property. The first occupant of the house, Isaac Rice, was the free stepson of Caesar Bonner. He was born in 1792 in the Narragansett Country on the west side of Narragansett Bay and moved with his family to Newport in the early nineteenth century. The Rice homestead was built for Caesar Bonner and given to Isaac Rice shortly thereafter. Isaac Rice became one of Newport's early black entrepreneurs, developing a well-known catering business in Cotton Court off Thames Street. He was also a gardener and was employed by the Gibbs family in landscaping the Gibbs' estate on Mill Street, a portion of which became Touro Park. Rice was involved with local free African-American social organizations in the ante-bellum period, including the African Union Society and the African Benevolent Society. The homestead is said to have been a stop on the underground railroad for Southern slaves escaping to freedom. During this period, abolitionist Frederick Douglass and Isaac Rice became acquainted, presumably through associations with New Bedford and local African-American entrepreneur and abolitionist George T. Downing. Douglass is said to have stayed at the house in 1843 when he visited Rhode Island to speak on abolition on behalf of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society. The Rice homestead and associated property has remained in the Rice family since its construction.

★ Touro Street

★ 29 Touro Street, AP 24, Lot 13 :

Perry Mansion, c. 1757 ; an imposing 3-story, clapboard, hip-roofed Federal mansion which was the Newport home of Oliver Hazard Perry and



29 Touro Street. Photograph by Richard Youngken.

later (about 1900) the site of African-American entrepreneurs J.T. Allen and H. L. Allen's Restaurant business.

★ 82 Touro Street, AP 24, Lot 289: **Newport Historical Society Building and Seventh Day Baptist Meeting House.**

The meeting house was built in 1730 as a simple 2-story, clapboard clad, gable-roofed box with an ornate paneled interior possibly designed by Richard Munday. African Americans worshipped in the building during the eighteenth century possibly in the east gallery. Later (1864-1869) the building was occupied by the African-American Shiloh Baptist Church.

Vernon Avenue

25 Vernon Avenue, AP 6, Lot 59:

Barclay-Stokes House, c. 1875: a 2-story, gable-roofed, clapboard, late nineteenth century vernacular Victorian style farm house with a large barn now converted to apartments. The property is associated with African-American George Barclay and his descendents, who have occupied this home for four generations.

Walnut Street

22 Walnut Street, AP 12, Lot 82:

John Gidley House (aka Davenport House), c.1728: a 2-story, gable-roofed, shingle Georgian style house originally built for John Gidley. In the 1720s, John Gidley, Jr. owned one of Newport's first rum distilleries. Richardson lists John Gidley as owning a distillery operation in 1732. The principal Gidley residence, however, stood at the intersection of Gidley and Thames Streets in the Court End of town and was a substantial gable-on-hip-roofed Colonial mansion. The house on Walnut Street may have been an investment property for Gidley. (NHS, Richardson).

25 Walnut Street, AP 12, Lot 223:

William and Joseph Wanton House, c.1770: a 2-story, gable-roofed, clapboard, Georgian style house associated with William and Joseph Wanton prior to the Revolution. The Wantons, a prominent Newport merchant family, were involved in the slave trade as early as the mid-1700s, owning the slave ships *Charming Abigail*, *Polly*, *Africa*, *Ruth*, *Wanton*, and *Fortune* prior to the Revolution. The principal early Wanton house stood on Thames Street

between Touro and Mary during this period. Col. Joseph Wanton, Jr. purchased the Hunter House on Washington Street in 1756 for his own use. The house on Walnut Street may have been an investment property.

28 Walnut Street, AP 12, Lot 197:

Sarah Rumereil House, prior to 1758: a 2-story, gable and flat-roofed, clapboard, commercial/residential Colonial structure. In 1774, Sarah Rumereil held three slaves. According to Richardson, Ebenezer Rumereil owned a dry goods business prior to the Revolution. It is possible that this structure is the location of the business. (NHS, Richardson)

36 Walnut Street, AP 12, Lot 78:

Joseph Belcher House, 1760/70: a 1-1/2-story, gambrel-roofed, clapboard, Georgian style house. Joseph Belcher, a pewterer, owned the house between 1770 and 1777. In 1774, Belcher owned four slaves, some of whom may have been employed in his pewter manufacturing business.

41 Walnut Street, AP 12, Lot 72:

Thurston House, c.1734 : a 1-1/2-story, gambrel-roofed, clapboard and shingle, Georgian style house originally located on Long Wharf and moved to the corner of Walnut and Washington Streets and to the present location in 1883. The house belonged to former African slave Newport (possible Neptune) Thurston. Neptune Thurston was a cooper by trade, possibly learning the craft from the Baptist minister Gardner Thurston, a cooper by trade and a member of the prominent slave-trading Thurston family. Gardner Thurston refused to make casks for the African rum trade and

supported the Reverend Samuel Hopkins' abolitionist stand. (Crane, George Gibbs Channing) According to African-American historian and Newporter Charles Battle, Neptune Thurston gave noted Rhode Island painter Gilbert Stuart his first painting lessons. (Battle p36)

Warner Street

14 Warner Street, AP 18, Lot 3:

Benjamin Stevens House, (aka William A. Jackson House), c.1800: an altered, 1-1/2-story, gable-roofed, asbestos-sheathed, Federal and nineteenth century vernacular style house. In the early to-mid-twentieth century the house was occupied by African-American William A. Jackson and his family. William A. Jackson owned a moving company, the Jackson Moving Company, during this period.

29 Warner Street, AP 18, Lot 143:

W. Mathews Building (aka Jacob Dorsey Confectionery Shop), c.1907, 1921: a single story, clapboard and shingle, nineteenth century vernacular commercial building. African-American Jacob Dorsey operated a confectionery, bakery and shop here in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Dorsey came to Newport from Maryland in 1851 at the age of 30. City directories place him as a whitewasher at 29 Warner Street in the 1880s and 1890s. City directories indicate the confectionery business existed into the early twentieth century.

Washington Street

53 Washington Street, AP 16, Lot 14.4:

Potter-Minturn House, prior to 1758: an

imposing 2-1/2-story, gambrel-roofed, beaded clapboard, Georgian style mansion owned by slave-owner James Potter before the Revolution. The house was sold to Simon Newton in 1801.

54 Washington Street, AP 16, Lot 32:

Hunter House, prior to 1758, 1870s: an imposing, 2-1/2-story, beaded clapboard, gambrel-roofed, Georgian style mansion occupied by Deputy Governor Jonathan Nichols, Jr. in the late 1740s. Nichols was a prosperous merchant, proprietor of the White Horse Tavern and a privateer. The house was purchased by Col. Joseph Wanton, Jr. in 1756. Wanton was Deputy Governor of the Colony between 1764 and 1767 and a Loyalist who fled to New York with his father Governor Gideon Wanton, in 1775. A few years after, the Wanton estates in Newport were confiscated and both father and son died by 1781. The Wantons, a prominent Newport merchant family, were involved in the slave trade as early as the mid-1700s, owning the slave ships *Charming Abigail*, *Polly*, *Africa*, *Ruth*, *Wanton*, and *Fortune* prior to the Revolution. In 1774, Joseph Wanton had three slaves.

After the Revolution, in 1805, the house was purchased at auction by William R. Hunter, a lawyer. The house was sold in 1854 to the Old Colony Steamboat Company and maintained as a popular and genteel boarding house. Julia Ward Howe's Town and Country Club met at the house on several occasions. Among those boarding after the Civil War was Col. Thomas Wentworth Higginson, a Union Army Black Regiment commander and abolitionist. Col. Higginson assisted African-American entrepreneur George T. Downing in a successful fight to desegregate the Newport public schools in the late 1860s. (Downing, Battle)

61 Washington Street, AP 12, Lot 120:

Saint John the Evangelist Church, 1894: a gable-roofed, stone masonry, Gothic church. (see Poplar Street)

62 Washington Street, AP 16, Lot 12:

Captain John Warren House, prior to 1736, 1774: an imposing, 2-1/2-story, gambrel-roofed, clapboard and shingle, Georgian mansion perhaps built for Charles Dyer and later owned, in 1749, by Joseph Willson. Willson sold the house by 1774 to Captain John Warren, also a merchant, who owned two slaves in 1774.

64 Washington Street, AP 12, Lot 121:

Thomas Robinson House, prior to 1736, c.1760, 1879: a 2-1/2-story, gambrel-roofed, clapboard, Georgian mansion. The house was originally built (the southern part) for Walter Chapman prior to 1736. It was purchased by Thomas Robinson from Benjamin Hazard in 1760. Robinson invested in the slave trade as early as 1756 when he invested with Nicholas Robinson in the voyage of the *Dolphin*. Robinson is recorded as a Newport merchant and manufacturer of spermaceti candles in 1772. His father-in-law, Thomas Richardson, owned slave ships, a distillery and four slaves (in 1774).

71 Washington Street, AP 16, Lot 224:

Pitts-Southwick House, prior to 1758, 1880, 1889: a 2-story, gable-roofed, clapboard Georgian and Colonial Revival style house occupied by Solomon Southwick, the colonial printer (*The Newport Mercury*), who in 1774 owned four slaves, some of whom may have been employed in the printing business.

★ Washington Square

★ 8 Washington Square, AP 17, Lot 221:

Rathburn-Gardner-Rivera House, prior to 1722, c.1740, c.1950, c.1980: a 2-1/2-story, gambrel-roofed, clapboard, Georgian styled house owned by John Gardner between 1722 and 1763. It was inherited by George Gardner in 1763 and sold to Abraham Rodrigues Rivera in 1793. John Gardner is listed as the captain of the slaver *Africa* in the mid-eighteenth century, responsible for voyages in 1754, 1755, 1761 aboard *Africa* and the schooner *Friendship*. Abraham Rodrigues Rivera was a member of the Jewish merchant families of Aaron Lopez and Jacob Rodrigues Rivera who together, before the Revolution, were leading Newport merchants active in the slave trade among other venues.

Washington Square, AP 17, Lot 234,

The Mall - Parade - Eisenhower Park, eighteenth century, enlarged early-mid-nineteenth century: a large triangular park bordered by Thames Street, Touro Street, Washington Square and Court House Street which was the site of the "great school house", the early eighteenth century school. As early as 1715, local newspaper advertisements mentioned the sale of slaves here. (NHS, *Newport Mercury*).

★ Washington Square, AP 17, Lot 222,

Colony House, 1739-41: a 2-story, gambrel-roofed, brick, Georgian edifice built on a raised stone foundation. Designed by Richard Munday and documented to have been built by local builder/craftsman Wing Spooner, this landmark building is reported to have been constructed with the help of

slave labor. It was also near the site of slave markets during the eighteenth century, held in the area of the "old great" school house to the west. (Downing)

Dr. Marcus F. Wheatland Boulevard (formerly West Broadway)

28 Wheatland Boulevard, AP 17, Lot 302:

U.S.O. Building (aka Martin Luther King Building), c.1944: a 2-story, concrete block, brick masonry and clapboard, flat-roofed building originally built as the African-American U.S.O. building during World War II. It has been used as a recreational center for the African-American community since its construction.

32 Wheatland Boulevard., AP 17, Lot 279:

Hyman Rosoff Building (aka Stone Mill Lodge), c.1907, 1921: a 3-story, shingle and clapboard, flat-roofed, early twentieth century vernacular style commercial/residential building which has been the home of the Stone Mill Lodge, an African-American fraternal society since it was founded in 1895.

65 Wheatland Boulevard., AP 18, Lot 178:

Charles and Oliver Tisdale Building, c.1907, 1920: a 3-story, flat-roofed, shingle and brick masonry, commercial building which was a warehouse for the Tisdale grocery store. This store was a fixture for the West Broadway / Kerry Hill community and it employed African Americans in the early to-mid twentieth century. African-American William H. Jackson, Jr. worked in the store. Jackson had

been a retired foreman of the Jersey Central Railroad (he retired in 1950).

86 Wheatland Boulevard., AP 14, Lot 151: Marion's Beauty Salon, prior to 1870: a 2-1/2-story, gable-roofed, shingle, Early Victorian style commercial/residential structure, occupied by African-American Marion Thompson's beauty salon in the mid-twentieth century.

94 Wheatland Boulevard., AP 14, Lot 208: Aura Spencer's Chicken Shack, late 19th/early twentieth century: a 3-story, shingle and brick, flat-roofed, residential/commercial structure. The first floor commercial space was occupied by Aura Spencer's Chicken Shack restaurant, one of many African-American-owned eateries in the area during the early-mid twentieth century.

94 Wheatland Boulevard. Photograph by Richard Youngken.



William Street

27 William Street, AP 27, Lot 144: Edward Hammett House, c. 1808, 1818: a 1-1/2-story, gambrel-roofed, Georgian style cottage built by housewright Edward Hammett. The Hammetts (father Nathan, Sr. and sons Nathan and Edward) were late eighteenth and early nineteenth century builders who built many houses in the Levin-William Street area on speculation, for rental or eventual resale. The neighborhood was occupied in the late 18th and early nineteenth centuries by African Americans including Rosanna Dyer and Silvia Easton who may have lived in this house or the one next door (36 William Street). (NHS, 1840s census)

36 William Street, AP 27, Lot 123, 124: Benjamin Hammett House, c. 1790: a 1-1/2-story, gambrel-roofed, clapboard and shingle, Georgian style cottage built by Benjamin Hammett in much the same style as 27 William St. next door.

54 William Street, AP 28, Lot 94,95: Rice House, c. 1850/59, 1988/89: a 2-story, gable-roofed, clapboard and shingle, nineteenth century vernacular house, owned by the African-American Rice family since construction. The house is associated with the principal Rice Homestead on the adjoining property at the intersection of William and Thomas Streets (24 Thomas Street).

84 William Street, AP 28, Lot 82: Silas Dickerson House (aka Pilgrim Rest), c. 1893/95: a single story, gable-roofed, clapboard, nineteenth century vernacular style house owned

by African-American businessman Silas Dickerson in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Dickerson owned and operated a successful neighborhood grocery store on William Street in the mid to late nineteenth century. This house may have been a rental property. The house was later owned by African American Elizabeth Canavan and used with 90 William Street (next door to the east) as a nursing home known as Pilgrim Rest.

90, 92 William Street, AP 28, Lot 91.4: James T. Greene House (aka Pilgrim Rest), prior to 1850, 1983-4: a 2-story, gable-roofed, clapboard, nineteenth century vernacular house which has been converted to commercial use. The building was associated with Pilgrim Rest, a nursing home established in this building and the structure to the west (84 William Street) owned by African American Elizabeth Canavan in the mid to-late twentieth century.

Willow Street

27 Willow Street, AP 12, Lot 96: Peckham-Carr House (aka John Carr House) prior to 1758: a 2-story, gable-roofed, clapboard and shingle, center chimney, Georgian house owned by Joshua Peckham before the Revolution and later purchased by John Grimes. Peter Mumford purchased the property in 1783. In 1774 Grimes owned three slaves.

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substantial. Withey provides tables of the relative values of commodities shipped from Rhode Island to various locations (1768-72) which demonstrate that rum and spermaceti candles were the principal exports in terms of value, with the bulk of trade in terms of tonnage and ship traffic being coastal and West Indian. Other sources (Coughtry and Crane) argue effectively that although in tonnage and ship traffic the coastal trade exceeded the African trade by a wide margin, the per ship profit of a successful slaving voyage did substantially exceed that of a coastal venture. The net profit from a few voyages in the African trade was potentially greater than that of many voyages in the coastal trade, with less cost in terms of investment in ships, crews, and overhead expenses, but the risk was great for calamity and disaster either off the African coast or at sea. The coastal trade to the West Indies supplied the plantations with foodstuffs and lumber -- essential supplies to sustain plantation production.

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Johnston, Edna Seaforth.: Rice family, other key individuals, William / Levin Street neighborhood.

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