

Hidden in Plain Sight:
**AMERICAN SLAVERY
AND THE UNIVERSITY**



TOP IMAGE ON FRONT

**A S.W. View of the College in
Providence, together with the
President's House & Gardens**

MERIDEN GRAVURE CO.

COURTESY OF THE JOHN CARTER BROWN
LIBRARY AT BROWN UNIVERSITY

BOTTOM IMAGE ON FRONT

***Shipping Sugar from Ten Views
of the Island of Antigua, 1823***

William Clark

lithograph, hand coloring

23.5cm x 34.8cm

COURTESY OF THE JOHN CARTER BROWN
LIBRARY AT BROWN UNIVERSITY

This exhibition has been curated by the Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice, a scholarly research center with a public humanities mission that was created out of the 2006 “Slavery and Justice” report.

Archival Materials on display and additional materials on Brown’s connection to the slave trade can be found at the University Archives located at the John Hay Library as well as the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University.

IN 1764, THE SAME YEAR AS THE FOUNDING OF THE COLLEGE OF RHODE ISLAND (today Brown University), the Brown brothers, John, Nicholas, Moses, and Joseph, launched the slave ship *Sally*. Captained by Esek Hopkins, first commander in chief of the United States Navy, the brigantine headed to West Africa in search of slaves to sell in the Caribbean.

The story of the *Sally* is intertwined with the history of Brown University and the United States. Slavery and slave labor generated great wealth and fueled colonial expansion of the Atlantic world. The institution of racial slavery created a network of trade between continents, creating new businesses and a powerful merchant class. For colleges in the colonial era, including the College of Rhode Island, the historical records show that many of the founders, trustees, and donors to the endowments acquired their wealth through commercial activities involving the African slave trade. In part, some of the building structures for the College of Rhode Island were constructed with slave labor. The first chancellor, Stephen Hopkins, owned slaves. The liberty imagined by the Founding Fathers at the creation of the American republic did not include enslaved people. Racial slavery was a foundation of American society. Its legacies continue to haunt us and therefore demand our attention.



BUILDING UNIVERSITY HALL

ENSLAVED NATIVE AMERICAN AND AFRICAN LABOR was used to build University Hall, the College of Rhode Island's first building on its then newly established Providence campus. Displayed here are some of the names of people who appear in the building record, including "Mary Young's Negro Man," "Earle's Negro," "Abraham," and "Pero." These are the names of some of the enslaved people whose owners donated their labor for University Hall's construction. In addition to the donation of enslaved labor, benefactors also provided in-kind gifts of materials including wood by Newport's slave-trading firm Lopez and Rivera.

Gravestone of "Pero, an African Servant to the late Henry Paget"

Pero was 62 years old when his owner, Henry Paget, donated his labor for the construction of University Hall. This image shows his grave in Providence's North Burial Ground, not far from campus.

IMAGE COURTESY OF ROBERT EMLÉN,
UNIVERSITY CURATOR AND PROFESSOR OF
AMERICAN STUDIES

N ^o 6.	To Stakely Smith for 212 Days Work Stone- ing the Well & Bill	15..
N ^o 7.	To 2909 feet of Timber a £45 4s	18.. 2
20	To 2 ^d 0 ^c 19 Barro Iron Dan. Thornton for Ma	11.. 10 1/2
N ^o 8.	To Amos Hortons bill To 7 Days use of Lea what is bl. before To 3 Gallons Oil of order a 5/3	2.. 2 1/2 5.. 3 15.. 9
24	To 1 oz brass pins ad.	" 6
N ^o 9-27	To Cash p. for 25805 Elijah Shepardon	3.. 3
	To 1 pail 1/6, 1 st 20 th Nails 1/4 d Wheaton	2.. 10
	To 849 feet Oak bord of Jon. Pike a 3/4 th #6	1.. 8.. 8
	To Cash p. W. Chatty for Ketching of Bricks & 1 st Brown	1.. 12.. 3
28	To Adam for 13 Days Work at the Well a 3/1	1.. 10..
	To p. Adam & Nat Allen for Ketching Bricks 1 Day Each a 3/1	" 6..
30	To 2 whids Lime of Otis Whipple	1.. 16..
N ^o 10-	To Henry Paget Esq. for 29 Days Work of Pero & bill a 3/1	4.. 7..
31	To Cash p. Job Indian for his Work in the Well Extra from other work & agrant 8 Days a 1/6	" 12..
Aug 2	To paid Mingow Negro	" " 9..
	To 3 pints W.I. Rum ad Simmons for Extraordinary Services	" 1.. 6
	To 5 bord of Stones of Jos. Bagley besides the 7 bord bl. June 27. a 5/3 for 3 1/2 bord, & 172 bord ab 1/9	1.. 8.. 6
6	To p. Jonathan Hill for Ketching bricks	" 1.. 6
	To 2 ^d bord Nails d. Rich. Gallop	" 1.. 8
8	To 2 whids Lime of Aaron Mason	1.. 10..
	To 2 Gall. W.I. Rum 7/1. 2 ^d Sugar 1/1. when Laying the 2 ^d floor	" 8..
9	To 6 th 24 th Nails ab. ad Uriah Wiscote	" 3..
10	To paid Sam. Burges for Ketching bricks	" 1.. 6
N ^o 11-	To Wm Logans bill for painting 600 sashes & 25 Window Frames	4.. 1.. 9
	Carried forward	£ 233.. 15.. 9

Job, a Native American, a free African named Mingow, as well as Pero are listed in this building record from the construction of University Hall.

THE COLLEGE TO NICHOLAS BROWN & CO., DR.: 1770-1771, RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE MISCELLANEOUS PAPERS, MS-1E-1, BOX 3, FOLDER I:111, BROWN UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES.

Rhode Island's Economy: **SLAVES, MERCHANTS, AND MANUFACTURERS**

THE RHODE ISLAND ECONOMY was linked to the Atlantic slave trade and depended on a close trading relationship with the Caribbean. Leading merchants in the state were owners of major plantations in the Caribbean. Sugar, one of the major goods exported from slave plantations of the Caribbean, was an integral ingredient for rum distilleries thousands of miles north in Rhode Island. Profits from rum funded many voyages to the west coast of Africa, becoming a form of currency in the slave trade. Some newly enslaved Africans were taken first to the Spanish Caribbean to work on sugar plantations and then to mainland Spanish America. Because the Caribbean plantations' economies focused almost exclusively on sugar production, these colonies relied on Rhode Island products such as furniture and home goods to outfit their plantations. When the slave trade declined, the state became a leader in the manufacture of "Negro cloth," a cheap fabric used to clothe enslaved African Americans in the Southern states.





**The First Mechanical Cotton Mill of Samuel Slater, Pawtucket, R.I.
(tall building in center)**

Undated illustration

Using cotton picked by enslaved people in the South, Rhode Island textile manufacturers became pioneers and primary marketers of “Negro cloth,” a cheap fabric used to clothe the enslaved and signify an inferior status.

COPYRIGHT BETTMAN/CORBIS, COURTESY OF GETTY IMAGES

“Negro Cloth”

Contemporary replica of “Negro cloth,” woven by Seth Rockman, associate professor of history.

COURTESY OF SETH ROCKMAN





Mapping Rhode Island's Colonial Economic Network

The wealth that was derived from slave labor propelled the various European colonial empires. In Colonial America enslaved labor of indigenous people and Africans was the basis of global economic growth. Slave labor and the wealth derived from the trade of people of African descent fueled colonial expansion of the Atlantic world. In Colonial America, slave labor linked far-flung places and the local American economy into a powerful network.

DESIGN COURTESY OF ERIN WELLS, ARCHIVAL MAP COURTESY OF THE JOHN CARTER BROWN LIBRARY AT BROWN UNIVERSITY



Account book from the Slave Ship Sally, September 11, 1764–December 20, 1765

The voyage of the *Sally* was a disastrous one. The enslaved captives started to die even before the journey to the Caribbean slave markets began. Of the 196 Africans acquired by the ship's master, at least 109 perished. In his captain's log Hopkins records that one of the first to die was a woman who "hanged her Self between Decks." On August 28, 1765, the enslaved Africans rose up against the crew. Hopkins provides no further details of this act of resistance, other than the crew "obliged [to] fire on them." Eight Africans died in this incident.

COURTESY OF THE JOHN CARTER BROWN LIBRARY AT BROWN UNIVERSITY

The supposed amount of Brigs Cargo

15000 gallons Munn	-----	15000
20 barrels Do	-----	800
	-----	150

4 66 th Tann	36	-----	126
Do beaf & pork	51	-----	195
300 brown do		-----	300
		-----	460
		-----	400
		-----	394
		-----	<u>17825</u>
3 hhd	316	-----	
	40	-----	
12 cask	104	-----	460
		-----	<u>18285</u>
		-----	<u>18285</u>
100 th tobacco	-----	60	
long do	-----	980	
bars	-----	120	
	-----	130	
	-----	<u>1294</u>	
	-----	1156	
	-----	64	
for 6 bars	-----	42	
	-----	7	
	-----	16	
	-----	8	
do wine	-----	<u>7</u>	<u>1294</u>
11 Snuff	-----	40	bars
do & bar for 28 th	-----	40	
	-----	238	
	-----	212	
	-----	122	
	-----	118	
	-----	<u>690</u>	
6 S Caves	do 115	bars	Each
	-----		<u>690</u>

175

Sea Captains Carousing in Surinam, c.1752-1758

John Greenwood

Oil on bed ticking

37 1/2 x 75 in. (95.9 x 190.5 cm)

This scene of a tavern in the Dutch Caribbean colony of Surinam shows a half dozen men who would become trustees of the College of Rhode Island, today known as Brown University. Their presence highlights Rhode Island's close connection to the Caribbean as a result of the slave trade. Captain Esek Hopkins of the *Sally* is pictured near center, with a sick partygoer to his left.

COURTESY OF THE SAINT LOUIS ART MUSEUM, MUSEUM PURCHASE 256:1948

1765			No
August			
21	1 galle Slave Dyed	-----	21
25	1 boye Slave Dyed	-----	22
27	1 Woman & 1 boye Dyed	-----	23 24
28	Slaves Hoje on us was obliged fine on them and Destroyed 8 and several more wounded badly 1 thye & ones thye broke	-----	25 10 32
30	1 boye & 1 galle Slave Dyed	-----	33 34
31	1 Woman Slave Dyed	-----	35
Sept			
1	1 Woman & 1 galle Slaves Dyed	-----	36 37
2	1 Woman Slaves Dyed	-----	38
3	1 boy Slave Dyed	-----	39
4	1 boye Slave Dyed	-----	40
6	1 man Slave Dyed	-----	41
7	3 boye & 1 galle Dyed	-----	42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49
8	2 Women and 2 boye Dyed	-----	50 51
9	1 Woman & 1 galle Slave Dyed	-----	52
11	1 boye Slave Dyed	-----	53
12	1 boye Slave Dyed	-----	54
14	1 galle Slave Dyed	-----	55
15	1 galle Slave Dyed	-----	56
16	1 Woman Slave Dyed	-----	57
19	1 man Slave Dyed of his wounds on the thye when Slaves Hoje	-----	58
20	1 boye Slave Dyed	-----	59
22	1 Woman Slave Dyed	-----	60 61 62
23	2 Women & 1 galle Slaves Dyed	-----	63 64
25	1 man & 1 woman Slaves Dyed	-----	65 66 67
26	2 men & 1 galle Slaves Dyed	-----	



Stephen Hopkins, 1999

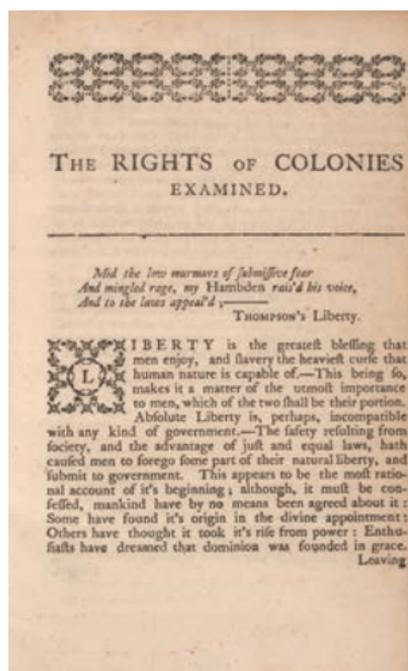
John Philip Hagen
Oil on canvas

COURTESY OF BROWN
UNIVERSITY PORTRAIT
COLLECTION

**“The Rights of
Colonies Examined”**

Stephen Hopkins
Printed by William Goddard, 1765

COURTESY OF THE JOHN
HAY LIBRARY AT BROWN
UNIVERSITY



STEPHEN HOPKINS and “The Rights of Colonies Examined”

IN 1765, CHANCELLOR STEPHEN HOPKINS, former Rhode Island governor and slave owner, penned the pamphlet, “The Rights of Colonies Examined,” arguing against British taxation. In the pamphlet, he compared the experience of the American colonist to that of the enslaved. He wrote: “those who are governed at the will of another, and whose property may be taken from them...without their consent... are in the miserable condition of slaves.” Yet Hopkins owned the following enslaved people: Fibbo, St. Jago, Prince, Bonner, Adam, and Primus. His pamphlet tells us of the paradox of the birth of the American republic – a passion for liberty ensnared by a slave society. It is this paradox that remains one of our country’s major challenges today.

The Slavery and Justice Report: **IMPACT AND LEGACIES**

AFTER THREE YEARS OF RESEARCH AND INVESTIGATION BY THE FACULTY, staff, and students on the University Steering Committee on Slavery and Justice, the “Slavery and Justice” report was published in 2006 under the direction of President Ruth J. Simmons. The committee referred to the University’s complicity in the slave trade as “hidden in plain sight.” Many of the documents, material culture, and stories about the University’s role in the slave trade were not new. But the report created the opportunity to read these documents in a new way and better understand the contemporary world that unfree labor had created. Globally, we are still grappling with how to acknowledge this past. More than a decade later, many institutions are beginning the work of uncovering their links to the slave trade and to slavery. In the aftermath of the report, Brown University

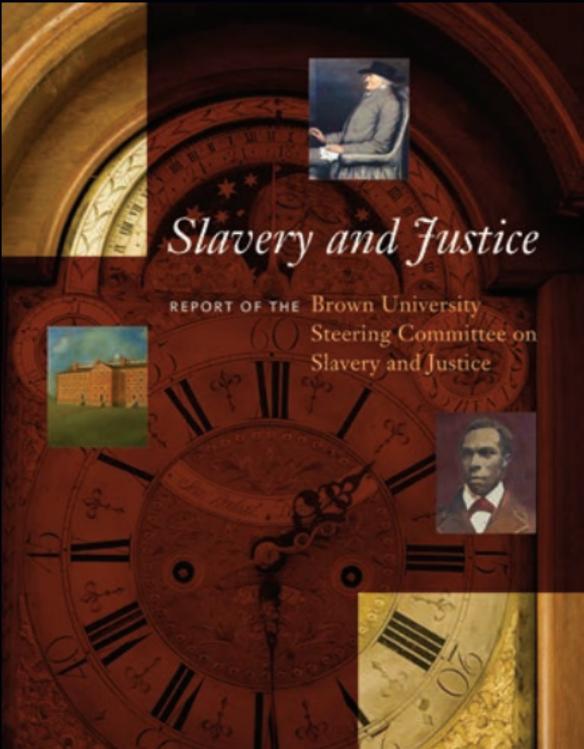


established a memorial to the history of slavery on the Front Green outside of University Hall. Designed by Martin Puryear, the Slavery Memorial recognizes Brown University's connection to the trans-Atlantic slave trade and the work of Africans and African Americans, enslaved and free, who helped build our university, Rhode Island, and the nation. The University also established the Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice, a scholarly research center with a public humanities mission that examines the history and legacies of the racial slavery. Today both the University and the country continue to struggle with the legacies of slavery, particularly around the questions of justice and freedom and issues of structural racism. The juxtaposition of liberty and slavery at our nation's founding remains central to our present and generates challenges for our times.



The Slavery Memorial

COURTESY OF WARREN JAGGER



BROWN