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SLAVES IN THE AMERICAN MARITIME ECONOMY, 1638 - 1865

ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL ROLES

By Brendan Foley

Ed: This is the conclusion of Mr. Foley's article.

Slaves in the Shipyard

The first known instance of black slaves working at a maritime trade in the American colonies occurred in New Hampshire. African slaves probably first appeared in New England in 1638, and by mid-century Richard Cutts' Piscataqua River shipyard employed eight slaves. It is not clear if these workers were skilled shipwrights or boat builders, or plied a semi-skilled trade: caulking, sailmaking, ropewalking, rigging. Five of the men were eventually willed to the Widow Cutts upon her husband's death in 1675, but the fate of the other three is unknown. Perhaps they died before their master, were sold prior to his demise, or manumitted upon it. Cutts' early ownership of so many slaves must have been exceptional in New Hampshire. He was certainly unusual among shipbuilders of that period; few colonial ship carpenters could afford more than a single slave.¹²

The early acceptance of slave labor in the Piscataqua region might have stemmed from the distinct commercialism of the local inhabitants. Unlike the Puritanical Massachusetts Bay colonists settling just a few miles to the south, the European immigrants in southern New Hampshire did not come to the New World to escape religious persecution. An oft quoted but perhaps apocryphal tale has a late seventeenth century Piscataqua minister complaining that his followers were forsaking the piety of their forefathers. A prominent citizen retorted, "Sir, you entirely mistake the matter; our ancestors did not come here on account of their religion, but to fish and trade."¹³ There could be no fishing or trading without watercraft, and there could be no watercraft without a steady waterfront labor supply. Portsmouth account books from the first third of the eighteenth century show frequent hiring of slaves to work in the shipyards. The output of those yards allowed the region's leading merchant, William Pepperrell, to send a fleet of over one hundred vessels to the fishing banks in the 1730s. That family's ship and slave owning ex-

tended through generations; significantly, William Pepperrell Jr. maintained a river-barge crewed by six African slaves in the 1740s.¹⁴

Slaves in Massachusetts were hired to work in shipyards at least as early as 1713. A Boston shipyard owner contracted three slaves in that year to help construct a brigantine for a local merchant. Joseph Goldenberg posits that the trio's long term of employment and high wages suggest that they were skilled workers. By the 1730s slaves working alongside free white laborers were a familiar sight on New England waterfronts, but they were a large investment for a capital-strapped shipwright. The Northern vessel builders that did buy slaves rarely owned more than one or two; the three 1713 Boston slaves had different owners. That town harbored three hundred to four hundred slaves in 1720, but that figure had grown to 1,374 two decades later. The competition that skilled slaves offered to white artisans did not go unnoticed; beginning in 1705 Boston artisans complained intermittently about inroads blacks were making into various labor markets. Similar concerns were aired throughout the colonial period.¹⁵

The use of slaves in shipyards probably originated in the chronic labor shortage in the early days of the colonies. In addition to resorting to slave labor, American shipwrights were forced to embrace technical innovations in ship production because of the dearth of workmen. For instance, sawmills were rare in England until late in the eighteenth century, but as early as 1623 a sawmill had been established in northern Massachusetts. In the next two decades, nineteen sawmills were established along the banks of a single New Hampshire river. Colonial labor, including slave labor, was costly and difficult to obtain, so capital investments in machinery substitutes for workmen proved sound.¹⁶

Slaves in New England were concentrated in the seaport towns, the yards of which put to sea an estimated 74 percent of the fishing, coasting, and trans-oceanic trading ships in the American colonies by 1740. Skilled shipwright slaves such as that men-

tioned by Piscataqua merchant George Jaffrey commanded relatively high wages: Jaffrey paid another merchant thirteen pounds for his slave's twenty-seven days work aboard the ship *Nightingale*. A slave of that status represented unfree maritime labor's elite, but semi-skilled and unskilled slaves were far more common around the waterfront. By 1750 around 3 per cent of the Massachusetts population was comprised of slaves, but they were concentrated in the seaports. Boston's population in 1742 was approximately 16,400 and at least 8.5% of the total was comprised of slaves. Rediker estimates that the majority of those slaves worked around the docks as unskilled laborers.¹⁷

Interestingly, New England slave-owners hired out their semi-skilled slaves at the same wage rate paid to white tradesmen performing the same work. The rate varied according to the skill level of the task performed, not the race of the worker. Goldenberg writes, "Thus when Black Joseph did common labor in a Salem shipyard, his master received only 7 shillings a day instead of the usual 10 he earned as a caulker." Evidence from Rhode Island yards show that free black shipyard workers received wages equal to free white workers.¹⁸

New England shipyards were the largest colonial tonnage producers, but the yards of other colonies also employed shipbuilding slaves. In South Carolina, maritime work was the third largest occupation among males slaves, after agriculture and woodworking.¹⁹ Southern maritime slaves were often hired out by their owners to other shipwrights. During the 1750s and 1760s, black shipwrights could be rented for 20 pounds per month in South Carolina currency. Though most of their wages were turned over to the master, they must have been allowed a remarkable degree of freedom; in 1737 one shipwright slave in that colony pretended to be free after the death of his master and received payment for his work on vessels in Charlestown Harbor.²⁰ Frederick Douglass commented, "A city slave is almost a freeman, compared with a slave on the plantation."²¹ A caulker in Baltimore, Douglass' master granted him considerable leeway in making his work arrangements, but apparently took his entire wage. The slave wrote: "After learning how to talk [sic], I sought my own employment, made my own contracts, and collected the money I earned....I was bringing him from six to seven dollars a week. I sometimes brought him nine dollars per week: my wages were a dollar and a half a day."²²

Mid-eighteenth century documents from that South Carolina shed light on the relative value of maritime slaves. Shipwrights were worth between 300 and 800 pounds local currency, while caulkers brought only 300 to 350 pounds. Shipwrights were worth nearly twice as much as a prime field hand; they typically sold for 100 pounds sterling in the 1770s, in contrast to 60 pounds for an agricultural slave.²³ Maritime skills were marketed whenever circumstances dictated that a waterfront slave be sold to a new master. In 1742 one owner offered "A Fine young Negro Man, born in this Country, ... brought up to the Ship Carpenter's trade, and can Caulk very well," and a short time later another owner advertised "A likely negro Fellow to be sold,... a Ship Carpenter and Wheelwright by Trade."²⁴

Shipwrights in South Carolina directed more capital toward slave purchases than their Northern counterparts. Goldenberg writes:

Of the total wealth listed in the inventories of nine slave-owning New England shipwrights, an average of 5 percent was tied up in slaves. On the other hand, nine South Carolina shipwrights had an average of 57 percent of their total wealth invested in slaves. This contrast may be further demonstrated by comparing Rhode Island builder Roger Kinnicut with southerner Thomas Middleton. Kinnicut's 11 percent ratio of slave to total property was the largest of any New Englander, but it was still far below Middleton's 20 percent, the smallest ratio among the South Carolina builders.²⁵

The reason for the Southerners' proportionately larger investment in shipyard slaves is unclear, but it might have been due to a combination of economic and cultural factors. Future research could shed light on the absolute amount invested by each slave-owning shipwright in both regions. Perhaps Northern shipwrights were more highly capitalized than their counterparts to the south, so less of their money was tied up in slaves: shipbuilding was one of the most important New England industries, but it was a far less significant component of the Southern economy. It seems likely that the pervasive effect of a strongly slave-oriented culture would have influenced South Carolina shipwrights' investment decisions; slave owning no doubt boosted the social status of white men in that colony.

Slaves Aboard Ship

There were three main realms of work experience on watercraft during the era of slavery: inshore, coastal, or blue-water.²⁶ Inshore work was intracolony and took place on short-haul craft such as canoes, lighters, ferries, and river barges. Irreplaceable in manning these vessels, slaves were "the backbone of the lowland transportation system during most of the colonial era, moving plantation goods to market and ferrying and guiding whites from one landing to another." Peter Wood details the position held by slaves in the economic machine of South Carolina:

Besides the actual production of rice and naval stores (and later indigo), all of the hauling and loading of these commodities was done by Negroes, as was the building of roads and the cutting of canal passages. Black porters, carters, and stevedores on land were matched by hundreds of black oarsmen on the water. Even the boats which taxied persons to and from the ships in the harbor were manned by slaves.²⁷

Although slave owners allowed some of their slaves the relative freedom of maritime employment, they realized that granting them such leeway was fraught with danger. "Most planters envisioned an ideally ordered society as one in which blacks would be kept not only out of skilled trades and retailing but out of boats. Boat work made slaves 'insolent' and 'independent,' introduced them

to seamen, and kept them aware of the shipping news."²⁸ Nonetheless, whites recognized the need for black boatmen, and boatwork was a skill emphasized when a slave was sold. Notices for men familiar with that working environment included the following: "A very good Sailor, and used for 5 years to row in Boats,... a fine strong Negro Man. That has been used to the Sea, for which he is very fit, or to go in a Pettiaugua,... all fine fellows in Boats or Pettiau's," and a pair of men "that is capable to go in a Pettiauger, and has practis'd going by the water above 10 Years, and understands the Business as well as most of their Colour."²⁹

Many of the slaves handling small boats in the American colonies acquired their skills in Africa before they became slaves, and their knowledge and abilities made them invaluable to the functioning of the maritime economy. Bolster comments:

"Africans disembarked in the New World with more than memories of resistance and sketchy knowledge of whites' ways. They brought tangible skills to American maritime work.... A white seaman named John Willock noted with admiration in 1781 the small-boat handling abilities of slaves on St. Kitts.... American small boats and the skill necessary to build and handle them were truly creole - an amalgam of West African, European, and Native American technologies. But Africans have rarely been given credit for their contributions.... Euro-American seamen like Willock might marvel at the surfmen's dexterity and learn techniques of boat construction and boat-handling from them, but for the most part Europeans eschewed small-boat work in the Americas, making it the province of slaves."³⁰

The second general type of maritime experience for slaves was aboard coasting vessels plying intercolonial routes up and down the American eastern seaboard and out to the Caribbean islands. Slaves were not infrequently found serving as mariners on these vessels. In the opening decades of the eighteenth century, it is estimated that twenty percent of Philadelphia's sailors were black; a century later the proportion was the same. A Virginia law passed in 1784 stipulated that no more than one-third of any ship's crew could be black, suggesting that larger percentages of blacks among crews were common.³¹

A subset of this type of marine experience was coastal piloting. Slaves serving in this capacity were perhaps the most valuable of all the unfree mariners, for they had sole responsibility for safely bringing fully-loaded merchant ships into and out of ports in the West Indies, the Chesapeake, and the lower South. Captains turned command of their vessels over to pilots when entering the roads of most ports; this shallow-water maneuvering was the most dangerous portion of a voyage and required extensive knowledge of local shoals, currents, and channels. Slave pilots were aware that they wielded considerable power and demanded a certain degree of respect from the crews they shepherded. One West Indian pilot slave announced to the all-white crew of an inbound vessel, "I let you know I king pilot."³²

Slave pilots were sought by the enemy during times of war. In 1745 a slave seized from a schooner was encouraged by his Spanish captors to join with them against the English, and act as a pilot for Carolina. The slave refused, and when he finally made his way back to Charlestown the Assembly rewarded him with freedom. Thirty years later slave pilots were required by the British forces during the Revolution. Slaves were pressed into service, hired from Loyalist masters, or ran away to the Royal Navy.³³

The final realm of maritime experience was blue-water sailing. Service in this arena could take two forms: berths on merchant vessels trading with foreign ports or duty aboard privateers or men-o'-war of the American or Royal navies. This was perhaps the rarest form of marine employment for slaves, as it afforded them the most autonomy from their masters and the most opportunity for escape. Martha Putney relates that in 1810 the Newport, Rhode Island blue-water vessel *Betsey* had one black among its four-man crew. Charles Smith was enrolled as a mariner at Charleston and "was listed as born in Africa, a resident of Charleston and a slave."³⁴ The *Betsey* with Charles Smith on board returned to Newport on 12 June 1810 from its foreign destination. It would be interesting to know whether Smith returned to Charleston or remained in the free state of Rhode Island.

While coastal pilots and intercolonial mariners were relatively privileged slaves, Bolster states that "one of the most significant distinctions for slave mariners remained the fault line between coastal and deep-sea work." Some "Caribbean slaves criss-crossed the Atlantic - often in all-black crews - because entrepreneurs in Bermuda, the Bahamas, and Caribbean capital towns systematically organized deep-sea labor through slavery." These world-traveling slaves grew increasingly scarce as the era of slavery slowly drew to a close. Owners feared losing their valuable chattel on these routes: blue-water slaves were affected by news of the Somerset decision of 1774, which led slaves to believe that once they set foot in England they were legally free.³⁵

Perhaps the best insight into the life of a maritime slave comes from a unique firsthand narrative published in 1789. Olaudah Equiano, also known by his slave name, Gustavus Vasa, had a long and distinguished seafaring career. After the Middle Passage from Africa to the Caribbean and a subsequent voyage to Virginia a short time later, Equiano was purchased by an officer of the Royal Navy. For the next few years the slave sailed aboard warships ranging in size from small sloops to the *Royal George*, a capital ship. During his travels throughout the Atlantic and Mediterranean worlds, Equiano was witness to some of the defining events of the eighteenth century including the siege of Louisbourg, Nova Scotia during the French and Indian War. He was then sold to a new master in Montserrat, where he labored on small boats around the island and larger vessels sailing to the North American continent.

Equiano's master in Montserrat was a Quaker, and it seems that he treated his slaves better than average. Olaudah was allowed to keep fifteen pence sterling per day while he worked on the boats, more than the maritime slaves belonging to other owners. He soon transferred from the inshore boatwork to sailing American routes, and after proving his mettle his master granted him the privilege of conducting some private trading. Few slaves were as fortunate as Equiano. The skillful mariner carefully invested his stake on successive voyages; his small fortune grew steadily, and eventually he was able to purchase his freedom.³⁶

Variations in Maritime Opportunity for Slaves

The use of slave labor was persistent in the maritime trades. It existed from at least the middle of the seventeenth century and continued until abolition, but political and economic developments throughout the Atlantic world affected slaves' employment prospects during that period. Julius Scott states: "During the eighteenth century, opportunities for Afro-North Americans to test and stretch the boundaries of freedom upon the sea expanded markedly." However, the opportunities available to maritime slaves varied throughout the colonies. In New England, slavery began to wane after mid century. Nash writes that after the 1740s "New England ... was already tasting the first bitter fruit of overcrowding, the result of an expanding population competing for the resources of a relatively unproductive region. Hence less capital was available to invest in bound labor, and those who could afford additional workers could hire willing hands from the steady stream of immigrants into Boston from outlying towns. In the northern ports those who were most free of economic difficulties were the likeliest to purchase women and men who were unfree."³⁷ Shipwrights rarely were free of economic difficulty, and the number of maritime slaves in New England declined steeply as the century waned.

Nash's view is also taken by economists Fogel and Engerman: "Why then did the slave population of the cities decline?... In the cities...free labor, particularly immigrant labor, proved to be a very effective substitute [for slave labor]. This made the urban demand for slaves quite 'elastic'.... [I]t was easier for the cities to find acceptable, lower-cost alternatives to slave labor."³⁸ The influx of cheap rural laborers increased the elasticity of demand for urban slaves, and over the rest of the century slavery faded away in the northern seaports.

Opportunities for maritime slaves were further reduced due to a number of political factors around the turn of the nineteenth century. Following the 1793 Haitian revolution, Southern whites clamored for legislation to restrict the movement of black sailors in port. An economic downturn connected to the Jeffersonian Embargo of 1807 also affected black mariners, and then the growing influx of European immigrants diluted the labor pool and reduced real wages, particularly for maritime labor. Mariners' wages had nearly tripled between 1784 and 1793 and remained high throughout the Napoleonic Wars, but declined afterwards. Finally, the attempted slave insurrection of 1822 led by Denmark Vesey - a former sailor - resulted in additional repressive laws curtailing black sailors' activities.³⁹

In December 1822 the South Carolina legislature passed the "Act for the Better Regulation and Government of Free Negroes and Persons of Color." Under the law "any free negro or person of color" coming into port on a vessel would be confined in jail until the ship left port again. If a captain refused to pay the expenses for his black sailors' incarceration, the mariners could be "taken as absolute slaves, and sold." Later the provision allowing sale of free men was removed, and whipping was substituted.⁴⁰

Throughout the Southern ports similar restrictive legislation was passed as the Abolitionist rhetoric from the North heated up during the antebellum period. Black sailors faced sanctions in Georgia, North Carolina, Florida, Louisiana, Alabama, and the Spanish Caribbean. Bolster reports:

Within twenty short years of Vesey's and Walker's bold thrusts for freedom, and accompanying the phenomenal rise of organized abolition, an apparatus of systematic state coercion beset black sailors....sailors linked black America — free and slave, North and South. By fulfilling this part of Walker's nationalist dream, seamen of color attracted the wrath of wary white legislators. Although free blacks everywhere in these pre-Civil War decades confronted reduced manumissions and declining opportunities, no other black occupation was threatened as extensively as seafaring.⁴¹

The Maritime Lifeline

Maritime employment offered more than just an opportunity for slaves to acquire valuable skills and a chance for financial improvement. It also provided an avenue to freedom for many escaping slaves, including Frederick Douglass. Perhaps most importantly, the contact between bound laborer and free men along the waterfront and in fo'c'sles allowed information to filter into unfree communities. The news that traveled down these waterborne lines of communication electrified slave enclaves and struck terror in the hearts of Southern masters. Slave owners were right to be leery of the influence of sailors on their slaves. Frederick Douglass helped two white men unload a scow of stone on the wharf in Baltimore, whereupon the free men urged him to run away to the north. Douglass stated, "from that time resolved to run away."⁴²

White sailors occasionally went beyond encouraging slaves to escape, and provided material aid. A slave named Prince deserted his ship in Maryland in 1764 and a white sailor passed him "a Certificate for his Freedom." Black sailors more regularly lent a helping hand to runaway slaves. When Douglass made his bid for freedom he did so dressed in sailor's attire and equipped with a seamen's protection certificate from a black mariner.⁴³

Escape from bondage was a frequent temptation for slave mariners. Olaudah Equiano was presented with the perfect opportunity while in port at Guadaloupe in 1764. A large fleet of merchantmen was headed to France, but was desperately short of seamen to crew the vessels. All of Equiano's shipmates signed on with the fleet just be-

fore it departed, as the wages were fifteen to twenty pounds per man for the run. They enjoined Equiano to go, too, and promised to protect him. However, the slave felt that he had been well-treated by his master and believed that honesty was the best policy; therefore he decided to remain on his own ship.⁴⁴

Other slave mariners gambled for freedom and escaped when they could. Runaway slaves captured in Philadelphia included several that had made their way out of bondage aboard watercraft. "In the seven months from August 1790 to February 1791, the dockets tell of ...Anthony, who fled by ship from his master in Bermuda; ...Christian, who escaped from St. Croix; ...Sam, who arrived on a sloop from Bermuda..."⁴⁵ Sailors comprised nearly 9 percent of South Carolina's skilled slaves in the 1700s, but represented a quarter of the skilled runaways. Similarly, about 25 percent of Virginia's skilled runaways between 1736 and 1801 were mariners.⁴⁶

What of skilled shipyard slaves? Did their relatively high economic status act as an anchor, or did they escape more frequently than unskilled slaves? Were slave shipwrights treated well enough by their masters that they were hesitant to run away? Goldenberg reports that only thirteen runaway shipyard slaves could be located in colonial newspapers. Uncertainty seems to have precipitated the escape of most of these slaves: the advertisements indicate that the slave's position had changed or was about to change at the time of the disappearance.⁴⁷ Deeper historical inquiry is required to determine the frequency of shipwright slave escapes.

Runaway slaves were a nuisance and financial difficulty for slave owners, but a blood-drenched colony-wide slave revolt as a result of abolitionist hectoring was a truly terrifying specter. The Haitian Revolution of 1793 was the manifestation of Southerners worst nightmares, and they feared the contagion would spread to the United States. The fastest mode of communication was by ship, and news of the insurrection apparently spread via black maritime workers. At Denmark Vesey's trial, a co-defendant testified that the Vesey "had the habit of reading to me all of the passages in the newspapers that related to Santo Domingo." The slave leader told his followers that he corresponded through the black cooks of vessels trading between South Carolina and Haiti, and promised that the island's blacks would come to the slaves' aid once they started the insurrection in America.⁴⁸

Northern abolitionists harnessed the communication network already in place among American ports. Black nationalist David Walker wrote his inflammatory *Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World* in 1829 and spread it from Boston to the South through this network. From his used-clothing store near the Hub's wharves Walker inveigled sailors to carry the document south in their sea-chests. The Georgia legislature responded to this effort by imposing a forty-day quarantine on all vessels with free black sailors aboard, and requiring the arrest of those who had made contact with slaves ashore.⁴⁹

Conclusion

Slaves in maritime employment in America and the Caribbean were essential to the functioning of the early modern economy. Without their contribution on the docks of colonial and later United States ports and their skilled handling of small boats throughout the region, ships carrying the agricultural cargoes of the New World could not have weighed anchor. Black sailors were a necessity aboard undermanned coasting vessels, and they were valuable ingredients in some deep-sea trade routes.

Skilled slaves were leaders of the urban slave communities. The maritime slaves among the skilled ranks seemed to fare better economically than most slaves, and because they were in contact with the wider world - both black and white, free and slave — they were shapers of a new black American identity. Furthermore, maritime connections furnished slaves with long-distance information regarding the plight of their brothers and sisters in bondage and kept them apprised of legislation that could affect them. The well-informed maritime slaves served as leaders of rebellions, as evidenced by the participants in the Vesey insurrection. Lastly, links to the water provided chances for brave men to escape to free territories. Autonomous and resourceful, slave mariners made their bids for freedom in disproportionately large numbers compared to the overall slave population.

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Endnotes:

¹² Winthrop D. Jordan, "Enslavement of Negroes in America to 1700," in Stanley N. Katz, et al (eds.), *Colonial America: Essays in Politics and Social Development* (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1993), p. 306; Valerie Cunningham, "The First Blacks of Portsmouth," *Historical New Hampshire* 44 (Winter 1989), p. 182.

¹³ Another version has the preacher urging the congregation to "walk in the paths of righteousness and piety so that [they] would not contradict the main end of Planting this Wilderness," when the citizen exclaims "...you think you are Preaching to the People at the Bay; our main End was to catch Fish." From D.W. Meinig, *The Shaping of America: A Geographical Perspective on 500 Years of History, Volume I: Atlantic America, 1492-1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), p. 108.

¹⁴ William G. Saltonstall, *Ports of the Piscataqua* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1941), pp. 12, 30-31, 33.

¹⁵ Joseph A. Goldenberg, *Shipbuilding in Colonial America* (Charlottesville: Published by the University Press of Virginia for The Mariners' Museum, Newport News, Virginia, 1976), p. 63. Gary B. Nash, *The Urban Crucible: The Northern Seaports and the Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), p. 68.

¹⁶ Goldenberg, *Shipbuilding*, p. 16; Bernard Bailyn, *The New England Merchants in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1955), p. 101.

¹⁷ Richard S. Dunn, "Servants and Slaves: The Recruitment and Employment of Labor," in Jack P. Greene and J.R. Pole (eds.), *Colonial British America: Essays in the New History of the Early Modern Era* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), p. 184; Saltonstall, *Ports of the Piscataqua*, p. 30; Daniel Vickers, *Farmers and Fishermen: Two Centuries of Work in Essex County, Massachusetts, 1630-1850* (Chapel Hill and London: Published for the Institute of Early American history and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia by the University of North Carolina Press, 1994), p. 230; Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, p. 62.

¹⁸ Goldenberg, *Shipbuilding*, pp. 66, 68. Black Joseph conducted his work in 1739.

¹⁹ Bolster, *Black Jacks*, p. 21.

²⁰ Goldenberg, *Shipbuilding*, p. 67; Wood, *Black Majority*, p. 208.

²¹ Douglass, *Narrative*, p. 58.

²² Douglass, *Narrative*, p. 93.

²³ Goldenberg, *Shipbuilding*, p. 67.

²⁴ Wood, *Black Majority*, p. 198.

²⁵ Goldenberg, *Shipbuilding*, p. 67.

²⁶ In addition to the work experiences detailed below, free black men and slaves also labored in the various fisheries of the Atlantic world. Perhaps most notable among these was the whaling industry based from New England ports, which employed a large number of black men. However, there is no evidence that black slaves sailed on these whaling voyages; the heyday of the whalers was in the mid-nineteenth century, after slavery had been abolished in the two states most involved in whaling, Massachusetts and Rhode Island. For discussions of black men's experience in the whaling industry, see Martha S. Putney, "Black Merchant Seamen of Newport, 1803-1865: A Case Study in Foreign Commerce," *Journal of Negro History* 57 (1972), pp. 156-168; Daniel Vickers, "Nantucket Whalers in the Deep-Sea Fishery: The Changing Anatomy of an Early American Workforce," *The Journal of American History* 72 (1985), pp. 277-296; and Margaret S. Creighton, *Rites and Passages: The Experience of American Whaling, 1830-1870* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

²⁷ Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1974), pp. 203, 230-231.

²⁸ Bolster, *Black Jacks*, p. 17.

²⁹ Wood, *Black Majority*, p. 203.

³⁰ Bolster, *Black Jacks*, pp. 59-61

³¹ Bruce Levine, *Half Slave and Half Free: The Roots of the Civil War* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1992), p. 60; Gary B. Nash, "Forging Freedom: the Emancipation Experience in the Northern Seaport Cities 1775-1820," in Ira Berlin and Ronald Hoffman (eds.), *Slavery and Freedom in the Age of the American Revolution* (Urbana and Chicago: published for the United States Capitol Historical Society by the University of Illinois Press, 1983), p. 8; Mechal Sobel, *The World They made Together: Black and White Values in Eighteenth-Century Virginia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), pp. 51-52.

³² Bolster, *Black Jacks*, p. 132.

³³ Wood, *Black Majority*, p. 205; Benjamin Quarles, *The Negro in the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1961. Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia), p. 152.

³⁴ Martha S. Putney, "Black Merchant Seamen of Newport, 1803-1865: A Case Study in Foreign Commerce," *Journal of Negro History* 57 (1972), pp. 161-162.

³⁵ Bolster, *Black Jacks*, pp. 19-20.

³⁶ Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vasa, the African* in Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (ed.), *The Classic Slave Narratives* (New York: Mentor, 1987), pp. 70, 71, 93.

³⁷ Nash, *The Urban Crucible* (abridged version), p. 70.

³⁸ Fogel and Engerman, *Time on the Cross*, p. 102.

³⁹ Scott, "Afro-American Sailors," p. 40; Gary Nash, *Forging Freedom: The Formation of Philadelphia's Black Community 1720-1840* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. 145; Bolster, *Black Jacks*, p. 193; W. Jeffrey Bolster, "'To Feel Like a Man': Black Seamen in the Northern States, 1800-1860," *Journal of American History* 76 (1990), p. 1183.

⁴⁰ Bolster, *Black Jacks*, p. 194.

⁴¹ Bolster, *Black Jacks*, pp. 199-200.

⁴² Douglass, *Narrative*, p. 62.

⁴³ Bolster, *Black Jacks*, p. 96; Bolster, "To Feel Like a Man," p. 1173

⁴⁴ Equiano, *The Life of Olaudah Equiano*, p. 90

⁴⁵ Nash, *Forging Freedom*, p. 138.

⁴⁶ Bolster, *Black Jacks*, pp. 21, 24.

⁴⁷ Goldenberg, *Shipbuilding*, p. 67.

⁴⁸ Scott, "Afro-American Sailors," pp. 51-52. While the revolution unfolded in Haiti, newspapers from the West Indies reached Charleston within a month. The chagrined editor of the *Gazette* discovered that slaves were in the practice of taking as many as 200 copies for their own use (Scott, "Afro-American Sailors," p. 41).

⁴⁹ Bolster, *Black Jacks*, pp. 197-198.

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