# The Slave Ship Manuscripts of Captain Joseph B. Cook: A Narrative Reconstruction of the Brig *Nancy*'s Voyage of 1793

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Captain Joseph B. Cook set sail for Africa at the worst possible time. The rainy season along the African west coast falls between May and August, when tornados and malaria ravage the coastline.[1] Cook steered the brig *Nancy* out of the port of Providence, Rhode Island, on 29 March 1793. It would take about six weeks to reach Africa, such that he must have arrived just when the rains and winds became torrential.[2] It was a bad start to what would become an even worse voyage – Cook's first slaving voyage aboard the brig *Nancy*, and probably his second slaving voyage generally. Cook loaded the *Nancy* with a full cargo of 121 Africans on the Upper Guinea coastline somewhere between Senegambia and Sierra Leone. He then sailed south-west across the Atlantic, bound for the Dutch port of Suriname on the north-east coast of South America. In the early months of 1794, the New England public would read that during the middle passage there had been a slave revolt aboard the brig *Nancy*.[3] The revolt failed – Cook and his crew suppressed it without loss of life on their side. But they did kill 'a number' of Africans, undoubtedly a regrettable financial loss from the perspective of the *Nancy*'s Providence owners, Zachariah and Philip Allen.

The revolt occurred amidst a swirl of revolutions proclaiming the natural liberty of man. The American Revolution was less than 20 years in the past. The French Revolution was an even more recent memory.[4] The slave revolution in Saint Domingue (now Haiti) was raging as the *Nancy*'s revolt occurred. Inspired, abolitionists garnered public support, not least of all in Providence, Rhode Island, where the Brown family found itself divided between sons John Brown, a leading slave-trader, and Moses Brown, leader of the Rhode Island abolitionist movement.[5] In the fall of 1787, an anti-slave-trade bill that Moses Brown had initiated by petition breezed through both houses of the state legislature, to the delight and disbelief of abolitionists. It prohibited Rhode Island residents from participating in the

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slave-trade. The penalty for violation was a fine of £1,000 (Rhode Island old tender)[6] and £100 for each slave.[7] From then on, Rhode Island slave dealers would be traders in a doubly black market. The 1787 Act transformed formerly legitimate traders into smugglers, and 'respectable' merchants into crooks. Or at least that was the intention. In actual fact, slave-traders ignored the act, brazenly continuing to set sail for Africa. Rhode Island authorities followed suit by turning a blind eye. In the year the bill became law, not a single slave ship was prosecuted under its terms.[8] Not until the federal Abolition Act of 1808 threatened five-figure fines and five- to ten-year prison sentences did the Rhode Island slave-trade wither.[9] As William Ellery wrote to Moses Brown in 1791, just two years before Joseph B. Cook undertook his illegal voyage aboard the *Nancy*, '[a]n Ethiopian could as soon change his skin as a Newport merchant could be induced to change so lucrative a trade ... for the slow profits of any manufactory'.[10]

The press let its sympathies be known when it reported the revolt on Cook's ship. The revolt appeared both as a minor four-line item in small print at the back of the shipping news section, and as a major front-page story, where the slaves' efforts were applauded and garnished with quotations from Wilberforce and other abolitionists. The *Salem Gazette* shipping news report of 28 January 1794 curtly acknowledged the revolt:

> Providence, Jan. 23—Capt. James Brown, who arrived here last week, from Surinam, informs that the brig Nancy, of this port, Capt. Joseph B. Cook, has arrived at that place from Africa, with a cargo of slaves, who, on the passage, rose on the white people; and that a number of negroes were killed before they were suppressed.[11]

The informer, James Brown, was probably not a slave-trader himself – he is not included in Jay Coughtry's list of Rhode Island slaver captains.[12] One wonders if he was a member of the famous Brown family, and if he reported the incident out of abolitionist sympathies shared with Moses Brown. He must have realized that reporting the incident would publicly identify the *Nancy* as a slaver, giving abolitionists an appealing target.

At the opposite extreme, the Philadelphia *General Advertiser* of 11 February 1794 made the revolt front-page news, and with considerable delight. Describing a letter published in the Providence *Chronicle* on 21 January 1794, the account began[13]

> It appears by information from Surinam, that the Brigantine Nancy,[14] of this port, commanded by Joseph B. Cook, had arrived at that place, with a cargo of slaves from the coast of Africa; and that during the passage, they made an attempt to recover that liberty with which they were endowed by the common Parent of the Universe, and of which they could not have been deprived without the most outrageous violation of every principle of Religion, Justice, and Humanity; but in consequence of this laudable attempt to assert their natural and inalienable right, several of their number were destroyed by the captain and crew of the Brig.[15]



A close study of the public reaction to the *Nancy*'s slave revolt aboard the brig *Nancy* is beyond the scope of this article. Rather, I would like to focus upon what actually happened on Cook's ship during its triangular voyage of 1793. The reason for my focus is the existence of an unexamined collection of manuscripts, namely a logbook, account book and two daybooks from the brig *Nancy* itself. These four notebooks run to a total of 138 pages.[16] They are written in brown ink on yellowing paper bearing an English watermark. Some of the pages are darkened along the edges, probably by humid seafaring conditions. The manuscripts cover large parts of the 1793 slaving voyage as well as several Rhode Island-Suriname coasting trips undertaken by Cook and the ship, both before and after his two slaving voyages (Cook took the *Nancy* to Africa again on 23 May 1795).[17]

It seems that the authors of the leading sources on the Rhode Island slave-trade and shipboard revolts are not aware that these manuscripts exist. Crucially, Jay Coughtry, in his definitive history of the Rhode Island slave-trade, *The Notorious Triangle: Rhode Island and the African Slave Trade 1700-1807*, includes some basic information about the brig *Nancy* and its revolt, but without reference to the manuscripts. Similarly, the recent Cambridge database of 27,233 transatlantic slave ship voyages made between 1595 and 1866 includes the same minimal pieces of information, again without recourse to these manuscripts.[18] Both Elizabeth Donnan and Eric Robert Taylor note the *Nancy*'s revolt, but offer no information beyond what is contained in the *Salem Gazette*'s brief report.[19] I would therefore like to reconstruct the narrative of Cook's 1793 voyage by use of the *Nancy*'s ship records. In so doing, I hope to respond to Philip Curtin's call for further research on the minor slave-trades (for example, the American and Danish slave-trades),[20] and also to Darald D. Wax's claim that the study of the slave-trade has been too systemic or structural, rather than individual, in its focus:

> Treatments of the slave trade typically are concerned with organizational problems, the machinery and procedures of exchange, and the response, the collective response, of Africans on that leg of the slaving voyage known as the middle passage. But in a relation that depended heavily on individual judgments and decisions—by African leaders, diplomats, European factors and ship captains—it is surprising to discover how little is known about these people.[21]

This article positions itself within a growing body of microstudies of particular slave-traders and voyages. Olivier Pétré-Grenouilleau has edited the 187-page journal of Joseph Mosneron-Dupin, a Nantes-based slave-trader writing in 1804.[22] Alain Yacou's study of the journals of French slaver captain Joseph Crassous de Médeuil examines Crassous's voyages on the *Roy Dahomet* (1772–74) and the *Suzanne Marguerite* (1774–76), including lengthy excerpts from the manuscripts.[23] Leif Svalesen's research on the Danish slave ship *Fredensborg* combines archival and archaeological findings to reconstruct the ship's 1767–68 voyage from Copenhagen to the Danish West Indies via the Gold Coast.[24] Most recently, Robert Harms's study of the *Diligent* traces the French slave ship's 1731–32 triangular voyage through the 113-page journal of First Lieutenant Robert Durand. Harms is writing against the assumption that the slave-trade was monolithic, uniform and 'global'. He stresses that it was 'a kaleidoscope' of individual intersecting local contexts. His narrative charts the encounters between the Billy brothers of Vannes and King Agaja in Dahomey, Captain Assou in Whydah, and the European sugar planters in Martinique, among others.[25]

Admittedly, there are large gaps in the *Nancy*'s records, the most serious one being that the manuscripts stop before the middle passage begins and resume upon Cook's arrival in Suriname. Enough interesting evidence exists in the surrounding coverage, however, to justify the formulation of some tentative rebellion-related hypotheses. I shall offer several, bearing in mind the fragmentary coverage of the manuscripts. There is also the fact that Cook's logbook does not cover all of the *Nancy*'s time on the African coast. It does however cover the first three weeks. Coughtry knows of only two surviving Rhode Island slaver logs that include material on the African coastal portion of their voyages.[26] The *Nancy*'s increases Coughtry's total to three. The manuscripts thus offer new and valuable information about conditions and events on Rhode Island slavers in the late eighteenth century.

Very little appears to be known about Captain Joseph B. Cook (alternatively spelled Cooke), but it would seem that he was an experienced slave ship captain. Slaving voyages were long, lasting on average nine to twelve months, and dangerous due to the high risk of disease. On the basis of Rhode Island newspaper obituaries, Coughtry calculates that an average of two Rhode Island slave captains died each year. This represents between 4 and 20 per cent of the RI slaver captains in the trade at any one time. It is hardly surprising, then, that the average slaver captain made only 2.2 slave voyages in his lifetime.[27] Cook made at least three, making him more experienced than most.[28]

The brig *Nancy* was a small ship built in North Providence in 1784, nine years before Cook's voyage.[29] Its seafaring ended on 17 June 1803 in Savannah, Georgia, where it was surrendered to port authorities. The Providence register states simply 'vessel unseaworthy'. This is hardly surprising after at least 13 years at sea including two triangular slaving trips. The Atlantic crossing and West African coastline were extremely harsh on ships, and slave ship owners were safest using their newest and strongest vessels. One slave-trader cautioned against using any ship over four years old for the slave-trade.[30] A common strategy was to pull a ship out of the slave-trade when it reached ages seven to ten, retiring it to a less punishing business like the North American and Caribbean coasting trades, where the *Nancy* probably began and ended its maritime career.[31]



The earliest of the manuscripts is a daybook that covers the *Nancy*'s daily expenses during one of the coasting trips (listed by day, not account).[32] On 31 July and 9 August 1792, Captain Cook sold flour for £226 to the man who would report the *Nancy*'s slave revolt the following year.[33] Cook and Captain James Brown obviously knew each other before the *Nancy*'s first slaving voyage. The last three-and-a-half pages (or seven sides) of the 1792 daybook have been ripped out, ending the account record on 23 November 1792. As the next record of accounts begins only once Cook has reached Paramaribo with his cargo of slaves, one wonders if this was an effort to hide details of Cook's slave transactions in Africa.

Next, chronologically, comes the *Nancy*'s 1791–93 logbook. Of the four notebooks, it is this one that offers the most detailed narrative material on Cook's voyages. Cook made another coasting trip from Providence to Paramaribo (similar to the one described above) between 3 April 1791 and 2 February 1792.[34] The logbook then covers the coasting trip covered by the first daybook between 5 May 1792 and 12 January 1793. Of interest and relevance here is Cook's handling of several disruptive crew members (the worst of whom was a seaman named Oliver Reily), an incident to which I will return below. He also describes the process of inspection by Dutch officials in Suriname upon arrival at the mouth of the Commerwine River.[35] Finally, on 22 December 1792, Cook makes the seemingly trivial comment that one hogshead [barrel] of molasses was unstowed from 'between decks', partly emptied, then returned. On a regular commercial vessel, the area 'between decks' was a passageway (between the main deck and the hold) which was little more than a crawl space two or three feet high. On a slaver, this was where the slaves were kept, such that the space had to be four or five feet high. The 'between decks' layer thus segregated slaves from the crew above and the supplies below.[36] Unless extensive renovations were done between Cook's return from his 1792–93 coasting trip (on 12 January 1793) and departure for Africa less than three months later (on 29 March 1793), it is most likely that the brig was built for slaving, and that this part of the ship was used (probably inefficiently) as an extra-large storage space for molasses during the coasting trips.

The logbook covers the first 66 days of Cook's first slave voyage with the brig *Nancy* (29 March–3 June 1793). The Atlantic crossing took exactly 45 days (29 March–13 May 1793), then Cook's logbook covers the first 21 days along the Upper Guinea coast, at which point the logbook ends somewhat suspiciously: the last six pages (or 12 sides) of the manuscript have been cut out. One wonders if this was a deliberate attempt to destroy the records detailing Cook's slave dealings.

The third notebook is an account book in which expenses are listed by customer's account rather than by day, unlike the two daybooks. This covers Cook's sale of slaves and purchases of goods between October and December 1793 in Paramaribo. Unfortunately, then, none of the manuscripts cover the middle passage, when the revolt occurred.

The fourth and last manuscript is a 12-page fragment of another daybook, this time covering the *Nancy*'s expenses and sales in Paramaribo from September to December 1796. Here the *Nancy* was again engaged in the non-slave coasting trade between Rhode Island and Suriname.[37] Cook returned home from this last coasting trip with a total of 140 hogsheads, probably full of molasses to be distilled into rum in Rhode Island.[38]

On Friday, 29 March 1793, Joseph B. Cook began the *Nancy*'s first slave voyage. He recorded in the ship's logbook that 'At 2PM I take my departure from Block Island bearing [NW] 5 Leagues bound to Goree in Africa.'[39] 'Goree' is Goree Island, a tiny landmass measuring only 800 metres end to end and 300 metres across at its widest point. It lies 3.5 kilometres off the coast of the modern Senegalese capital, Dakar. Goree Island was one of many British slave forts along the African west coast. Rhode Island traders typically traded along a string of well-established European slave forts and castles that lined the West African coastline, particularly further south and east from where Cook went, from the British Cape Coast Castle east to the tiny Dutch outpost of Beraku.[40] This was the region where Cook took the *Nancy* on its second slave voyage (1795–96). Then, he began at Cape Coast Castle[41] and proceeded east (as one was obliged to do, given the trade winds) to Anomabu, Adja and Agga, all located on the Gold Coast between Assinie and Cap St Paul (now Ghana).[42]

Although the purchase of slaves through European middlemen inflated average prices, Rhode Island slave captains were in such a rush to leave the African coast – an area known as 'the white man's grave' because of the disease risk that they were willing to pay higher prices.[43] Most owners advised their captains to take the first offer and leave the coast as soon as possible.[44] Furthermore, the Guinea Coast had a reputation for being the most deadly stretch of African coast for white seamen.[45] Trading directly with Africans was inadvisable because it took more time, both because the African dealers' supply of slaves was an erratic trickle compared to the forts' far larger and more constant incoming flow, and because of the cultural complexities of negotiations (that is, a language barrier and different cultural trading practices).[46]



The brig struggled toward Goree Island under terrible conditions. 'Heavy thunder and rain took in reefs',[47] 'sharp Lightening and heavy rain',[48] and 'gales and rain'[49] are typical entries in the logbook during the early days of the ship's Atlantic crossing. Through the storms, Cook spotted whales and their waterspouts, sunfish and tortoises, one ten-pounder of which the crew caught and probably ate.[50] On the day before land was first spotted, a land bird foreshadowed the *Nancy*'s arrival. Cook noted with relief that a '[s]wallow came on board'.[51] As the *Nancy* wove its way through the Canaries (Tenerife, then Palma), Cook noticed that the sea below him was getting more and more shallow – 'the water appears to be a little chang'd to the greenish Colour'[52] – and that '[w]e see numbers of land birds and butterflys Sunfish &c'.[53] The *Nancy* passed the 'Isle of Farro', 'Cape [Mirick]', 'the sand bank of Tindall' and the perplexingly named 'Beshitten Islands' (probably the modern Bissagos Islands) before sailing past Cape Verde.[54] He noted 'two high hills called the womans breasts with a Low point running to the Seaward' on Cape Verde.[55] Finally, Cook arrived at the 'Point of Refriseo' and the 'West Point of Goree'. By 13 May 1793, the *Nancy* had arrived at Goree Island, its first African destination.

Although Goree Island was a slave-trading centre, Cook does not appear to have bought any slaves there (unless he did so without recording it). It was common practice for Rhode Island slavers to restock their basic supplies and perhaps engage in non-slave-trading further up the coast before buying slaves south- and eastwards.[56] This is perhaps what Captain Cook did. Early on the morning of 13 May 1793, the *Nancy* landed in Goree. Cook then '[v]isited the Governor and was very Strictly examined Concerning the War with France and England'. The two imperial powers were newly at war, not least in the West Indies, which probably helps explain Cook's unusual choice of the Dutch port of Paramaribo as his ultimate New World destination.[57] That afternoon, Cook traded loaf sugar (one loaf weighed 10lbs) for hides and dollars while someone sneaked onto the *Nancy* and stole his 'Great Coat' out of the ship.[58] The next day, Cook traded sugar, biscuits and beef for cash and hides 'which Compleats all my Business'. He closed the day's entry with the only explicit mention of slaves in the entire logbook: 'Observ. the People of Goree are Poor having Naught but Slaves to Sell.'[59]

From Goree, the *Nancy* set sail for Isle de Los further south along the Upper Guinea coast. Cook passed the 'Point of Cape [Emanuel]', 'the Shoals of Grande' and the 'Isle of Tamara'. On the way, he '[s]aw a number of Birds Called Boobies and a great number of Large Sunfish Some as Large as the head of a hogshead'. He also experienced two days of 'hard

tornadoes'.[60] The brig arrived at Isle de Los at 8pm on 26 May 1793 in the company of the provocatively named *Willing Quaker* and its master, Captain Adamson of Boston, and with Brig-Captain Fisher from New York and his vessel.[61] The following morning at 8am, Cook met with Mr Horrocks, the governor. Cook noted that he found the colony 'in Very Distracted Condition'. The logbook continues, '[n]o Bills to be had to be Depended on the Governor Informed me he would not Draw any bills as he Considered it a great Risque to Draw fearing they Would be Protested and he would not advise me to Take any from any Person on the Coast.'[62] The bills being referred to were bills of exchange, a standard method of payment in the triangular trade.[63] They were a flexible but risky substitute for cash – definitely no slave-trader's first choice of payment form. Bills of exchange were essentially IOUs drawn on firms where the buyer had a major account (typically in large imperial centres like London or Amsterdam), and were payable within a negotiated period (usually between three weeks and three years after the sale). Bills of exchange might occasionally prove non-cashable, particularly given the distances involved, time delays and dependence of many buyers' accounts (particularly in the New World) upon future crops.[64] Whether the Anglo-French war made it impossible to cash bills, or whether Mr Horrocks was referring to local factors, is unclear.

The following day, there is a suspiciously veiled reference to the purchase of slaves in Cook's logbook. The entry reads as follows:

> Tuesday May 28 ~93. Paid King Cantor
> 1 box Spe'm Candles 20lb
> 7 gallons of Rum and Load of Sugar.[65]

There is no note of what Cook paid King Cantor for. This is odd, given that for all other exchanges Cook notes both the payment sum and quantity of goods purchased. It is possible that Cook was paying the king ground-rent, a fee whereby African kings granted the right to trade slaves on their territory.[66]

A second suspicious reference appears in the same day's entry. 'This Day Saw Capt Adamson of the Ship Quaker from Boston he told me trade was very Dull No Sale for Rum at Seriloan [Sierra Leone] or the Bananas [the Banana Islands, between Freetown and Sherbro Island].'[67] It is significant that Adamson spoke of 'Sale *for* Rum' rather than 'Sale *of* Rum.' 'No Sale for Rum' meant 'No Sale *of slaves* for Rum.' Rhode Island rum was the Rhode Islander's ticket into the European-controlled West African slave-trade. A fiery variety far more potent (and thus more valued by Africans) than its English or West Indian equivalents, Rhode Island rum gradually joined gold as a local currency within the trading network of the European forts.[68] Slave prices were even expressed in gallons of rum, and,



according to Coughtry, Rhode Island slavers did not bother with cargoes of carefully mixed goods (responding to local demand along the coast)[69] because rum was sought after everywhere.[70] This gave them a particular exemption from having to inform themselves on African ethnic differences and preferences. The *Nancy*, however, does seem to have carried a mixed cargo of goods, and not solely rum.

The following Sunday, the *Nancy* left Isle de Los and 'made sail for the River [Rofelea]'. The next day, the brig '[a]t 9AM weighed and stood into the River at Noon anchor'd in 5 fathoms water in the mouth of [Rofelea] River', delivering 'to Mr Horrocks one Loaf of Sugar'.[71] If indeed Cook's Rofelea River is the modern Rokele River, then he had entered at Freetown, and was progressing up the river into Sierra Leone. Rhode Island slavers were tiny in comparison to their European counterparts.[72] British slavers, for instance, were on average 63 per cent heavier (by tonnage).[73] The brig was a particularly shallow-bottomed vessel, which, combined with its generally small size, allowed it to navigate up rivers, unlike large European slavers.[74] Its small size may also have made it harder to manoeuvre on the high seas.[75] It is possible that Cook planned to travel up the river in order to buy slaves from smaller African dealers. As already explained, this would not fit the standard model of RI slave purchasing strategy (that is, to stay on the coast and buy from European middlemen). Given that fact, it is equally possible that Cook may have delivered the sugar then carried on along the coast to another slave fort. Unfortunately, the entry of 3 June 1793 is the final entry in the logbook. The following six pages (or 12 sides) have been mysteriously cut out of the manuscript, such that we will never know exactly what happened aboard the *Nancy* between Rokele River and the brig's arrival at Paramaribo.

Just as the manuscripts contain not a single explicit reference to the acquisition of slaves by the brig *Nancy*, so they are strangely silent on its mid-Atlantic slave rebellion. The log ends on 3 June 1793 and the account book begins on 29 October 1793. The account book may have been started upon arrival in Paramaribo, when financial transactions would have begun with renewed intensity. If this is so, and given that the middle passage typically lasted between five and 12 weeks, Cook could have left Africa anytime between 6 August and 24 September 1793. The slave revolt, then, must have occurred sometime between 6 August and 29 October 1793.

Of course, an account book is not a logbook. One cannot expect to stumble upon a narrative account of the revolt among its figures and calculations. But 'a number' of slaves were killed by Cook and the crew in the struggle that ensued. This must have represented quite a loss in profits for the Allens, who owned the brig. Yet Cook makes no mention of this loss in his figures.

As with the masked references to slave purchasing, though, it is possible to extract more from the text by considering its omissions and their implications. When Cook left Africa, he had a full cargo of 121 slaves. When he paid his Suriname factor Mr Gomperts (his marketing and sales agent) at a rate of 4 per cent commission for slaves to be sold, he paid on the basis of 104 slaves.[76] The commission totalled RI £1,400 7, so the total value of the slaves must have been £35,008 15 (on average, £336 12 per slave).[77] Cook sold 104 slaves at Paramaribo. He also claimed 'the average of 5 1/8 Slaves Being the Portion of J B Cook'.[78] The captain's 'portion' was the amount of cargo (typically, rum on the way to Africa and slaves on the way back) that the captain could ship free of charge by customary right.[79] Typically, captains' 'portion' or 'privilege' ranged between one and four slaves, making Cook's share larger than the average.[80] Cook also refers to '[b]earing the Proportion of the Loss of 8 Slaves on the Passage', indicating that eight slaves died on the middle passage, putting the ship's fatality rate at 8 out of 121, or 6.6 per cent. This is well below Coughtry's estimate of 12 per cent[81] and consistent with Palmer's estimate of 5–10 per cent mortality during the nineteenth century (having fallen from about 15 per cent during the period 1730–1800).[82] Were those killed in the revolt among these eight? Probably not. Adding Cook's captain's share of five slaves (assuming he would take rum in place of the remaining 1/8 slave) to the 104 sold, we have a total of 109 slaves. With the eight who died, the total becomes 117. But 121 slaves were on the brig when it left Africa. This leaves four slaves who have mysteriously disappeared from Cook's records. It was probably these four who were killed in the suppression of the rebellion. The loss of value incurred by the Allens, then, would have been four slaves valued at £336 12 each (on average), a total of £1,346 8. It is impossible to guess at the sex and age of those killed, even if we assume that those killed were active participants in the rebellion. Women and children were uniquely well placed to be collaborators in revolts.[83] Unlike the men, women and children were allowed on deck unshackled for large periods of time.[84] Furthermore, women's quarters were often closer to the officers' quarters, specifically the captain's cabin which contained the arms chest.[85] Any sexual contact with crew members may have given African women added access to potential weapons as well as to information crucial for the successful execution of a rebellion.[86] One wonders if Cook's convenient failure to account for the four rebel slaves would have been detected by the Allens in the account records had Captain James Brown not made news of the rebellion public.

Thus, a few basic facts can be established from the manuscripts: (1) that the rebellion occurred between 6 August and 29 October 1793, and (2) that four slaves were probably killed in the rebellion. What makes the rebellion on the *Nancy* even more interesting is the fact that revolts on Rhode Island



ships were comparatively rare. Between 1730 and 1807, only 17 slave revolts occurred on Rhode Island slavers, a number equivalent to one revolt every 4.5 years, or about one every 55 voyages. By contrast, European slavers experienced revolts with far more frequency. There was on average one revolt every 1.5 years aboard French slavers (or one revolt in every 15 voyages), and one revolt every two years on British slave ships.[87] Behrendt, Eltis and Richardson estimate that on average, ten per cent of all slave vessels experienced revolts.[88]

What could have been the causes? I would like to propose three possibilities, some or all of which could have contributed to the revolt: (1) the slaves' probable Upper Guinean origins and the fact that these ethnic groups (for example, the Fulbe, Wolof, Serer and Malinke)[89] demonstrated the highest rate of insurrection of all West Africans; (2) a possible sense of solidarity and cooperation between the black crew members (of which there were several on the *Nancy*) and the enslaved Africans; and (3) poor crew discipline on the part of Captain Cook, which may have given the slaves an opportunity to rebel.

David Richardson calculates that slaves from the Senegambia and Sierra Leone regions had a rate of revolt three to five times higher than the average.[90] When compared with slaves from ethnicities or regions that revolted the least (that is, West Central Africa, or Bonny or Calabar in the Bight of Biafra), the Senegambian and Sierra Leone revolt rate is 14 to 30 times higher. Richardson generalizes that ships going to regions north of the Gold Coast had a 400 per cent greater chance of revolt than had those going to areas south and east of the Gold Coast.[91]

What could account for this difference? One possibility could be Islam. Islam was gaining in popularity among the peoples of the Senegambia region. Michael Gomez notes that the terms *Mandinga* and *Mandingo* (a major Senegambian ethnic group) were synonymous with *Muslim* by the nineteenth century.[92] Gomez argues that Islam tended to unite Africans of different backgrounds by transcending their ethnic differences.[93] Islam may thus have acted as a catalyst for rebellion. Brazilian Muslim slaves seem to have derived strength and fervour from Islamic rituals and Muslim collective solidarity, if not from the actual principle of *jihad*.[94] Perhaps the same occurred on Cook's ship. Incidentally, the wars being fought in the region, typically between Muslim and non-Muslim ethnic groups, also may have meant that many captives sold into slavery were prisoners of war[95] and, crucially, experienced warriors who would be particularly adept at staging rebellions.[96] Cook's 121 slaves may have had both seasoned African soldiers and bonded Muslims among them.[97]

A second possible cause of the rebellion is a rising sense of racial identity and unity among Africans – what Gomez argues replaced ethnic

identities among Africans as the institution of slavery became entrenched.[98] There were black crew members aboard the brig *Nancy*. Had they felt more loyal to their fellow black Africans than to their white captain and crew, one wonders if they might not have used their special access to tools (potential weapons), information and privileges to aid the revolt.[99]

Slave ships required twice the usual number of crew for security reasons. The general ratio was one crew member per 13 tons of vessel as compared to the one per 17–20 tons for non-slave ships.[100] On this ratio, the brig *Nancy*, weighing 110 tons, ought to have had eight crew members. The manuscripts mention nine by name.[101] Three of these were black coopers: 'Peter a Negro Cooper', 'George Cobart Negro Cooper', and 'Young Fortune Negro Cooper'.[102] Coopers made and repaired the hogsheads and casks in which rum, molasses and tobacco were stored. Marcus Rediker calculates that on British ships between 1700 and 1750, coopers earned a third to a half of seamen's average wages. Cook paid his seamen $11 per month,[103] so if Rediker's figures may be applied to this later period, the *Nancy*'s three black coopers would have earned $3.67–$5.50 per month, although their wages may have been lower on the basis of race.

'Peter a Negro Cooper' was with Cook for the full duration of the period covered by the manuscripts. The first place his name appears is in the first daybook, during the coasting trip of 1792, when the *Nancy* paid 'Peter (Negro Cooper)' £10, probably his wages or money to buy coopering supplies.[104] He appears in the logbook on the slaving trip, then in the second daybook during the 1796 coasting trip as well. Peter seems to have been a trusted and regular member of Cook's crew. The other two, though, appear only during the slave voyage, so they could very well have been dismissed or even killed had they been collaborators in the slave revolt.

W. Jeffrey Bolster and Martha S. Putney have both argued that there was a sizeable black presence among the crews of American ships.[105] Putney has even found instances of ships, including slavers, whose crew was 50 per cent or more black.[106] On the cases of black crew members on slavers, she comments, '[t]o them, in all probability, it was a job and they needed the income'.[107] But this is not to say that they gave their genuine support to the slave trade. Black mariners were in a unique position. They were able to scan large parts of the Atlantic world, observing the plight of black people from Africa to the West Indies to the Americas. They may even have been some of the first to become aware of and to promote Gomez's ethnicity-transcending race-based identity. Denmark Vesey, with whom Gomez opens his book, was himself a former sailor.[108] Bolster notes that confessions extracted from several of the leaders in Vesey's 1822 insurrection in Charleston, South Carolina, 'pointed to black seamen as links in the chain of rebellion'.[109] Vesey's desire to open correspondence with the black



inhabitants of Port-au-Prince in Saint Domingue and his confidence that Saint Domingue and Africa would provide back-up armed support were surely grounded in his travels to both places during his earlier seafaring days.[110] Bolster provides further examples of black seamen using their marine mobility to distribute pamphlets of an insurrectionary nature.[111] Of course, there are also cases of black crew members who betrayed slaves' rebellion plans to the white captain and crew, but the *Nancy*'s full blown rebellion suggests that the slaves' plans were not prematurely exposed.[112]

The third possible cause for the rebellion was a lack of order and crew discipline on the part of Captain Cook. Slave revolts typically occurred when the crew lacked organization and coherence, often the result of disruptive violent or drunken behaviour by a crew member, or of widespread illness or death among the crew.[113] Two illuminating previous incidents of crew disruptiveness are documented in the coasting trip portion of the logbook. In the first, Cook seems to have handled a fight between two sailors firmly. The entry reads as follows:

> Wednesday April 27 1791. Says Jack he has abused me, and says Elijah he has abused me Like a dog, and Says I I will use you well, and took a Ropes end and gave them both a few Strokes To Lett them know they should not fight On Board the Vessel that I had Charge Of and then set them about other Business.[114]

In the second incident, though, Cook seems almost incompetent. He lacks decisiveness, with the result that his authority must have been undermined. It is worth repeating Cook's own account of the incident, which occurred in Suriname on 22 November 1792:

> At Half Past Nine PM Oliver Reiley began to behave in a Very abusive manner. I order'd him to be quiet and ordered him To go ... [to] his lodgings which he absolutely refused On my attemting [sic] to make him go off of the deck he took me by the Collar saying he would not be abused by Master or mate or any officer on board and struck me in the face calling to rest of the Crew to assist him and in my attemting [sic] to throw Him on the deck and secure him two of the Seamen, John Snowdon and Redman Burr took hold of me saying I should not strike him what they did farther I Am not able to say my Shirt was [tore] in the Scuffle very Bad. After the Seamen took us apart – Reiley and Snowden Went forward and used very unbecoming language. I went Immediately ashore and asked the advice of Several Masters Of Vessels who thought it would be best to go on board and Keep a good [walk] on my return. Mr Holden the mate informed Me that the [Said] Reiley and William Luther had [treated] Him with very

> bad language saying that if he Came forward'on the Maindeck they would Stab him and then they came onto the Quarter deck and told him if I Jo.'s Cook [should] Put them in Prison it Should Cost me my Life if Ever they should find me in America.[115]

The most remarkable part is Cook's next line. Having been assaulted by one subordinate and indirectly given conditional death threats by two others, Cook sighs feebly: 'I thought I would Let the matter rest untill morning and then intended to apply to the governor for advice.'[116] The next morning Cook did just that. First he tried to reason with Oliver Reiley, asking him if he would 'take his discharge'. Reiley refused. Then Cook left the ship to speak with a series of captains – four in all – all of whom thought 'it would be Dangerous to Proceed to Sea with all my Present Crew'. As if this were not enough outside advice, Cook next applied to speak with the governor's temporary replacement, Mr Muntz, who was in charge while the governor was out of town. Even in retelling his story to Muntz, Cook downplayed the severity of Reiley's acts: 'I did not think it best to open the whole of his Crimes before the Judge. If I had I believe it would Cost Reiley his Life.'[117] This is prime evidence of Cook's lack of strong authority. Cook is nothing like the sadistic captains described by Rediker, or even the severe Captain Ferentz described by Svalesen.[118] Mr Muntz recommended having Reiley escorted off the ship by soldiers, which Cook arranged, paying the soldiers their six guilders (or six pounds) out of Reiley's wages.[119] Cook seems to have forgotten completely about the death threat made against him by John Snowdon and Redman Burr – he took no disciplinary action against them. Had a crew member became disruptive during the *Nancy*'s middle passage, Cook's indecisive and mild leadership may have created enough confusion to give the slaves a perfect opportunity to revolt.

Finally, there is the issue of the mid-Atlantic timing of the revolt. Earlier scholarship suggests that most shipboard revolts occurred on or just off the African coast, while slaves 'had a Shore to fly to'.[120] Coughtry knows of only three middle passage revolts that occurred out of a total of 17 revolts on Rhode Island slavers between 1730 and 1807, the *Nancy*'s being one.[121] However, more recent work noted by Harms suggests that about 30 per cent of shipboard rebellions took place on the high seas.[122] Richardson, Eltis and Behrendt add that because the period spent on the African coast was much longer than that on the high seas, once adjusted for time, the risk of revolt at sea was actually the same or even slightly higher than on the African coast.[123]

Of course it is hard to argue that the slaves deliberately planned that the revolt would occur mid-Atlantic. But in fact they may have had good reason to do so. Although a revolt close to the coast would increase their chances of returning to Africa, it would also increase their chances of being recaptured by European or African slave-traders.[124] Moreover, nearby crews would rush, armed, to support the crews of other ships within their sight who were experiencing disturbances.[125] Donnan offers one example of a slave rebellion on the *Mary* that was suppressed because of the arrival of a nearby ship's crew.[126] In another instance, the captain of one ship sent his chief mate, armed, to investigate what looked like a slave rebellion on the *Mary*. In fact, the scuffle was between crew members.[127] Cook's logbook is littered with sightings of other ships. On average, he passed about one ship every two or three days at every point except for the mid-Atlantic stretch. Thus, slaves rebelling in the mid-Atlantic might actually have had a chance of succeeding, at least in dominating the ship's crew, if not necessarily in finding their way back to Africa.[128]



The records begin again with Cook, having put down the rebellion and arrived at Suriname, selling his slaves at the Dutch port of Paramaribo.[129] Several points deserve mention here. First, not surprisingly, a number of slaves and crew members had been ill. Because Rhode Island slavers were so small, a ship doctor (like the ship 'supercargo' or professional slave dealer) was an unaffordable luxury. As a result, it was the captain who was expected to tend to the medical needs of his crew and slaves. Captain Cook seems to have relied upon the expertise of a Dr Kammel upon arrival in Paramaribo. The brig *Nancy* paid for the doctor's bills for crew members (RI £4 10 for John Allen and £48 10 for William Kennedy)[130] and for slaves (£94).[131] As payment, Dr Kammel took '1 Small Sick Boy Slave' valued at the minimal total of £169. He must have believed the boy could recover under his care. His bill was £94, so he paid the difference to Cook in cash.[132] Sick slaves were also sold, presumably explicitly as they are thus identified in Cook's records, to 'Widow Rudin & Son' on 2 November 1793. The purchasers paid a total of £1100 for '8 Sick Slaves Viz 4 boys and 4 women', or an average of £135 10 per slave. Considering that the average purchase price obtained by Cook on the entire cargo was £336 12 per slave, the sick slaves' value had dropped by nearly two-thirds of their original value due to illness.

A second interesting observation is that the slaves seem to have been sold in groups and by auction, rather than individually or by pre-established contract.[133] The basis for this conclusion is the fact that the *Nancy*'s slaves were sold in small groups at a uniform price (per slave).[134] These uniform prices fell consistently as the season progressed, probably because the most valuable slaves were sold first.[135] Knowing this, planters were probably more willing to pay high prices at the start, when most of them had not yet filled their slave quotas for the coming harvesting season. Selling in auction form would reflect such shifts in market demand. Conversely, selling by

pre-established contract would reflect market conditions at the time the contract was negotiated, rather than at the time of actual sale.

Third, whether or not Cook's slaves and coopers were ethnicity- or race-based in their self-conception and sense of loyalty, it appears that Cook was oblivious to either sort of distinction. African ethnic distinctions seem to have mattered to slave purchasers and traders, as different ethnic groups had different reputations among planters (that is, for docility, recalcitrance, physical strength and stamina). The Coromantine from the Gold Coast, for example, were considered to be hard workers but prone to rebellion.[136] The Akan, also from the Gold Coast, were regarded almost everywhere as 'rebellious and troublesome'.[137] Planters in South Carolina preferred Senegambians. Brazilian buyers disliked Angolans.[138] But Cook's account book contradicts these findings, because not once did he identify the ethnic origins of any slave he sold. The slaves he sold were simply described as 'women slaves', 'men slaves', 'boy slaves' and 'girl slaves'.[139] Some other slavery-related manuscripts differ in this respect. The 1810 sale records of one Louisiana plantation, for instance, indicate the ethnic affiliation of each slave sold. Among the group of slaves are Africans of 'Manéga', 'Sénégal',[140] 'Conga' and 'Bambara' ethnicity, as well as American-born slaves designated by the label 'Créol'.[141] Scholars like Colin Palmer argue that, at the very least, slaves' geographic region of origin, if not their ethnicities, were noted by slave-traders.[142] But other evidence suggests that it was common not to record such information.[143] Cook's records confirm this view.

As for race, Cook seemed again to be curiously uninterested. In Suriname, he sold goods to several black and mulatto women. The first time he entered their names into the *Nancy*'s daybook, he identified them by race. There is 'Amerika Van Spelner Negrowoman', 'Alibo De Pena Negrowoman', 'Dena Van Stolton Negro Woman', 'Miss Cobar—mulatto woman' and 'Betty Van Cammel Negro Woman'.[144] When these names appear subsequently, the racial identifications are gone. Dena Van Stolton's name appears alone on 6 July 1792, as do those of Alibo De Pena on 23 July 1792 and 'A. Spelner' on 23 November 1792.[145] The same thing happens with 'Peter the Negro Cooper'. Initially his racial tag accompanies his name in the manuscripts,[146] but later he becomes simply 'Cooper Peter'.[147] Cook may not have had any real interest in African ethnicity and race, considering them neither important nor interesting as compared to the maximization of profits. This is perplexing, though, given that a knowledge of both could have increased Cook's profits and the security of his crew and cargo.

Two final observations deserve mention. First, on 23 November 1793, Cook sold two of the *Nancy*'s '[c]arriage guns' to the master of another ship, a Captain M. Rich.[148] Carriage guns were guns that sat on supports or



'carriages'. Presumably slave ships' carriage guns would be special in two ways. First, they would have to be able to swivel the full 360 degrees, so that they could be turned inward on the ship and used on its own slaves should there be a revolt.[149] Second, they would be close-range for the same purpose, as opposed to the long-range guns that would be used against pirates and other ships. Perhaps Cook, having completed the middle passage and delivered his 104 remaining slaves to port, had no further need for close-range, fully rotational carriage guns.[150] Moreover, perhaps he sold them to erase traces of slave-trading that could betray him to customs officials upon arrival in Providence. Although he would have had to cross the pirate-infested Caribbean to return to Providence from Paramaribo, close-range carriage guns would not have protected the *Nancy* against them.

Lastly, when Cook went to Paramaribo, he stayed either at 'Adriana''s or, more commonly, at Mrs Susannah Nobus's inn.[151] Cook may have received more than just room and board at these establishments. As Hilary Beckles has shown, female innkeepers (particularly in port cities) often doubled as brothel madames.[152] On 2 November 1796, a curious entry appears in the *Nancy*'s daybook. Cook wrote, 'Mary for Mrs Nobus: £55'. Was Mary just the servant collecting money for Mrs Nobus, or was she Mrs Nobus's slave whom Cook rented as concubine? On this latter reading, the money Cook paid Mary could have been 'for' Mrs Nobus in that it was meant to go directly to Mrs Nobus for Mary's services. In a later entry (7 December 1796), Cook noted that he '[p]aid the Washer woman for 12 Weeks @ £1.10 – £18'.[153] Like 'inn' or 'tavern', 'washerwoman' was a common euphemism that blurred the distinction between domestic and sexual services.[154] The manuscripts therefore hint at a few possible instances of prostitution and concubinage.

On the *Nancy*'s return to Rhode Island, the records are silent once again. What we do know is that news of the revolt preceded Cook. This was potentially damaging for him on three levels. At the most internal level, there was the issue of Cook's responsibility for the rebellion vis-à-vis Philip and Zachariah Allen, the *Nancy*'s owners. It is no surprise that most accounts of slave rebellions come from people other than the captains themselves,[155] for instance, the ship's doctor or the young son of the captain (too naïve perhaps to recognize the damage he could be inflicting by recounting the incident fully in writing).[156] Where the captains offered their own account, they tended to shift the blame for the rebellion away from themselves onto their 'negligent' crew.[157] This is to be expected, given that captains could potentially be penalized for their carelessness by having the lost slaves counted among their 'portion' or by suffering a loss of reputation generally.[158] Coughtry believes that there were probably many more revolts than those identified by historians. 'Captains had good reason for omitting

such occurrences from their journals and correspondence, especially if a number of lives were lost.'[159]

Cook's next concern would have been insurance.[160] Many slave ship owners purchased insurance on African voyages, although with premiums running at an average rate of 20 per cent of the value insured, seldom would the entire value of ship and cargo be insured for all three legs of a trip.[161] Coverage for slave insurrection was usually limited to five to ten per cent of the total number of slaves on board.[162] If the *Nancy* had insurance, its loss of four slaves out of 121 (a loss of 3.3 per cent) would not exceed even a maximum of five per cent. However, no insurer ever covered 'common mortality' – the loss of slaves due to negligence, accident or disease.[163] If Cook had been negligent in his management of the crew or slaves, one wonders if his insurers would attempt to avoid compensating the loss by reading the lives lost in rebellion as cases of negligence-induced 'common mortality'.[164]

Finally, news of the rebellion was also news that the *Nancy* had been slave-trading. The publicity could only attract the attention and criticism of the growing abolitionist movement, as it did when the *Salem Gazette* published its account on 28 January 1794.

It is thus hardly surprising that news of rebellions virtually always came via other ships, and that captains were reluctant to report the news to the owners themselves.[165] The three levels of exposure that Cook may have experienced (to the ship's owners, to its insurers and to abolitionists) may have damaged his reputation as a competent captain and cost him profits as well. Public exposure could also have made him a prime target for prosecution.

Thus ended the illegal 1793 slave voyage of the brig *Nancy*. A poorly timed departure against the backdrop of an Anglo-French war, a poor market for slaves and unreliable bills of exchange on the African west coast, a rebellion in which four slaves were probably killed, and Captain Brown's publicity of the incident must have made the voyage an uncomfortable one for Captain Cook. As for the circumstances of the rebellion, potential causes alone can be proposed, among them the above-average tendency of Upper Guinean Africans to rebel on slavers, the potential race-based cooperation between black crew members and enslaved blacks on the *Nancy*, and Captain Cook's failure to maintain crew discipline, which could have provided the slaves with an opportune moment for rebellion.

Gomez's two-part model proposes that there was a transition from ethnicity-based to race-based identity among African slaves. I would add that for many West Africans, there was a middle 'stop' along the way: Islam. Any or all of these three bases for a sense of identity could have acted as catalysts for the rebellion. In other words, if many of the *Nancy*'s



slaves had come from the same ethnic group, they may have been more able and inclined to unite and rebel. The same could have been true if many were Muslims. If the brig's black crew members felt a common unity with their captives on the basis of race, this too could have facilitated the insurrection. Captain Cook does not seem to have been interested in any of these factors. Nowhere in the manuscripts does he mention African ethnicity. Nor are there any references to Islam. Racial identifications of black purchasers and crew members are only initially noted in the account books, and there are no physical descriptions of the slaves (which could have reflected preferences along a colour gradient), also sometimes included at the point of sale. Perhaps Cook's indifference implies that his interest in his cargo was purely profit-oriented, falling short either of an ethnographic curiosity or a deep-seated racism. Even in this case, though, there would have been self-interested reasons for Cook to acquaint himself better with his captives – to know perhaps what to expect as far as risk of rebellion was concerned, and also to know how best to market his slaves for his target market. Had he been more aware of African ethnicity, the role of Islam in West Africa, or race, he may even have been able to prevent the rebellion. Omissions and veiled references characterize Cook's records of his illegal trading. Even so, I would venture the conclusion that, despite his considerable slaving experience, Cook may have been surprisingly sloppy not only in disciplining his crew, but also in learning more about his African captives.

## APPENDIX

### Philadephia *General Advertiser* Account of Slave Revolt on the Brig *Nancy* (11 February 1794)

*Providence January 21*

MR. WHEELER,

*Please to insert the following observations in the Chronicle, and oblige the friends of justice and humanity.*

It appears by information from Surinam, that the Brigantine Nancy, of this port, commanded by Joseph B. Cook, had arrived at that place, with a cargo of slaves from the coast of Africa; and that during the passage, they made an attempt to recover that liberty with which they were endowed by the common Parent of the Universe, and of which they could not have been deprived without the most outrageous violation of every principle of Religion, Justice, and Humanity; but in consequence of this laudable attempt to assert their natural and inalienable right, several of their number were destroyed by the captain and crew of the Brig. It may perhaps be alleged, in extenuation of the crime, that the white people only acted in self-defence; but the reply is obvious. Who were the aggressors? Who forced the wretched Africans from their native country; from all the tender and endearing attachments of Husband, Parent and Child? Who crowded them in the hold of the vessel, or as Mr Wilberforce emphatically stiles it, '*the floating shop for the sale of*

*human flesh*,' Who by such base and barbarous means, provoked them to a natural and just resistance? Should we condemn a number of Americans for rising on the crew of an Algerine cruiser? Should we not rather applaud and wish them success. May not the barbarians of Algiers retort on our African Slave-Traders, the severe rebuke of an inspired apostle, 'Thou that sayest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?' Can they who are concerned in the detestable Slave-Trade, & are thus accessory to murder, and the misery of so many of their fellow-creatures, can they enjoy the profits resulting from the blood stained traffic? Can they reflect on the tears, the groans, and the agony of the wretches whom they have reduced to such complicated sufferings, and not feel their souls harrowed with the painful remorse, but by whatever arts they may now sooth or suppress the upbraidings of conscience, the time is assuredly approaching when they will sorrowfully realize this sacred declaration 'Verily there is a GOD who judgeth in the earth, who will render to every man according to his works;' and as he hath been pleased to order civil government 'for a terror of evil doers,' surely it is incumbent on the strong arm of the national legislature to exert itself in the prevention of crimes more abhorrent than those which the Indians frequently perpetrate on the defenseless inhabitant; those savages with respect to divine revelation 'sit in darkness,' while we are indulged with the meridian splendor of gospel lights; we boast the most accurate knowledge of the rights of man, and exult in having been successful defenders of those rights; they in many instances only avenge the wrongs they have suffered, while our Slave-Traders send to a distant country, seize on the innocent and unoffensive [sic] natives, and compel them to a state of the most cruel slavery; but this abominable traffic in our own species is not only repugnant to the dictates of that revelation which informs us, that 'GOD hath made of one blood all nations,' but the feelings of humanity are shocked at the sad recital of the atrocious crimes which are inseparably connected with the odious practice; and philosophy, by the elegant pen of a Raynal, reprobates it in language too pointed to be omitted in this animadversion. 'The Highwayman (says the Abbe) attacks you, and takes your money, the Slave-Trader carries off even your person; the one invades the rights of society—the other those of nature; this certainly is the truth, and if there existed a religion which authorized only by its silence such horrors; if it did not continually denounce vengeance against the authors, and the instruments of this tyranny; if such religion existed, the minister and the altar ought to be crushed in one common ruin.'

If it should be thought that the severity of the censure contained in this publication requires an apology, the writer would borrow one from Mr. Pitt's admirable speech in the British house of commons—after describing, in terms of the most pathetic eloquence, the matchless horrors of this nefarious trade, he adds; 'I know, Sir, I state this subject with warmth! I feel it impossible for me not to do so; or if it were I should detest myself for the exercise of moderation. I cannot without suffering every feeling, and every passion that ought to rise in the cause of Humanity, to sleep within me, speak coolly upon such a subject. There is no excuse for us, feeling this infernal traffic as we do, it is the very death of justice to utter a syllable in support of it.'

HUMANITAS.

## NOTES

I am grateful to Professor Colin Palmer for his guidance and encouragement, and to Don Skemer of the Manuscripts Division of Princeton University's Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, without whom I would not have known that the Cook manuscripts existed. I am indebted to Alec Dun for his generosity in helping me to locate press reports of the *Nancy*'s revolt. Many thanks to Professors David Richardson and Gad Heuman for excellent suggestions for revision, and to the other *Slavery & Abolition* readers for their comments. Staff members of the Manuscripts Division, Princeton Department of Rare Books and Special Collections were most helpful throughout. Thanks also to Jerome Handler and Marilyn Lockhart.

1. Jay Coughtry, *The Notorious Triangle: Rhode Island and the African Slave Trade 1700–1807* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1981), p.53. In a letter to Captain Wright of the *Ann*, Captain Peleg Clarke, an experienced slaver from Newport, warned against being in Africa during the rainy season: 'Another thing, in May the rains setts in,



and lasts 'til the latter end of July, at which time there is but little trade.' Virginia Bever Platt, '"And Don't Forget the Guinea Voyage": The Slave Trade of Aaron Lopez of Newport', *William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, 32, 4 (Oct. 1975), p.613. Similarly, in 1721, a Royal African Company agent wrote to one of his merchants in Gambia: 'We are sorry to find the mortality and sickness so great amongst you, which we presumed might be occasioned by the rainy season coming on so soon after your arrival.' Colin Palmer, 'The Slave Trade, African Slavers, and the Demography of the Caribbean to 1750', in Frank Knight (ed.), *General History of the Caribbean. Vol.III: The Slave Societies of the Caribbean* (London: UNESCO Publishing, 1997), p.24.
2. The Brig *Nancy* left Providence on 29 March 1793. Cook sighted Tenerife on 28 April 1793, and arrived at Goree Island on 13 May 1793, J.B. Cook, Logbook, 62 (29 March 1793), 72 (28 April 1793), 77 (13 May 1793), Logbook and Account books of the Brig Nancy 1791–96, 4 Vols., C0199, Manuscripts Division, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
3. See *Salem Gazette*, 28 Jan. 1794, and the Philadephia *General Advertiser*, 11 Feb. 1794.
4. As Whig lawyer Cockburn remarked, 'everything was connected with the Revolution in France, which for twenty years, was, or was made, all in all, everything; not this thing or that thing, but literally everything was soaked in this event', quoted in Asa Briggs, *The Age of Improvement 1783–1867* (London: Longman, 1959), p.129.
5. See Darald D. Wax, 'The Browns of Providence and the Slave Voyage of the Brig Sally, 1764–1765', *American Neptune*, 32 (July 1972), pp.171–9. See also James F. Reilly, 'The Providence Abolition Society', *Rhode Island History*, 21, 2 (April 1962), pp.33–48.
6. The dominant currency throughout this article and the manuscripts is the Rhode Island (old tender) pound. As with the English pound, there were 100 pence or 20 shillings in a RI pound. Based on internal references of equivalence in the manuscripts, it seems that the exchange rate was RI £1 = US $0.40, (or US $1 = RI £2 10). I have made this calculation on the basis of the following entry in the Account book: 'Paramaribo Dec. 21 1793. [paid to] Harry Freeman Seaman ... Cash for Cloathing in Africa 3½ dollars (£8'15).' Account book, 14 (21 Dec. 1793).
7. Coughtry, *The Notorious Triangle*, pp.205–6.
8. Ibid., p.206.
9. For general maritime trade conditions in Rhode Island during this period, see 'The Maritime Economy', ch.2 in Peter J. Coleman, *The Transformation of Rhode Island 1790–1860* (Providence, RI: Brown University Press, 1963), pp.26–70.
10. William Ellery in Coughtry, *The Notorious Triangle*, p.231.
11. *Salem Gazette*, 28 Jan. 1794.
12. James Brown was captain of the schooner *Eunice* when he reported the rebellion on board the *Nancy*. He was probably involved in the RI–Suriname coasting trade at the time. The *Eunice*'s registration documents show that James Brown was a part owner of the ship in 1793 (the schooner was registered on 6 July 1793). If James Brown did indeed hold abolitionist views, his schooner's subsequent fate takes an ironic turn. By 21 February 1795, the *Eunice* had been sold to Samuel Wardwell and Shearjahub Bourne, both Newport merchants. Bourne was a notorious slave-trader. According to Coughtry's list of slave voyages, Bourne sponsored at least six slave voyages between 1789 and 1797, making him responsible for the enslavement of at least 829 Africans. On 1 April 1795, James Brown's old ship, the *Eunice*, left Bristol bound for Africa. Captain Hezekiah Usher left the African coast with 83 slaves. The ship was surrendered to port authorities in Newport on 1 April 1795. One wonders if this was because the vessel was unseaworthy, or because it was identified as a slaver. Works Projects Administration, *Ship Registers and Enrollments of Providence, Rhode Island 1773–1939*, 2 Vols. (Providence, RI: The National Archives Project, 1941), Vol.1, Pt.1, p.326 (entry no.1034); 'Appendix: Rhode Island Slaving Voyages, 1709–1807', in Coughtry, *The Notorious Triangle*, pp.264–71.
13. As the entirety of the *General Advertiser* report deserves attention, I have included it here as an appendix.
14. This is one of the few references (probably erroneous) to the *Nancy* as a brigantine, rather than a brig. On the differences between brigs and brigantines, see David R. MacGregor,

*Merchant Sailing Ships 1850–75: Heyday of Sail* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1984), pp.73–9.

15. *General Advertiser* [also *Aurora General Advertiser*], 11 Feb. 1794. I am grateful to Alec Dun for this reference.
16. The logbook is 84 pages long, the account book is 21 pages long, the two daybooks are 12 and 21 pages long respectively.
17. 'Appendix', in Coughtry, *The Notorious Triangle*, p.268.
18. David Eltis, Stephen D. Behrendt, David Richardson and Herbert S. Klein (eds.), *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade: A Database on CD-ROM* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), unique identity no.36597.
19. Elizabeth Donnan (ed.), *Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America*, Vol.III: *New England and the Middle Colonies* (Washington: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1932), p.358 n2; Eric Robert Taylor, 'If We Must Die: A History of Shipboard Insurrections During the Slave Trade', PhD dissertation, University of California Los Angeles, 2000, p.304. Taylor's table is the most extensive listing of shipboard slave revolts on ships of all national affiliations between 1509 and 1865. See 'Appendix C: A Chronology of Shipboard Slave Revolts', in Taylor, 'If We Must Die', pp.264–311.
20. Philip D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), pp.213–20.
21. Darald D. Wax, 'Thomas Rogers and the Rhode Island Slave Trade', *American Neptune*, 35 (July 1975), p.289.
22. Alain Pétré-Grenouilleau, *Moi, Joseph Mosneron Armateur Nantais (1748–1833): Portrait culturel d'une bourgeoisie négotiante au siècle des Lumières* (Rennes: Éditions Apogée, 1995).
23. Alain Yacou, *Journaux de bord et de traite de Joseph de Médeuil: De La Rochelle à la côte de Guinée et aux Antilles (1772–1776)* (Paris: Editions Karthala, 2001).
24. Leif Svalesen, *The Slave Ship Fredensborg*, trans. Pat Shaw and Selena Winsnes (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000). The shipwrecked slaver was recovered off the coast of Norway in 1974.
25. Robert Harms, *The Diligent: A Voyage Through the Worlds of the Slave Trade* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), pp.xiv, xviii–xix.
26. These are the logbooks of the slave ship *Mary* and the sloop *Rising Sun*, Coughtry, *The Notorious Triangle*, p.141.
27. Ibid., p.50. The case of Captain Stephen Deane, the late eighteenth-century veteran of at least seven slave voyages, is unusual, Stephen D. Behrendt, David Eltis and David Richardson, 'The Costs of Coercion: African Agency in the Pre-Modern Atlantic World', *Economic History Review*, LIV, 3 (2001), p.464.
28. First, on 22 July 1786, Cook sailed the Providence-based 60-ton Snow *America*. The *America* was owned by John Cook, possibly a relative of the captain's. It was common practice among owners of slave ships to hire a member of their own family as captain (for examples within the D'Wolf family, see Coughty, *The Notorious Triangle*, p.263). Joseph Cook had a crew of 15, and a cargo of 66 slaves on board when he left Africa, ibid., p.263. Cook's second trip is the subject of this article. As captain of the larger 110-ton brig *Nancy*, also Providence-based, Cook left that port on 30 March 1793. Cook's third slave voyage began on 23 May 1795. Cook again left Africa with a full shipment of 121 slaves, and returned to Rhode Island from Saint Thomas in the West Indies almost a full year later, on 23 April 1796, Coughtry, *The Notorious Triangle*, p.268; *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade*, unique identity no.36626. Cook's final appearances are as captain of various Rhode Island non-slaving ships between 1802 and 1811. Manuscript logs of these transatlantic voyages and US–Caribbean coasting trips exist, but a close study of them falls beyond the scope of this article. See J.B. Cook, Logs of Various Voyages 1802–1811, 4 Vols., C0199, Manuscripts Division, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library. These cover Cook's voyages from Providence to Suriname on the brig *Mary* (1802–03), his trips to Amsterdam, Liverpool, Dublin, Baltimore and Lisbon on the ship *Charlotte* (1807–08, 1810–11), and his voyage to Lisbon on an unidentified ship (1803).



29. The *Nancy* was 63 feet 2 inches long, 20 feet 4 inches wide, and 10 feet 5 inches deep. Curiously, it was not registered with the District of Providence until six years after it was built, on 13 July 1790. Registration was required for all vessels engaged in foreign trade, while those involved in the coasting trade alone required only an enrolment. Whaling and fishing ships had their trade recorded with their registration, but there is no trade listing for the Brig *Nancy*, a hint by omission of the shadowy nature of its business. The ship's owners were Providence merchants Zachariah and Philip Allen. The *Nancy* surfaced again in the Providence registration records in 1801, this time without Captain Cook or either Allen owner. It was probably not being used for slave-trading at this point.
30. Coughtry, *The Notorious Triangle*, p.77.
31. Ibid., p.78.
32. At this point, the brig was carrying edible goods (below the decks) and horses and 16 mules (on deck) to Paramaribo, Suriname. Cook sold dried herring, pork, beef, flour, tobacco and a Providence speciality, spermaceti candles (made out of whale head-matter), to colonists, plantation owners and other ships' captains. Cook bought molasses from sugar plantations, along with some coffee and sugar, for the return trip. The Daybook mentions Surinamese plantations by name, including Domburg, Ornamibo, [Condag] and [Cottenduro]. Cook traded with Captains Paine, Lockers, Tredwell, Clark, John Jenkins, [Towell], Holden and Alger. (Throughout this article, I have used square brackets to indicate unclear words in the manuscripts.)
33. The Brig *Nancy* Daybook commenced 21 June 1792, 8–9 (31 July 1792, 9 Aug. 1792).
34. The trip took one month down but two months back, and Cook spent a difficult period of 'upwards of Seven months' in Suriname. He does not explain the nature of his 'Series of Troubles'. Perhaps he is referring to a serious leak in the brig, which forced him to stop for repairs on the way home, and which may have been responsible for the spoilage of three quarters of the ship's supply of meat in storage. On Thursday 8 December 1791, Cook wrote, 'discover our vessel to Leak much more than I Expected'. The next day he noted 'vessel leak Increases'. On Saturday 10 December 1791, he indicated that 'our vessel leaks so much we shall be obliged to make some Port and Repair our Leaks'. A carpenter came on board over a week later and repaired the brig. It is possible that the leaking was responsible for the subsequent fact that '[w]e have Destroyed 3½ Barrels of Beef & Pork Since We Left Surinam 1 [Bbl] remains.' It is also possible that a mussel bed may have been the cause of the leak, and that the ship had recurring problems with mussels. On 6 January 1792, Cook noted 'the strong smell of the Bottoms like the Smell of a Muscle [sic] Bed ...', Logbook, 11–21 (7 Dec. 1791–6 Jan. 1792).
35. On Thursday 14 June 1792, Cook's log reads: 'at 3PM [we] anchord in the mouth of Commerwine River and went to the New port in the boat and [took] two soldiers one to carry the [report] and the other to Continue on board until the vessel is [entred]. Mules and horses gives us Permission to Carry the Vessel up to town without farther ceremony. Thus ends the [two] Days Journal the most Disagreable of any Part of the Passage', Logbook, 43 (14 June 1792). On the process of inspection of slaves by Dutch officials at the entrance the same river, see Johannes Menne Postma, *The Dutch in the Atlantic Slave Trade 1600–1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p.169.
36. Coughtry, *The Notorious Triangle*, p.72. Svalesen, *The Slave Ship Fredensborg*, p.105, notes that male slaves, who were considered the most dangerous, were always kept in the 'between decks' space on Danish slave ships, unlike women and children.
37. This was probably the trip Cook undertook immediately after his second slave voyage on the *Nancy* (23 May 1795–23 April 1796), 'Appendix', in Coughtry, *The Notorious Triangle*, p.268.
38. On 11 December 1796, Cook records spending RI £14 for the gauging of his cargo of 140 hogsheads (to ensure that they were full and met accepted standards). I am assuming the hogsheads were full of molasses, a product susceptible to gauging and the typical return cargo of RI vessels. Molasses was distilled into rum on a 1:1 ratio. On the final leg of a slaving trip (i.e. West Indies–Rhode Island), a ship could thus conceivably carry all the raw material necessary to produce its Africa-bound rum cargo for its next trip, Coughtry, *The Notorious Triangle*, p.197.

39. Logbook, 62 (29 March 1793).
40. The standard route in between these two endpoints included visits to Dutch forts such as Apam Fort and Fort Cormantin and to British outposts such as Winneba Fort, Tantum Fort, Bunce Island and Sierra Leone, Coughtry, *The Notorious Triangle*, p.129.
41. On Cape Coast Castle, see Albert von Danzig, *Forts and Castles of Ghana* (Accra: Sedco, 1980), esp. p.iv for a bird's-eye view of the castle over several centuries.
42. The *Mary* encountered Cook and the *Nancy* on the African coast in 1795. Captain Nathan Henry recorded the following entries: 'Thursday 31st December. Sailed for the Leeward Coast. Brig Captain Cook. Friday Jan.7th ... [anchored on north point of Wm. Island].... This Morning arrived the Brig. Capt. Cook.' Journal of the Ship *Mary* 1795–96, in Donnan, *Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America*, Vol.III, p.363.
43. On the 'White Man's Grave', see Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade*, p.282. The French slave-trader Mosneron-Dupin referred to the region as '*enfer terrestre*' (earthly hell) in his journal, quoted in Pétré-Grenouilleau, *Moi, Joseph Mosneron Armateur Nantais*, p.17. Palmer, 'The Slave Trade', p.23 reports that the Royal Africa Company's average annual death toll (for men in the company's service on the Gold Coast) was 27%. For detailed primary-source descriptions of typical afflictions suffered by white slaver crews on the coast, see Palmer, 'The Slave Trade', p.23.
44. Coughtry, *The Notorious Triangle*, p.135.
45. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade*, p.284.
46. Coughtry, *The Notorious Triangle*, p.118. Similarly, the anti-revolt tactic of mixing Africans of different ethnic backgrounds, Taylor, 'If We Must Die', p.144, probably would have required longer collection times and more complex routes, preventing a rapid exit from the coast.
47. Logbook, 62 (31 March 1793).
48. Logbook, 63 (3 April 1793).
49. Logbook, 70 (21 and 22 April 1793).
50. Logbook, 63–71 (2–25 April 1793). The crew of the *Fredensborg* caught and ate a shark soon after having left the African coast in 1767, but may not have eaten the second one they caught. The crew had already thrown one dead crew member and the body of a female slave overboard, and 'sharks that fed on human flesh were not very appetizing'. Sharks often trailed slave ships, Svalesen, *The Slave Ship Fredensborg*, pp.109–10.
51. Logbook, 71 (26 April 1793).
52. Logbook, 74 (3 May 1793).
53. Logbook, 75 (7 May 1793).
54. Logbook, 73–77 (30 April to 12 May 1793).
55. Logbook, 77 (12 May 1793).
56. Coughtry, *The Notorious Triangle*, p.105.
57. In November 1793, Sir John Jervis sailed with 7,000 men to assault the French West Indies, establishing his forces on Saint Domingue. By 1798, the British had lost almost 20,000 army and navy troops through death, discharge or desertion. Toussaint L'Ouverture's forces succeeded in expelling the British in September 1798. David Patrick Geggus, *Slavery, War, and Revolution: The British Occupation of Saint Domingue 1793–1798* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1982), pp.383–91. See pp.100–32 on the impact of the British intervention on 'the balance of power between black, white, and brown' in St Domingue. On the war between the British and the French generally, see Briggs, *The Age of Improvement*, pp.137–8. On the period of trade tensions with British colonies and the consequent American shift toward trade with Dutch, Danish and Swedish colonies, see John H. Coatsworth, 'American Trade with European Colonies in the Caribbean and South America, 1790–1812', *William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, 24, 2 (April 1967), pp.243–66.
58. Logbook, 77 (13 May 1793).
59. Logbook, 77 (14 May 1793).
60. Logbook, 78–80 (15 May–25 May 1793).
61. Surely the name *Willing Quaker* was a sarcastic jab at the abolitionists. Joseph Inikori's slaver records reveal other such provocative names like the *Accomplished Quaker* and the *Friends Goodwill*, both slave ships sailing from Liverpool in 1796, Joseph E. Inikori, 'Measuring the Unmeasured Hazards of the Atlantic Slave Trade: Documents Relating to the British Trade', *Revue Française d'Histoire d'Outre-mer*, 83 (1996), p.84.



62. Logbook, 81 (27 May 1793).
63. Many of Cook's buyers in Suriname paid by bills of exchange. Postma, *The Dutch in the Atlantic Slave Trade*, pp.263, 275, notes that this mode of payment was notoriously unreliable in Suriname because of the prevalence of absenteeism among plantation owners as well as their dependence on future monoculture sugar crops.
64. Coughtry, *The Notorious Triangle*, p.182.
65. Logbook, 81 (28 May 1793).
66. K.G. Davies, *The Royal African Company* (New York: Atheneum, 1970), p.282.
67. Logbook, 81 (28 May 1793).
68. Coughtry, *The Notorious Triangle*, p.108.
69. On its 1772–74 voyage, for instance, the *Roy Dahomet* carried a diversified cargo which included hats, firearms, pipes, knives and Indian textiles. The *Suzanne Marguerite* (1774–76) carried silk, socks, tobacco, parasols and Dutch cheese, among other items, Yacou, *Journaux de bord et de traite de Joseph de Médeuil*, pp.46–59, 236–45.
70. Coughtry, *The Notorious Triangle*, p.7. Writing about the slave-trade generally (with no special reference to Rhode Island), Palmer notes the typical slaver's wide assortment of goods: 'textiles, guns and powder, alcohol, mirrors, knives, ironware, pipes, tobacco, pots, pans, beads', Colin Palmer, 'The Cruellest Commerce', *National Geographic*, 187, 3 (Sept. 1992), p.80.
71. Logbook, 82 (3 June 1793). This reference seems confusing because Cook left Mr Horrocks on Isle de Los. Throughout the manuscripts, though, and particularly in the Account book and Daybooks, 'to' is often used in a sense synonymous with 'for'. Thus, Cook may have been delivering the loaf of sugar for, or on behalf of, Mr Horrocks.
72. For average tonnages of European slavers of various nations, see M.K. Stammers, '"Guineamen": Some Technical Aspects of Slave Ships', in Anthony Tibbles (ed.), *Transatlantic Slavery Against Human Dignity* (London: HMSO, 1994), p.39.
73. Coughtry, *The Notorious Triangle*, pp.75–6.
74. For more technical features of brigs (and brigantines), albeit from a slightly later period, see MacGregor, *Merchant Sailing Ships*, pp.73–9.
75. Joseph C. Miller, *Way of Death: Merchant Capitalism and the Angolan Slave Trade 1730–1830* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988), p.371. For a detailed discussion of ship types in the Luso-Brazilian Angolan trade, see pp.366–74. For a similar overview of the Dutch slave trade, see Postma, *The Dutch in the Atlantic Slave Trade*, pp.142–8.
76. Account book, 16 (undated).
77. By coincidence, this sum is very close to Cook's figure for the total value of the slaves, plus that of the rum being transported, minus Gompert's commission: £35,035 10, Account book, 16 (undated).
78. Account book, 16 (undated).
79. The custom applied to seamen to a limited extent, but more so to the captain, who naturally took 'the lion's share', Marcus Buford Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates, and the Anglo-American Maritime World, 1700–1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p.131. It apparently dated back to the great medieval maritime code, the Laws of Oleron (1194). This code guaranteed that the seamen 'could use part of the storage space to freight a cargo of his choice (*mareage*), or he could take a portion of the general freightage as his share of the profits from the sailing venture', J. Runyan quoted in ibid., p.130.
80. Coughtry, *The Notorious Triangle*, p.68.
81. Ibid., p.150. Although he does not seem to ultimately establish an average death rate, Philip Curtin does discuss the many factors that contributed to the number of deaths during the Atlantic crossing. See Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade*, pp.275–86.
82. Palmer, 'The Cruellest Commerce', p.87. Taylor, 'If We Must Die', p.102, sets mortality rates at 20% or more for the early eighteenth century, 10–15% by the late eighteenth century, and 5–10% for the nineteenth century.

83. The slave-trader Mosneron-Dupin describes a revolt begun by female slaves on the British slaver, the *Barry*, Pétré-Grenouilleau, *Moi, Joseph Mosneron Armateur Nantais*, p.72. See Taylor's discussion of the role of women and children, Taylor, 'If We Must Die', pp.154–61.
84. As Samuel Waldo wrote to Captain Samuel Rhodes in 1734, 'For your safety as well as mine, you'll have the needful guard over your Slaves, and put not too much Confidence in the Women nor Children lest they happen to be Instrumental to your being surprised which may be fatall.' Lorenzo J. Greene, 'Mutiny on the Slave Ships', *Phylon*, 5 (1944), p.347.
85. Behrendt, Eltis and Richardson, 'The Costs of Coercion', p.461.
86. Harvey Wish, 'American Slave Insurrections Before 1861', *Journal of Negro History*, 22, 3 (July 1937), p.302. Svalesen, *The Slave Ship Fredensborg*, p.119, notes the striking absence of any explicit mention of sexual contact between crew members and female slaves. He speculates that an incident in which an African woman was seen carrying a candle in the passage to the cabin probably involved sexual relations. Harms's French sources suggest that it was customary for each officer to choose a female slave to serve him 'at the table and in bed'. He also refers to two reported incidents of rape and abuse so severe that the sale value of the female victims (one only eight to ten years old) dropped significantly. These incidents seem to have been recorded because they affected the voyages' profitability, Harms, *The Diligent*, pp.312–13. For a discussion of sexual abuse of female slaves by crew members (and the consequent shame and frustration presumably felt by male slaves), see Taylor, 'If We Must Die', pp.97–9, 139–40.
87. Coughtry, *The Notorious Triangle*, p.152.
88. Behrendt, Eltis and Richardson, 'The Costs of Coercion', p.463.
89. I have borrowed Colin Palmer's list of ethnicities typically transported from the Senegambia and Sierra Leone, Palmer, 'The Slave Trade', p.22.
90. A group of Liverpool merchants instructed the master of their Gambia-bound ship to 'keep a watchfull Eye over your Slaves to prevent any insurrections, which has too often been the Case, especially amongst those of Gambia', quoted in David Richardson, 'Shipboard Revolts, African Authority, and the Atlantic Slave Trade', *William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, LVIII, 1 (Jan. 2001), p.80.
91. Ibid., p.76. Behrendt, Eltis and Richardson, 'The Costs of Coercion', p.457, confirms this.
92. Gomez is drawing upon the work of Gwendolyn Midlo Hall and Allan D. Austin. Michael Gomez, *Exchanging our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), p.68.
93. Ibid., pp.59–60. On Muslim slaves in the Americas, see ch.4, 'Prayin' on duh Bead: Islam in Early America', pp.59–87; Allan D. Austin, *African Muslims in Antebellum America: Transatlantic Stories and Spiritual Struggles* (New York: Routledge, 1997); Sylviane Diouf, *Servants of Allah: African Muslims Enslaved in the Americas* (New York: New York University Press, 1998); João José Reis, *Slave Rebellion in Brazil: The Muslim Uprising of 1835 in Bahia* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993); and Robert Brent Turner, *Islam in the African-American Experience* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997).
94. Reis, *Slave Rebellion in Brazil*, pp.127–8.
95. African wars often meant more business for the slave-trade. As a white trader at Cape Coast Castle noted in 1712, '[t]he battle is expected shortly, after which 'tis hoped the trade will flourish', Palmer, 'The Cruellest Commerce', p.81.
96. Writing on the Haitian slave revolution, John Thornton notes that 'a great many of the slaves had served in African armies prior to their enslavement and arrival in Haiti. Indeed, African military service had been the route by which many, if not most, of the recently arrived Africans became slaves in the first place, since so many people had been enslaved as a result of war. Under these circumstances, their military performance may not be as remarkable as historians have assumed. As ex-soldiers and veterans of African wars, they may have needed little more than the opportunity to serve again, in a rather different sort of war in America', John K. Thornton, 'African Soldiers in the Haitian Revolution', in Verene A. Shepherd and Hilary McD. Beckles (eds.), *Caribbean Slavery in the Atlantic World: A Student Reader* (Princeton: Marcus Wiener, 2000), pp.933–4. For a similar account of a

rebellion on a French ship by African soldiers, see Richardson, 'Shipboard Revolts', p.83. See also Taylor, 'If We Must Die', pp.124–6.

97. On the wave of Islamic reform movements aimed at establishing Muslim political control in the western Sudan, see John E. Flint (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Africa Vol.5: from circa 1790 to circa 1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), p.202.
98. See 'Vesey's Challenge', ch.1 in Gomez, *Exchanging our Country Marks*, pp.1–16.
99. Taylor, 'If We Must Die', pp.161–3, offers several instances of black crew members aiding slave revolts.
100. Coughtry, *The Notorious Triangle*, p.56.
101. The white crew members mentioned are 'John Allen Seaman', 'William Kennedy Seaman', 'Harry Freeman Seaman', 'James Randall Seaman', Timothy Benson and James Webber, Account book, 12–15 (29 Nov. 1793–21 Dec. 1793), 18 (undated).
102. Account book, 10–11 (15 Nov. 1793).
103. Account book, 18 (undated).
104. 1792 Daybook (June–Nov. 1792), 13 (13 Sept. 1792).
105. See 'Free Sailors and the Struggle with Slavery', ch.7 in W. Jeffrey Bolster, *Black Jacks: African American Seamen in the Age of Sail* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), pp.190–214; Martha S. Putney, 'Black Merchant Seamen of Newport, 1803–1865: A Case Study in Foreign Commerce', *Journal of Negro History*, 60, 3 (1975), p.160.
106. Putney, p.158.
107. Ibid., p.167.
108. Gomez, *Exchanging our Country Marks*, p.1.
109. Bolster, *Black Jacks*, p.193.
110. Ibid., p.193; Gomez, *Exchanging our Country Marks*, p.2.
111. Bolster, *Black Jacks*, p.194.
112. Plans for a slave rebellion were betrayed to the captain and crew of the *Mary* by a slave acting as temporary crew member, 'Journal of the *Mary*', in Donnan, *Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America*, Vol.III, pp.374–5. A similar incident occurred on the Danish ship, the *Fredensborg*, Svalesen, *The Slave Ship Fredensborg*, pp.114–15. Taylor, 'If We Must Die', pp.174–8, offers further examples. On the other hand, Darold D. Wax, 'Negro Resistance to the Early American Slave Trade', *Journal of Negro History*, 51, 1 (Jan. 1966), p.9, cites another revolt which occurred precisely because the captain, having lost much of his crew to sickness, resorted to using slaves as seamen.
113. Coughtry, *The Notorious Triangle*, p.139; Richardson, 'Shipboard Revolts', p.75; and Taylor, 'If We Must Die', pp.109–11, 114–16. On a 'momentary laxity in supervision' on board the *Mary* that may have facilitated the 1708 rebellion, see Palmer, 'The Slave Trade', p.31.
114. Logbook, 9 (27 April 1791).
115. Logbook, 44 (22 Nov. 1792).
116. Logbook, 44 (22 Nov. 1792). Cook's behaviour is in striking contrast to Captain Henry's swift and firm treatment of insubordination on the *Mary*: 'Saturday April 23d ... James Aburn detected by the Capt. Beating one of the slaves with a Rope, Which Capt. Henry went to Correct him for and Aburn turned upon him and struck him four times, also bit his finger. Upon which the Capt. Ordered Aburn to be brought aft of the Barricado tyed his hands to the After Main Strouds and gave him some stripes with a Codline. Then Calld all hands aft, also told them he would not let Aburn loose unless they would become bound by their word, for his future good behaviour. And they all Unanimously Agreed too, with their Consent it was done.' 'Journal of the Ship *Mary* 1795–6', in Donnan, *Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America*, Vol.III, p.371.
117. Logbook, 45 (23 Nov. 1792).
118. See Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, pp.215–17. The *Fredensborg*'s Captain Ferentz prescribed 50 lashes of the cat-o'-nine-tails for the 'minor offence' of theft by a crew member. The guilty party stole pork and butter on several occasions because he was hungry, Svalesen, *The Slave Ship Fredensborg*, p.118.
119. Logbook, 45 (23 Nov. 1792); 1792 Daybook, 21 (23 Nov. 1792).
120. Captain Harding of the *Robert*, referring to the 1721 revolt led by an African named Captain

Tomba, in Palmer, 'The Cruellest Commerce', p.88. See also Wish, 'American Slave Insurrections Before 1861', p.300; Wax, 'Negro Resistance to the Early American Slave Trade', p.9; also Daniel P. Mannix and Malcolm Cowley, *Black Cargoes: A History of the Atlantic Slave Trade 1518–1865* (New York: Viking, 1962), pp.107–8. For a primary account confirming this view, see Francis Moore's statement in Palmer, 'The Slave Trade', p.30.

121. Coughtry, *The Notorious Triangle*, pp.150–1, 157.
122. Harms, *The Diligent*, p.315.
123. Behrendt, Eltis and Richardson, 'The Costs of Coercion', pp.464–5. Richardson makes the same point in an earlier article, 'Shipboard Revolts', p.75.
124. In the revolt on the British slave ship *Barry*, the ship's slaves gained control of the ship and directed it back to the Bissagos Islands with the help of the only white crew member kept alive. Upon arrival, however, they found themselves sold back into slavery by the island's inhabitants, Pétré- Grenouilleau, *Moi, Joseph Mosneron Armateur Nantais*, p.72. Taylor, 'If We Must Die', pp.200–1, offers further examples.
125. For two early examples of this (in 1703 and 1705), see Palmer, 'The Slave Trade', p.32. See also Taylor, 'If We Must Die', pp.166, 178–82.
126. See 'Journal of the Ship *Mary* 1795–6', in Donnan, *Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America*, Vol.III, pp.374–5.
127. Ibid., p.369.
128. For a quasi-fictional account of the aftermath of a successful slave revolt, see Herman Melville's *Benito Cereno*, in which an American ship captain boards a slave ship which, unknown to him, is actually controlled by its slaves. He meets the ship's captain, unaware that the captain's alleged personal slave is in fact the one in command of the ship. Allan Austin comments that Melville's African characters were probably Muslim, Austin, *African Muslims in Antebellum America*, p.13. Taylor, 'If We Must Die', pp.200–5, describes the actual events that inspired *Benito Cereno*: the revolt off the coast of Chile on the Spanish ship *Tryal* on 27 December 1804 and the visit almost two months later by Amaso Delano, captain of the American ship *Perseverance*.
129. For a primary account of life in eighteenth-century Suriname from the Dutch perspective, see Richard Price and Sally Price (eds.), *Stedman's Surinam: Life in an 18th-century Slave Society* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), pp.85–97, 125–50. See also ch.8, 'The Dutch Plantation Colonies under WIC Monopoly 1616–1738', in Postma, *The Dutch in the Atlantic Slave Trade*, pp.174–200; and James A. Rawley, *The Transatlantic Slave Trade: A History* (New York: Norton, 1981), pp.88, 97–8. On credit problems in Suriname due to dependence on the colony's sugar and coffee crop, see Postma, *The Dutch in the Atlantic Slave Trade*, pp.272–6.
130. Account book, 12 (29 Nov. 1793).
131. Account book, 15 (21 Dec. 1793).
132. Account book, 15 (21 Dec. 1793).
133. On Royal African Company slave sales by auction during the late seventeenth century, see David W. Galenson, *Traders, Planters, and Slaves: Market Behaviour in Early English America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp.81–5.
134. For example, on 30 October, P.C. Van Stuyvesant bought '7 men slaves at £625 [each]' and '5 women slaves at £625 [each]' from Cook, Account book, 2 (29 Oct. 1793).
135. On 30 October, Cook sold seven male slaves for £625 each. A month later, on 29 November, he sold another three for £415 each. By mid-December, the price of male slaves was half what it had been in late October. Cook sold three male slaves for £333.33 each (totaling £1000), Account book, 12 (29 Nov. 1793).
136. Palmer, 'The Slave Trade', p.22.
137. Palmer, 'The Cruellest Commerce', p.76.
138. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade*, pp.156, 208. For a thorough discussion of slave buyers' ethnic preferences among slaves, see pp.155–62.
139. Account book, 1–14 (29 Oct. 1793–21 Dec. 1793).
140. Gwendolyn Midlo Hall identifies 'Sénégal' slaves as Wolof, Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana: The Development of Afro-Creole Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992), p.40.



141. 'Manuscript of 24 pages pertaining to the Sale at Auction of a Sugar Plantation Content, Animals and Numerous Slaves Contemporary Copy Oct.24, 1810 Paroisse Saint Jean Baptiste, Louisiana More than 40 Slaves with Description and Price of Each', in Francis C. Brown Collection on Slavery in America 1779–1868, C0605, file 1, Manuscripts Division, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.
142. Palmer, 'The Cruellest Commerce', p.77.
143. In *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade*, the point of embarkation on the African coast (often a region) is available for 15,493 of the 27,233 voyages (57%). The fact that the frequency of ethnic identifications is not indicated suggests that such information was uncommon in slave voyage records. See Table 1: Select Summary of Information Contained in the Trans-Atlantic Slave Voyage Data Set, in ibid., 'Introduction'. The work of Galenson and Davies on Royal African Company records suggest that age was a more important and consistently recorded factor than ethnicity or geographic point of departure. See Galenson, *Traders, Planters, and Slaves*, p.114; and Davies, *The Royal African Company*, pp.299–300. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade*, p.156, notes Donnan's conclusion that certain markets (e.g. South Carolina) seem to have been more interested in ethnic origins than others (e.g. Virginia). The ethnic or geographical origins of the captives on Joseph Crassous's *Roy Dahomet* do not seem to have been recorded, unlike on his later ship, the *Suzanne Marguerite*, where their geographical origins are noted, Yacou, *Journaux de bord et de traite de Joseph de Médeuil*, pp.134–6, 246.
144. 1792 Daybook, 2–12 (24 June–3 Sept. 1792). The name of 'Betty Van Cammel' is strangely similar to that of Cook's preferred Paramaribo physician, Dr Kammel. One wonders if this is simply coincidence, or if the one could be a misspelled version of the other, and if there was thus some connection between the two. Betty could have been the daughter of Dr Kammel and a black or mulatto woman, for instance.
145. 1792 Daybook, 4 (6 July 1792), 7 (23 July 1792), and 21 (23 Nov. 1792).
146. 'Peter (Negro Cooper) D'o to Cash—£10', 1792 Daybook, 13 (13 Sept. 1792).
147. 'Brig Nancy D'o to Peters bill for Coopering', 1792 Daybook, 20 (29 Nov. 1792); 'Cooper Peter to Cash—£1.1796', 1796 Daybook, 5 (26 Oct. 1796).
148. Account book, 14 (21 Dec. 1793).
149. Richardson, 'Shipboard Revolts', p.73, refers to 'swivel guns' as a special anti-rebellion investment made by slaver captains and owners. Svalesen, *The Slave Ship Fredensborg*, p.106, notes that 'swivel guns' were usually loaded with peas to prevent serious injury, although they could be loaded with musket shot if need be. The French slave ship *Diligent* was equipped with two swivel guns, Harms, *The Diligent*, p.xi. Palmer includes a primary account that mentions 'quarter-deck guns, pointing on the deck thence' in 1693–94, a full century before Cook's voyage on the *Nancy*, Thomas Phillips in Palmer, 'The Cruellest Commerce', p.88.
150. In a rebellion on board the sloop *Little George* on 1 June 1730, the slaves in fact used the ship's carriage gun to fire down into the cabin, where the captain and crew had taken refuge. The blast 'blew the Scuttle all to pieces', but no one was injured, Greene, 'Mutiny on the Slave Ships', p.351.
151. For ten days' stay, Joseph Cook paid Adriana £25, or £2 10 per day, 1796 Daybook, 6 (2 Nov. 1796)]. For 100 days' stay, he paid Susannah Nobus £125, or £1 5 per day, Account book, 9 (5 Nov. 1793).
152. Hilary McD. Beckles, 'Property Rights in Pleasure: The Marketing of Enslaved Women's Sexuality', in Shepherd and Beckles, *Caribbean Slavery in the Atlantic World*, pp.694, 696.
153. 1796 Daybook, 10 (7 Dec. 1796).
154. Beckles, 'Property Rights in Pleasure', p.696.
155. Palmer, 'The Slave Trade', p.30, notes that it is doubtful that all or even most mutinies on Royal Africa Company slavers were reported to the company itself.
156. See Greene, 'Mutiny on the Slave Ships', p.352, for a rebellion account by Dr John Bell, physician on board the *Thames* (in a letter to John Fletcher of London, 15 Dec. 1776); and p.350, for an account by the young son of the *Felicity*'s Captain William Fairfield, writing to his mother (his father was killed in the rebellion of April 1789).
157. For examples, see Coughtry, *The Notorious Triangle*, pp.156–7.

158. Taylor, 'If We Must Die', pp.4, 256.
159. Coughtry, *The Notorious Triangle*, p.152.
160. For a discussion of the many links between the slave-trade and the insurance business in Britain, see Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1944), pp.104–5. On the insurance of the slave-trade in late eighteenth-century France, see Yacou, *Journaux de bord et de traite de Joseph de Médeuil*, pp.62–4.
161. For instances of slaver captains arranging insurrection insurance policies, see Wish, 'American Slave Insurrections Before 1861', p.302. Harms reports far lower premium rates in France during the *Diligent*'s 1731–32 voyage. French insurers charged rates of 6–8%. These were comparatively higher than the same insurers' rate for non-slave cargoes (2.25–3.25%), but far lower than Rhode Island rates, Harms, *The Diligent*, p.84.
162. Coughtry, *The Notorious Triangle*, pp.98–9. In some cases, extra insurance could be purchased at a higher premium, Behrendt, Eltis and Richardson, 'The Costs of Coercion', p.468 n29.
163. Coughtry, *The Notorious Triangle*, p.93. Harms's French insurers effectively only covered the death of slaves who had drowned during storms or been killed in naval battles. They considered death by disease and despair to be natural and thus not covered by insurance. Similarly, they would not cover losses incurred by slave revolt. Slaving captains likened revolts to naval warfare, arguing that they ought to be covered. But insurers attributed revolts to captains' negligence. Harms, *The Diligent*, p.84.
164. On insurrection insurance law, see the English cases of *Jones v Schmoll*, 1 Term R. 130 n., 1785; and *Farmer v Legg*, 7 Term R. 186, May 1797, both in Helen Tunncliff Catterall, *Judicial Cases Concerning American Slavery and the Negro*, 5 Vols. (Buffalo, New York: William S. Hein and Co., 1998), Vol.I, pp.19, 22. The Louisiana case of *Lockett v Merchants Insurance Co* is interesting for its adoption of the English approach to insurrection insurance law: 'we have adopted the English law, according to which an insurance on slaves protects the assured against losses ... from mutiny ... unless ... otherwise excepted', 10 Rob. La. 339, March 1845, in ibid., Vol.III, p.568. For slave trade insurance cases generally, see the Louisiana case of *Hunter, Murphy, and Talbot v Insurance Co*, 11 La. An. 139, Feb. 1856, in ibid., Vol.III, p.642; and the New York case of *Dickey v The United Insurance Company*, 11 Johnson 358, Aug. 1814, in ibid., Vol.IV, p.366. See also the BBC film, *A Matter of Insurance* (New York: Time-Life Multimedia, 1977).
165. Wax, 'The Browns of Providence', p.177.