THE grey dawn light on the morning of May 9, 1782, revealed to the masthead lookout of the Continental frigate *Deane* a strange sail on the horizon. Even at a distance, he guessed that the vessel with the raked-back masts to leeward was a Bermudian privateer. This late in the War of Independence, only fast runners, privateers, and warships cruised the waters off the Carolinas. She would bring welcome prize money to the *Deane*'s crew, rounding out a highly successful cruise. Capture was almost certain, since she was caught on a lee shore with nowhere to run and her sixteen six-pound cannon were no match for the frigate's twenty-eight twelve-pounders. Trapped and out-gunned, Captain George Kidd struck his colors, and the Bermudian privateer *Regulator* fell prize to the United States navy.¹

The men of the *Deane* were no doubt amazed to find that seventy of the seventy-five-man crew on the *Regulator* were black slaves. Kidd and his four officers were the only white men on board. A further surprise occurred at the vice admiralty court trial of the *Regulator* when, breaking with precedent, the Massachusetts justices offered the slaves among the crew their freedom rather than condemn them, as forfeited chattel, to be sold at auction. To a man, the black Bermudians declined the offer and asked instead to be sent to their island home as prisoners of war on the next flag-of-truce. Rather than embrace the freedom offered to them by this new republic, they chose to return to Bermuda and slavery. Contemporary Bostonians and modern readers alike might puzzle over the seemingly incongruous choice of the *Regulator*'s black sailors. To understand their decision requires a close look at their complex motives, embedded in the structure of Bermuda's maritime community, its male workforce, and centuries of historic development of slavery on the island.²

Nearly six hundred miles to the east of the North Carolina coast, the island of Bermuda maintains a lone outpost in the midst of the wide North Atlantic. Neither American nor Caribbean, this ancient British colony has escaped the attention of most colonial historians, a neglect perhaps owing to its small size and anomalous location.³ Far from marginal, Bermuda lay at the crossroads of the Atlantic world in the age of sail, when one contemporary claimed that nine out of ten vessels sailing between the Caribbean and Europe passed within fifty miles of the island. It was the most central location in England's American empire, roughly equidistant from all the colonies in a broad thousand-mile arc from Newfoundland to Antigua (see Figure III on page 584). The Gulf Stream to the west, the northeast trade winds to the south, and the Westerlies to the north enabled vessels to sail easily to and from Bermuda. Its location was a vital asset in an age when people, information, and trade traveled only as fast as wind and
waves allowed. 4

One of Europe's few true discoveries in the New World, Bermuda was uninhabited until the Virginia-bound survivors of the shipwrecked Sea Venture reached its shores in 1609. During a nine-month sojourn, the English discovered that the island, long thought by the Spanish to be haunted and called "the Isle of Devils," was a healthy and fertile paradise with considerable potential as a colony. Accounts of the "wracke and redemption" of the Sea Venture's company inspired William Shakespeare to pen The Tempest and the Virginia Company to dispatch six hundred settlers between 1612 and 1615 to fortify and colonize the island. A separate joint-stock venture, the Somer Island Company, was chartered in 1615 to assume administration of the colony and sent over another thousand settlers over the next seven years. By 1625, almost all of the island's twenty square miles were under cultivation (see Figure I), and the infrastructure of a settled colony was largely in place: a ring of forts and an organized militia to guard the coast, nine parishes tended increasingly by Puritan ministers, an elected assembly to pass laws, private land ownership, and impressive tobacco exports at a time when the price of that commodity was still high. While Virginia's settlers struggled to survive Indian massacres, famine, and astonishingly high mortality rates, Bermudians enjoyed good health, peace, and prosperity. 5

Bermuda owed much of its prosperity to the African black and Indian laborers whom the Somer Island Company imported from the West Indies, for they taught the English how successfully to cure tobacco for export. With the arrival of "one Indian and a Negroe" in the Edwin in August 1616, Bermuda gained the dubious distinction of being the first English colony to import African labor, fully three years before Africans arrived in Virginia. Few of the estimated 100 or more black arrivals before 1623 were apparently African-born; most were taken by English privateers from Spanish colonies in the Caribbean, bore Spanish names, and taught planters to make their tobacco "in the Spanish manner." More accurately termed "Atlantic creoles" than Africans, Bermuda's first blacks occupied an ambiguous legal status between slavery and limited servitude. They formed families and quickly established a demographically successful population. By the 1640s, however, they and their descendants were consigned to a perpetual and inheritable state of servitude. 6
Figure I: Eighteenth-century Bermuda, engraving by Herman Moll, from John Oldmixon, *The British Empire in America; Containing the History of the Discovery, Settlement, Progress and State of the British Colonies on the Continent and Islands of America*, 2d ed. (London, 1741; orig. pub. 1708), vol. 1, opposite page 456.
Between 1625 and 1684, there was little white or black migration to the fully settled and densely populated colony. Three generations of Bermudians came to maturity in virtual isolation from England and Africa as the population increased from 1,600 in 1625 to 8,000 in 1679, making it one of the two most densely populated colonies in English America. Natural increase and a small trickle of around 300 blacks and Indians, mostly from the Caribbean, over the ensuing fifty years swelled the colony's enslaved population. By the late 1660s, colonial officials complained that there were more slaves than could profitably be employed. In 1676, Bermuda governor Sir John Heydon banned the future importation of black and Indian slaves at a time when colonies elsewhere were clamoring for a greater supply. Heydon also exiled the island's tiny free black, mulatto, and Indian population by ordering them to leave the island within six months or be re-enslaved. This order, irregularly invoked into the nineteenth century, sought to conflate race with legal status by eliminating free nonwhites and succeeded in keeping Bermuda's free black population small until the eve of abolition in 1834. Despite the deportation and the import ban, the island's black population continued to grow, reaching 1,737 in 1684 to compose a little under a quarter of Bermuda's inhabitants. By the late seventeenth century, Bermuda's slave population was made up almost entirely of island-born creoles, the children and grandchildren of the 1616–1619 arrivals who were owned in small numbers and integrated into the majority of white households.

Like its population, Bermuda's economy also grew more diverse over the seventeenth century. White and black Bermudians cultivated tobacco exclusively until the late 1620s, when a depression in price prompted islanders to diversify into raising livestock and growing provisions for export to other English colonies. During the English Civil War and Commonwealth periods, the company's Puritan leadership was too distracted by events in England to curtail Bermuda's modest intercolonial trade, but after the Restoration it aggressively reasserted its authority over the colony in order to revive the exclusive cultivation of tobacco, which by then yielded little profit to Bermuda's planters but earned the company a steady revenue through duties. To that end, the company demanded that Bermuda planters restore tobacco acreage to pre-1633 levels, confined the island's trade to vessels licensed by it, and banned shipbuilding in order to stop Bermudians from directly marketing their produce abroad. The disgruntled colonists joined forces with Perient Trott, a London merchant and renegade company member, to launch a legal attack on the company's charter. In what turned out to be the opening salvo of Charles II's judicial battle to rein in England's American colonies, Bermudians ultimately succeeded in dissolving the company after a five-year *quo warranto* trial. In 1684, the government of Bermuda reverted to the crown.

The dissolution of the Somer Island Company was a watershed in the history of the colony. Free from company trade restrictions, Bermudians abandoned tobacco agriculture and took to the sea in pursuit of commerce. Initially driven by the need to
market island-grown produce in West Indian and North American colonies, Bermudian mariners quickly learned that carrying freight and speculative trading were far more profitable than producing trade goods. Shipbuilding, vital for expanding and maintaining the island's merchant fleet, demanded timber and prompted Bermudians to reforest their tobacco fields and search abroad for iron, canvas, wood, and other necessary materials. Once entrenched, shipbuilding and shipping resulted in a self-perpetuating, interdependent system in which shipping imports fed shipyards that, in turn, produced the vessels needed for the carrying trade. Bermuda's maritime economy wedded her people to sustained intercourse with a wider Atlantic world and dispelled the relative isolation characteristic of the island's company-period history.9

The economic shift from field to sea was no less than a "maritime revolution" that fundamentally transformed the island's society and landscape. From 1685 to 1700, Bermuda's annual tobacco exports fell from more than half a million pounds to fewer than ten thousand. In the same period, the island's merchant fleet rose from a handful to more than seventy vessels. Taking advantage of their island's advantageous location, Bermuda's first generation of mariners profited from connecting emerging regional economies in North America with the wealthy sugar-producing islands of the Caribbean. Freighting cargoes for other colonial merchants and buying goods on speculation enabled Bermuda to prosper far more than the older tobacco economy had allowed, and the island's extensive tramp trade made Bermudians among the best-informed denizens of the North Atlantic. Bermudians also found opportunity at the unsettled margins of empire, cutting logwood at the Bay of Honduras and raking salt in the Turks Islands, Tortola, and Saltortuga. Harvesting salt figured heavily in Bermuda's economic success, for in an age without refrigeration, salting was the chief means of preserving meat and fish. The high seasonal demand for salt at autumn slaughter time in the southern colonies annually netted Bermudians considerable capital, which they invested and supplemented with freight and trade profits during the rest of the year. Other maritime pursuits—wrecking, whaling, and privateering—brought a few lucky mariners overnight fortunes, but salt raking and the carrying trade were the mainstays of Bermuda's maritime economy in the century before the American Revolution. Less than a generation after the fall of the Somer Island Company, Bermudians succeeded in departing radically from the predominantly commodities-based economies typical of England's other colonies and forged a new one based on manufacturing ships and rendering commercial services. The maritime revolution transformed Bermuda into a cosmopolitan cultural crossroads, a product of the island's extensive integration into intercolonial and international exchange networks.10

The Bermudian fleet that enabled this Atlantic-wide commercial expansion was chiefly composed of the internationally renowned Bermuda sloop (see Figure II), supplemented by a lesser number of brigantines and schooners. On the eve of the maritime transition in 1680, Bermuda owned only fourteen vessels. Seven years later this number had grown to forty-two, and by 1700, the island's fleet included sixty sloops, six brigantines, and four ships. In 1716, all ninety-two Bermuda-registered vessels were sloops, and by 1750 the size of the fleet had grown and diversified to 115 vessels: eighty-one sloops, fourteen schooners, eighteen brigantines, and two others. The speed of the Bermuda sloop made it a highly sought-after carrier whose masters...
found ready customers in ports abroad, especially during wartime. The flexibility of the rig allowed it to sail in wind conditions that kept square-riggers at anchor, and the shallow draft of the typical Bermudian hull could navigate over sandbars that stopped larger vessels and up rivers to reach markets deep in the North American interior. The durable, native Bermuda cedar from which the sloops were built was highly resistant to rot and marine borers, giving Bermudian vessels a lifespan of twenty years and more even in the worm-infested waters of the Chesapeake and the Caribbean. The Bermuda sloop, in short, was wonderfully adapted to overcoming many of the physical and geographic obstacles in America's intercolonial trade, a factor that played no small part in the island's success.

Growing fleets require greater numbers of mariners to man them. One consequence of the maritime revolution was that slave labor shifted from performing diverse agricultural tasks to skilled artisanal crafts. A few male slaves had fished, hunted whales, and salvaged wrecks in local waters during the company period, and these early maritime slaves were among the first recruited by Bermudian masters embarking on intercolonial trade. Other male slaves, particularly boys, learned seamanship when their owners eschewed planting and took to the sea. A third group became sawyers, joiners, caulkers, blacksmiths, and shipwrights and formed the backbone of the colony's shipbuilding labor force. As more and more slaves were integrated into the maritime economy, the shipping fleet swelled and the island prospered from its increased trade. From a white perspective, the shift enabled white masters who went to sea to use their previously underemployed male slaves more productively, and as the economic base shifted from the limited productivity of land to the open-ended potential of commerce, the labor of black Bermudians became more vital to the success of the colonial economy.
The integration of slaves into the maritime labor force was gradual, however, for there were great risks involved in using slaves as sailors, not the least of which was the opportunity to run away in foreign ports. In 1700, Edward Randolph estimated that Bermuda's fleet was manned by 170 masters, 400 white sailors, and 100 black, mulatto, and Indian slaves, revealing that roughly one in five sailors was a slave and that roughly one in five adult male slaves was a deep-water sailor.\textsuperscript{14} A detailed crew list kept between August 1708 and July 1709 bears this ratio out: of the 102 clearing vessels that list crews, sixty-three departed with one or more black sailors (62 percent). A total of ninety enslaved and two free black men were among a total workforce of 655 sailors and masters (roughly one in seven). More than half of the listed slaves belonged to owners, masters, or crew members of the ships on which they served. At least twenty-four slaves belonged to owners of vessels, while another twenty-seven accompanied their owners to sea and worked alongside them. Widows
sent an additional nine slaves to sea to earn wages for their support. The remaining slaves were presumably hired by captains and shipowners from friends, neighbors, and relatives in the colony or, in the case of the two freedmen, through direct negotiation. The ratio of black to white sailors doubtless increased after July 1712, when the Bermuda Council limited the size of white crews but allowed "as many negroes or slaves as [masters] shall think fit" in order to keep a sufficient militia on the island to repel a feared French invasion.15  

The increasing importance of salt raking to the Bermudian commercial system further expanded the employment of slave sailors. In 1725, Governor John Hope explained to the Board of Trade that "all vessels clear out with a number of mariners sufficient to navigate the vessel anywhere [four to six for most sloops], but they generally take three to four slaves besides . . . [and] go a-gathering of salt at Turks Island, etc. When they then arrive, the white men are turn'd ashoar to rake salt . . . for 10 or 12 months on a stretch [while] the master with his vessel navigated by Negroes during that time goes a Marooning—fishing for turtles, diving upon wrecks, and sometimes trading with pyrates. If the vessel happens to be lucky upon any of these accounts, Curaçao, St. Eustatia, St. Thomas or the French Islands are the ports where they always are well received without any questions asked, and if a good price is offered, the vessel generally goes with the cargo. If not, they return and take in their white sailors with salt from the Turks Islands and under cover of their old clearings from hence they proceed to some of the Northern Plantations" to sell their cargo of salt. Although on paper the typical Bermuda sloop had a majority of white seamen, in reality it was often manned entirely by a slave crews under the command of only a single white master for most of the year while white sailors raked salt on remote Caribbean islands. Ironically, the vulnerability of the Turks Islands to French and Spanish invasion resulted in Bermuda's use of free white labor in the arduous drudgery of raking salt while slaves were increasingly attuned to skilled shipboard work.16  

By the 1720s, the number of slaves regularly employed by Bermuda's merchant fleet had sharply risen, prompting a debate over the nationality of black and Indian slaves. The Navigation Acts mandated that at least three quarters of the crew of British vessels must be subjects of the crown. Bermudians considered their slaves as such and manned their vessels accordingly, in many cases with a black majority, but naval officers in other British ports viewed Bermuda's maritime employment of slaves in a different light and occasionally seized sloops for violating the British manning quota. The issue came before the Board of Trade in 1725 when Robert Dinwiddie, Bermuda's collector of customs, seized the sloop William for smuggling and for having a crew of one white and three black seamen. In the William's defense, Provost Marshal George Tucker protested that "it has been a long time customary . . . to clear out negroes as sailors" and offered their regular participation in the island's militia as service to the crown. Other Bermudian masters cited cases where they had cleared ports in Bristol and London with substantial black crews unmolested. The ship-owning judges of Bermuda's Vice Admiralty Court understandably acquitted the vessel but Dinwiddie appealed to London for justice. Based largely on their military service, the Board of Trade deemed Bermudian slaves to be British subjects—at least as far as the Navigation Acts were concerned—and upheld the Bermuda court's
decision. With official recognition of Bermudian slaves as British sailors, masters increased their use of slaves aboard ship with confidence. By the 1740s, blacks accounted for at least one quarter of the sailors on virtually every sloop. A 1743 Royal navy list of the racial makeup of vessels in Kingston Harbor reveals that at least half of the crews of the four Bermudian vessels in port were black and that Captain Joseph Bascome was the sole white man on his sloop *Royal Ranger*, manned by eight slaves. In 1770, Governor George Bruere claimed that many Bermuda sloops were navigated "by [a white] captain and mate and all the rest of the hands [are] Negroes." A census taken four years later lists 572 white and 481 black Bermudians away at sea manning the island's fleet of 200 vessels, but these figures do not include the number of seamen then on the island, nor do they take into account that many of the white "seamen" were actually in the Turks and Caicos Islands raking salt. On the eve of the American Revolution, slave sailors formed the backbone of Bermuda's merchant fleet. At least 45 percent of Bermuda's sailors were slaves, representing 38 percent or more of the adult male slave population.

The incorporation of black Bermudians into the maritime workforce was not merely a way to keep male slaves fully employed, for adapting slavery to shipboard work had important commercial ramifications. By 1700, most of Bermuda's male slaves labored as carpenters, joiners, caulkers, pilots, and mariners—skilled professions vital to the shipbuilding industry and to the operation of the merchant fleet. Many white Bermudian shipwrights and mariners employed their own slaves in building and sailing sloops, using slave labor in traditionally wage-based occupations to reduce both the cost of constructing vessels and the operating expenses of trading voyages. The work of slave sailors was assessed in monthly wages, but since the slaves were severely limited by their inability to strike or refuse service, their wages often were below those commanded by white sailors in the larger Atlantic free wage labor market but generally equal to those of white Bermudian seamen. As a rough index of profitability, in the 1730s the wages earned by a Bermudian slave sailor in less than three years could equal his market value in Bermuda, yielding a very high rate of return to his owner or a substantial savings when that owner was a ship's captain or vessel owner.

With a lower overhead cost for each voyage and a secure labor supply (vital for minimizing costly delays in outports), Bermudians were able to undercut the freight rates offered by competitors in the carrying trade (chiefly New England) and realize greater profits. Cadwallader Colden, arguing for local protectionist duties in 1726, lamented to his fellow New Yorkers that "we all know that the Bermudians sail their vessels much cheaper than we do." Much to his satisfaction, Henry Laurens found the same true thirty-seven years later when a Bermudian freighted a shipment of his starch for a third less than the rate quoted by a Philadelphia captain. Bermudians were widely called "the Dutch of America" because their sloops were "the very best and swiftest sailing vessels, and get freighted readily at a better price than the vessels of any other country."

Slave sailors were also instrumental in the shadowy world of Bermudian smuggling with the French and Dutch West Indies. White captains regularly
discharged their white crewmen before embarking on illicit commerce, counting on the fact that if they were apprehended, the testimony of their black sailors would be inadmissible in most colonial courts. Whether for diminished costs or as a shield against prosecution for illicit trade, the extensive use of slave sailors gave white Bermudian mariners an important edge in the highly competitive, often volatile Atlantic colonial carrying market and expanded the range of their trade beyond the legal bounds of the Navigation Acts. Cedar timbers and sloop rigs made Bermudian vessels superior carriers, but slave crews made them profitable.  

This edge was particularly advantageous in times of war, when the wages demanded by merchant seamen skyrocketed to reflect the increased risks they ran and the labor shortages caused by Royal navy impressment. In contrast, Bermuda's merchant marine benefited from a stable wage structure because slave sailors could not strike for higher pay. In 1770, Governor Bruere noted that "in time of war [Bermudians] are wealthy, their vessels, which sail remarkably fast, getting a preference everywhere for freight. . . . [When] other owners must give exorbitant wages to their seamen[,] the Bermudian owner, if he commands the vessel himself as many of them do, and is proprietor of four negro sailors," paid competitive wages only to his white mate. During wartime, Bermudians kept their fleet fully employed in the intercolonial carrying trade, enhancing their profits by charging freight rates higher than peacetime levels but still lower than those of their competitors while maintaining static operating expenses. Although there were inevitable captures, the veteran crews of most of Bermuda's weatherly sloops usually outsailed their enemies. Slave labor was thus an essential element in enabling Bermuda's merchant fleet to prosper and compete with her larger and materially richer colonial neighbors for more than a century.

By the middle of the eighteenth century, Bermuda's maritime economy depended heavily on the slaves who built and manned the island's fleet. How do we explain the creation and perpetuation of such a labor system in an Atlantic world where maritime labor was in short supply, desertion was relatively easy, and ready wages were offered with few questions asked by captains often short of hands? How did white and black Bermudians daily work together on the island's many sloops and how did such sustained interaction shape definitions of race, identity, and masculinity among Bermudian sailors on land and at sea? To what degree did enslaved sailors benefit from their own labor aboard the sloops on which they sailed? In short, what was the life of a Bermudian slave sailor like?

Unlike most Atlantic world seamen, Bermuda's slave sailors generally knew well the men with whom they sailed. Social relationships already established on land were transferred intact aboard ship and heavily influenced crew interaction while underway. Bermuda's slave population was self-reproducing as early as the 1630s, and with virtually no influx of African newcomers, a tight-knit community of island-born slaves extensively related by kinship ties emerged by 1700. The overwhelming majority of Bermuda's slaves did not know Africa firsthand and had never endured a Middle Passage. Instead, they were highly attuned to European ways, having grown up in households in a colony where the racial breakdown was more or less even.
Widespread but small-scale slave ownership and the large sizes of both black and white families produced a racially integrated colonial society in which constant daily interracial interaction was the norm. Black and white Bermudian boys grew up in the same households, fished and swam together throughout childhood, and in some instances even attended the same grammar schools. Although sustained proximity between white and black Bermudians by no means promoted notions of equality and most likely reinforced a hierarchy of race within Bermudian society, the pasts and personalities of all seafaring individuals were generally known in the small island community. When Bermudians went to sea for the first time in their early to mid-teens, the proximity of shipboard life and collective nature of maritime labor reinforced a preexisting high degree of personal familiarity among Bermudian crews.

Throughout the eighteenth century, the manning of Bermuda's sloops was mostly a community or family affair. The colony's fleet ranged in size from seventy to 120 sailing vessels that were small by transoceanic standards and required many small crews of four to twelve men each. White and black Bermudians who dwelled in the same households on land often went to sea together. The 1708–1709 ship list gives many examples of crews related by blood and common residence. The four-man crew of the sloop *Anne*, for instance, was composed of master Christopher Lusher, his son (a boy), his slave James, and Thomas Watson. The sloop *Samuel*'s crew included master Daniel Gibbs, his three sons (John, Nathaniel, and Joseph), and Davy, the slave of one of the vessel's owners. A father and two sets of brothers manned the sloop *Woolidge*: master William Sr., William Jr., Richard, and Jeremiah Leacraft and Stephen and Hugh Painter. Thomas Burch's Barbados-bound *Advice* carried Captain Josiah Forster and his slave Robin, Nathaniel Merritt and his slave Ben, and sailor Joseph Ward. Southampton widow Mary Keele sent her son John and her slave Tony aboard the sloop *Joseph and Benjamin*, bound for the Turks Islands. One would be hard-pressed to find a Bermudian sloop crew that did not share kinship, household, or neighborhood connections in the eighteenth century, since even before they took to sea, captains and crew were often closely acquainted in the densely populated colony. Bermuda's locally anchored, community-based white and black seafarers contrast starkly with the stereotypes of anonymous, rootless, and often oppressed and violent seamen described by Marcus Rediker and other maritime and labor historians. Recent studies that connect seamen with the landed communities from which they originated reveal close-knit seafaring communities like that of Bermuda, challenging us to see a plurality of regional maritime cultures and interlinking maritime labor markets within a larger Atlantic world. The Hobbesian world of oppressed Jack Tars serving in ocean-going factories existed alongside locally based, family-run coasting vessels operated along the lines of family farms, with a wide array of labor arrangements in between.

Sailors' work varied greatly according to weather and season, for the wind and sea dictated whether the voyage would be easy, demanding, or in some cases fatal. The crews of the typical Bermuda sloop of forty registered tons were small (four to seven men), so tasks such as raising anchor, setting and striking sail, and standing watch were collective and therefore racially integrated. The small size of the sloops—about fifty feet long on deck, eighteen feet wide, and with a hold roughly eight feet in
depth—meant that by necessity Bermudian crews slept and ate together.26 Shared living quarters and work performed day in and day out while at sea doubtless influenced the relationship between free and unfree Bermudians and produced, for better or worse, greater degrees of personal familiarity and understanding. Unlike most overseers on plantations, white Bermudian slaveowners engaged in the same tasks as their slaves, enabling them to identify and discipline legitimate slackers through personal familiarity with the work but also giving them reasonable expectations of their slaves' capabilities. W. Jeffrey Bolster points out that experience and ability often at least temporarily undercut racial hierarchy, creating situations where veteran black sailors instructed and commanded novice white "boys" in shipboard tasks. Black and white sailors also shared a collective fate, for they jointly endured the tedium of long passages and fought against storms, shipwreck, or pirate attacks together.27

But masters and slaves did not benefit equally from their lives at sea, nor was a slave's seafaring life easy. A black sailor suffered the same accidents, caught the same diseases, and perished in the same storms and shipwrecks as did his white counterparts, and he faced other limitations that white sailors did not. Legal and social barriers to promotion kept black sailors from being formally recognized (and paid) as mates and captains. Racist colonial laws and the Navigation Acts created an insurmountable institutional bar to command, since slaves' skin color prevented them from swearing the oaths required by law to enter and clear vessels in port. Many slaves probably served in the role of mate and perhaps even as master at sea because of their skills and ability, but in port they reverted to the status of common sailor. A similar double standard prevailed locally in the island, where black pilots, "educated to the business from childhood," navigated vessels through the island's treacherous reefs while their white owners who held the official posts of Pilots of the East and West Ends collected their fees.28

Black Bermudians, aware of their masters' considerable dependence on them, negotiated distinct social and economic advantages from their lives at sea. Owners customarily gave their slave sailors a portion of their wages, usually one-third, out of which they apparently had to purchase their own clothes. This money nonetheless gave slaves some freedom of dress and enabled them to accumulate wealth by pocketing any surplus. Enslaved seamen who served on privateers also traditionally received one-third to one-half of their prize money in recognition of the personal physical risks they ran.29 Bermudian ship's captains further granted some enslaved mariners among their crews the privilege of conducting "private ventures"—small-scale speculative shipping that mirrored in microcosm the mercantile exchange of the sloop's voyage. By 1711, it was "a common practice among [slave sailors] . . . to carry abroad to other parts beyond the seas adventures of brass, pewter, platt, bongraces, capes, etc.," which the slaves sold or bartered in the ports they frequented to earn additional money. Olaudah Equiano, a slave sailor who spent a considerable time in the West Indies in the 1760s, related how in four trips made over the space of a single month of trading, he converted a half-bit glass tumbler (3d.) into merchandise worth a Spanish dollar (5s.)—a twentyfold profit. Four years of increasingly ambitious trading earned Equiano enough to purchase his freedom. The rum, lace, silk, jewelry, fancy dresses, and fine clothing seen at slave funerals, holidays, and balls in Bermuda were
almost certainly the fruits of successful slave sailors' bargaining. Although black Bermudian mariners were not paid what their labor was truly worth, they were still empowered to earn money and thus reap material benefits from their work.30

By the 1760s, some Bermudian slaves had become so adept at trading that they acted in an unofficial capacity as supercargoes who managed the purchase and sale of the vessel's cargo. Jean Hector de Crèvecoeur recalled that he had "seen several of these black [managers] at the tables of the rich Jamaican Planters, treated with all the consideration which their intelligence and faithfulness merit." Bermudian slave supercargoes, already conversant with European ways through their creole backgrounds, would also have had to be literate, numerate, capable of assessing market conditions in outlying ports, and perhaps bi- or multilingual, skills acquired only after years of schooling and voyaging throughout the Atlantic and Caribbean. Through private ventures, wages, and prize money, Bermudian slave sailors earned substantial sums of money for themselves and their masters.31

Wages and liberty to trade were not simply the indulgences of benevolent masters, for underlying these privileges was the architecture of a psychological discipline every bit as binding as the physical coercion used in other colonies. The prime aim of Bermuda's white maritime masters was to create a captive labor force that would work for substandard rates. White seamen were generally family members who worked on the promise of eventually inheriting shares in a family-owned sloop or poorer whites driven by need and lack of viable local economic alternatives who still wished to remain in Bermuda rather than emigrate abroad. Slave sailors who could run away necessitated other means of binding, a mixture of rewards and threats to minimize desertion. Although undoubtedly employed, traditional controls such as potentially disabling physical punishment while at sea and constant surveillance in port were problematic to sustaining a stable maritime labor supply, so new forms of restraint were necessary. The wages and private ventures that captains allowed gave slave sailors a financial stake in the voyage's outcome and thus discouraged desertion, because to run was not only to lose one's hard-earned money, but also the opportunity of making more in the future. The 1674 law requiring free blacks to depart the island kept most seamen from purchasing their liberty, since it transformed freedom into exile from family and friends. Although black Bermudian mariners had the means to purchase themselves and perhaps their family members, few apparently chose the perilous path of starting life anew in another colony, where they would have faced the grim prospect of seeking work in a discriminatory society, competing with other local free blacks, and possibly risking being re-enslaved by unscrupulous sharpers. Freedom also entailed the loss of a white master's advocacy in legally defending a black sailor's claim to wages and profits from ventures. Equiano summed up the plight of many free blacks: "They live in constant alarm for their liberty, which is but nominal; and they are universally insulted and plundered without the possibility of redress . . . [since] no free negro's evidence will be admitted in courts of justice."32

Rather than saving to purchase freedom, Bermudian slave sailors invested in creature comforts and thus directly converted their labor into improvements in their quality of life. With ready money and opportunities to shop selectively in a wide range of overseas markets, they purchased items for themselves and imported considerable quantities onto the island. Although the law banned slaves from owning
real or personal property, masters "wink'd at" widespread transgressions that served their own interests in building a more stable slave system through incentives. Like most sailors, black Bermudians took pride in their appearance and spent money on personal adornments. Slave seaman Josiah Saunders, for instance, was described as "remarkably clean and neat in his dress" and wore a gold "ring-bob" in one of his ears. Because many slaves working in Bermuda were also paid wages, sailors would have found ready customers for their private ventures in the island's slave community and were thus conduits for the flow of material goods tailored to the tastes of black Bermudians. Although eighteenth-century Bermudian slaves commonly lived in white households rather than in separate quarters, they frequently gathered by themselves to celebrate marriages, funerals, and holidays. By 1711, so many slaves wore fine clothing and fancy dresses to their own balls and gatherings that the Bermuda assembly passed an ineffectual sumptuary law that forbade masters from allowing their slaves to "wear any silk, lace, ribbon, rings, bracelets, buckles, . . . nor other ornaments." These "merry meetings and midnight festivals" reflected a synthesis of European fashion and African and Native American traditions perhaps best exemplified by the costume, dance, and music of gombay dancers. Despite the reforming efforts of the Bermudian assembly, numerous clandestine public houses served rum and bibby (a liquor made from fermented palmetto sap) to black clientele, sites where slave sailors could cut loose after months at sea. Goods and specie flowing in Bermuda's internal slave economy testify to the success of Bermudian slave sailors in obtaining creature comforts for themselves and for the slave community as a whole, while their celebrations and rituals reveal their ability to create and maintain cultural traditions independently expressed from that of the white families with whom they lived.

Along with material consumption, family ties figured prominently in anchoring seafaring slaves to Bermudian ships and slavery in a variety of ways. Black Bermudians were reportedly "fond of domestic lives and form[ed] early connections," probably in their late teens or early twenties. Although no extant records document formal slave marriages, Bermuda's distinct white and black female majority combined with the economic opportunities inherent in seafaring to make slave sailors highly sought-after marriage partners. It is likely that captains favored older slaves with wives and children when selecting their crew, playing on a slave's masculine role as provider to wed him to the voyage. Stated or implicit threats to sell family members abroad may have been another tool to discourage desertion, effectively holding wives and children as hostages against their men's return. Although for a later period, Bermuda's 1821 slave register reveals that the mean age of the 356 slave sailors listed was 31.1 years and that 55.9 percent of them were aged 30 or older. The presence of fifty-one Bermuda-born mulattoes in the register also raises the distinct possibility that some slaves were sailing with white fathers or half-brothers.

When hundreds of Bermudian slaves were reluctantly sold or sent to the American colonies during a period of commercial depression in the 1730s and 1740s, black Bermudian mariners became even more important to the island's slave community as links to loved ones overseas. Their orally transmitted messages are forever lost to history, but a July 1741 letter penned by Joseph Hilton, a black Bermudian in New York, to a friend back home relating news of that city's slave conspiracy scare reveals
that Bermudian sloops were also surreptitious postal carriers for literate slaves who used slave sailors as their messengers. The black seaman, serving a vital role as importer of goods and as messenger for the island's slave community, might have additional bonds to those forged by his owner if community needs seemed to outweigh his own quest for freedom. White masters, black family members, the slave community as a whole, and the success of the Bermudian economy each depended in different ways on the steady service of Bermuda's seafaring slaves.

Enticed by rewards, entangled by responsibilities, and entrapped in a system that discriminated against free blacks, very few slave sailors deserted. After spending six years in Bermuda, Governor William Browne asserted in 1788 that "the number of [slave sailor] deserters for thirty years past does not exceed five a year on an average. That is the highest number any one supposes," although Browne cautioned that "few will admit there has been so many, considering the rambling trade of Bermuda and the frequent opportunities [slaves] have to deliver themselves up from bondage. This may seem incredible but I have no doubt of it." Of the tens of thousands of runaway slave advertisements in North American newspapers between 1730 and 1790 compiled by Lathan Windley, only twenty-eight advertisements mention Bermuda-born slaves. The twenty-four men and five women identified included eighteen sailors and three caulkers, most of whom were young men who may not have yet married and who arguably had weaker ties to the Bermudian slave community. Taking the Browne figure as high and the newspaper rate as low, a desertion rate of less than 1 percent emerges for the Bermuda merchant fleet, far lower than the 7 percent average rate for the Royal navy in the 1750s or an estimated 5 percent average for British merchant shipping as a whole.

Even more surprising than the low number of deserters are the many instances of slaves who ran away returning to the island. At least seven of the masters seeking Bermuda-born runaway slaves in American newspapers thought they would be making for the island by ship. When Negro Jack ran from Tybee Lighthouse in Georgia in 1758 (where he may have been employed as a pilot), his master thought he would "endeavor to get off to Bermuda." Tom, an old man who ran away from his Charleston master in 1784, was thought to be heading for Bermuda, "where he has children belonging to Mr. Robinson." In other instances, Bermudian slaves captured by Spanish and French privateers escaped and returned home unbidden. In February 1767, a Spanish guarda costa set upon two Bermuda sloops gathering salt at the Tortugas. Benjamin Stiles, master of the Porgy, reported that when the Spaniards fired on him and forced him to strike his colors, "five of his negro sailors, in order to prevent falling into the hands of the said Spaniards jumped overboard to swim to the shore, by means whereof one of the said negroes was drowned, as this deponent hath since been informed by the other negroes who have since returned to these islands" voluntarily several months later. Clearly, white Bermudian slaveowners succeeded in their goal of maintaining a stable labor force in the merchant fleet by minimizing desertion, an achievement vital to the efficient operation of the island's entire economy.

Bermuda's low maritime desertion rate can also be explained by the insidious pervasiveness of slavery and racist laws and institutions all over colonial America. Among the most widely traveled denizens of the Atlantic world, black Bermudian
seamen saw the face of slavery in cities, towns, plantations, and settlements throughout North America and the Caribbean. The lives of urban slave artisans, watermen, and coastal fishermen would have more closely resembled their own, but conversations in waterfront taverns with free blacks would no doubt have revealed the difficulties and ambiguities of their position. Fraternizing with sailors from other vessels provided black seamen with a context to gauge their shipboard treatment. A trip beyond the docks to the cane fields of Jamaica or the rice belt of South Carolina would have revealed to black Bermudians an altogether harsher base of comparison for their servitude.  

Although legal rights and restrictions, economic liberties, physical mobility, and work regimes varied from place to place, African and African-American slaves throughout the Americas were trapped in an exploitative system in which they were ubiquitously considered racially inferior, captive workers. Slave sailors could escape their Bermudian masters, but where might they run in a world where much was stacked against them? They could perhaps try to pass as free in the larger Atlantic world of black sailors, but they would have to be ever-vigilant against cheating captains, re-enslavement, and encountering white Bermudians who would recapture them in the ports they visited. If Bermuda had an indigenous free black population, individual freedmen might have provided examples for building a life in freedom elsewhere, but the colony's periodic purges kept models for emulation to a minimum. The stresses of deception in passing for free and beginning life anew in a foreign port would have been significant. The common ground shared by Bermuda-born highly acculturated slaves and the multitude of newly arrived African slaves of various ethnic origins who in the early eighteenth century composed a majority of the American and Caribbean slave population was small, while the degree to which they would compete with skilled, urban creole slaves and free blacks would have been great. Add to this the fierce pride Bermuda's black mariners took in their profession and their absolute contempt for agricultural work and one can readily appreciate the considerable ethnic and cultural differences obscured by similarities of skin color and the shared status of slave.  

A number of enslaved seamen, in search of greater gain and independence and up to the challenges of life as runaways, did flee their masters, including a few Bermudians. Josiah Saunders fled his Bermudian owner in St. Eustatius in late 1757, returned to Bermuda for much of the following summer, and then proceeded on to South Carolina or Georgia, where he apparently found fellow Bermudian runaway Sue, a slave of White Outerbridge and perhaps his wife or lover. Bermuda-born Joe Anderson, a "stout sailor negro," was legendary in Kingston, Jamaica, for jumping ship at Port Royal in 1779 and successfully evading capture for the next fourteen years while working the interisland trade. But these individuals were exceptions to the general rule that few of Bermuda's slave sailors escaped. In Bermuda, they already possessed what many slaves in South Carolina and Virginia ran away to find: family members and friends from whom they had been separated. The stable family structure, geographic intimacy, and long history of Bermuda's slave community, exceptional in the British Atlantic, were compelling anchors mooring black Bermudians to their island home.  

On many levels, Bermuda's slavery appears singular in the parameters of the
institution in British America. The physical and conceptual worlds of Bermuda's black seamen were among the widest and most cosmopolitan known by any African or African-American slave. On their frequent forced visits to port cities and towns throughout mainland North America and the Caribbean, they collected information, conducted business, visited friends and family, and came to know slave communities throughout the Atlantic world. In Bermuda, owners allowed their slaves significant latitude in family formation, intra-island travel, recreation, trade, and property accumulation. American visitor Josiah Meigs went so far as to state that, compared with the institution elsewhere, "slavery here [in Bermuda] scarcely deserves the name." 47

When placed in the larger context of British American slavery, Bermudian slavery was unique only in its particular combination of facets of slave opportunity and autonomy. Viewed comparatively in an Atlantic spectrum of slave experiences, seemingly exceptional individual elements of the institution in Bermuda had widespread parallels in other colonies. As seafarers, Bermudians were among the thousands of blacks who plied the eighteenth-century trade routes of the Americas. Numerically, there were more blacks employed on the estimated 1,200 vessels of New England's 1760s merchant shipping fleet, in the intra-island trade of the Caribbean, and in the coastal, riverine, and intrabay fishing and transport boats of the Chesapeake and Lowcountry coast than could be found on Bermudian vessels. African and American-born slaves also numbered among the crews of many Royal navy vessels and slavers making the Middle Passage. Bermuda was exceptional in the high proportion of slaves in the crews of its fleet, but not in its use of slaves as sailors. 48

The living and working conditions of black Bermudian mariners fits squarely in a wider milieu of British American slave experiences. The autonomy and mobility of Bermudian slaves resembled that of urban black artisans in American seaports, who also hired themselves out, shared the wages they earned, and participated in local market exchanges. Bermudian slave sailors may have even envied the many urban slaves who rented their own lodgings and thus avoided the constant surveillance that came with living in a white household. West Indian and southern plantation slaves who were permitted garden plots and provision grounds likewise earned money selling surplus goods, which they spent on creature comforts and saved toward self-purchase. Many white owners appreciated that functionally, small liberties of accumulation, trade, and mobility gave their praedial and skilled slaves "a stake in slavery" that discouraged escape, fostered some degree of "identification with the economic and moral concerns of the master," and ultimately benefited them by making their slaves more productive. Like provisions from garden plots, stock- and poultry-raising, and hiring out extra time, the private ventures of Bermudian seamen produced revenue in a wider market economy, but there were also significant differences. Whereas the former enterprises lengthened a slave's working day, since work for oneself came after the owner's work, venture profits required no additional labor since work for one's owner (operating the vessel) simultaneously benefited the slave. Black Bermudians profited from their access to multiple regional markets, whereas slaves elsewhere were confined to a single local outlet, but all concerned possessed money and the freedom to spend it. 49

The early, high degree of demographic and family stability of Bermuda's slave
community was a crucial formative element, but by the mid-eighteenth century, creole-born majorities were emerging in most British colonies, even among the West Indian sugar islands. Slaveowners in many areas countenanced slave marriages with an eye toward a procreative expansion of their labor force, but the specific aim of using family members as anchors or hostages for geographically mobile slaves was also duplicated outside Bermuda. Slaveowners in eighteenth-century Belize encouraged enslaved logwood cutters to marry and form families to keep them from fleeing to nearby Spanish territory during the months they spent working in isolated, inland logging camps under token white supervision. It is likely that further research will reveal enslaved boatmen and seamen on the North American coast were similarly locally rooted by family formation.  

When the seventy black Bermudians of the *Regulator* declined the Massachusetts Admiralty Court's offer of freedom, they chose to return to the island of their birth, their families, and a profitable seafaring way of life to which they were accustomed, as well as to their white masters and slavery. They did not go home empty-handed, either. Sixty of them took passage on the American flag of truce ship *Duxbury* for New York. Off Cape Cod, they shouted "Huzzah for Bermuda!" and rose up with other prisoners on board to seize the vessel, putting their former experience as a trained and coordinated privateering crew to good and profitable use. On reaching Bermuda, the *Duxbury* was condemned as their prize. Nine other Regulators traveled overland through war-ravaged countryside to reach New York, where they obtained passage home. The sole remaining, unaccounted-for slave reportedly died in captivity awaiting exchange. Other Bermudian privateers were captured during the war and their slave crews condemned with the vessels, but they escaped from their new American masters and made their way back to Bermuda.  

Contemporaries pointed to the *Regulator* case and other evidence to advance the benign nature of Bermudian slavery and the mild treatment of the island's slaves. In doing so, they failed to appreciate the harshness of maritime labor, the mortal dangers of the sea, and the omnipresent threat of violence from the enemy. There was nothing benign or mild in fighting to reef a tops'l in a stiff, icy gale off Sandy Hook or trying to reach a rocky key through pounding surf after a reef has ripped the bottom out of one's sloop. Perhaps with the exception of shipbuilding, the most vital work done by Bermudian slaves was performed off the island and was thus hidden from the eyes of historical observers. In Bermuda, slavery mutated with the shift from field to sea to fit the island's emerging economic niche in a larger Atlantic world. Bermuda's black sailors may have traveled more and received better incentives than enslaved workers elsewhere, but they were still bound to a brutal, immoral, and exploitative system that ultimately benefited their owners far more than themselves.  

Bermuda's well-traveled white slaveowners and black seamen were intimately familiar with the wide spectrum of slave experiences throughout the Caribbean and coastal North America. Whether measured by access to markets and money, life expectancy, levels of literacy, occupational skill, mobility and autonomy, or family and community formation and stability, Bermuda's small slave population taken as a whole compares favorably with the hundreds of thousands of Africans and African
Americans who lived, labored, and died in the colonies of British America. Although one must never forget that the majority of African and African-American slaves lived and worked in a rural, agricultural, plantation setting, the considerable latitude of conditions on slavery's margins reveals the persistent malleability of the institution. With so many tastes of freedom, perhaps Bermudian slavery was among the most frustrating and bittersweet experiences of all.\textsuperscript{53}

In adapting existing agricultural, racial, and labor relations to a new maritime working environment, Bermudians invented new systems of control to replace directly coercive or supervisory means formerly employed on land. Bermuda's extensive use of and growing dependence on seafaring slaves led to the creation of a looser strain of slavery that offered greater opportunities to the slaves themselves. White Bermudians were keenly aware of their heavy reliance on black workers to operate their merchant fleet. In such a fluid labor environment, local identity, kinship ties to home, and material incentives woven into the course of the voyage imposed a psychological discipline that kept the vast majority of sailor slaves from deserting ship. Black sailors, aware of their vital services, gained material advantages through wages and the commercial concessions allowed them, had more freedom to negotiate the conditions under which they worked, and benefited from the mobility inherent in shipboard work. In the Atlantic slave system, they occupied a privileged labor niche that imparted opportunities denied to most African and creole slaves. The decision of the \textit{Regulator} crew to return to Bermuda emphasizes that material conditions and levels of autonomy for slaves varied widely in the Atlantic world, and that slaves appreciated these differences. That slaves given the opportunity of freedom might return to servitude underscores the values of a society that promoted residential and familial stability among its black inhabitants and the success of a system that bound master and slave together into a common enterprise.

In the eighteenth century, Bermuda depended on the sea for its economic survival. Its merchant fleet helped to carry the trade of Britain's expanding empire and was rewarded with the food, timber, and cash needed to sustain the island's inhabitants, shipbuilding industry, and economy. The success of the carrying trade rested firmly on the shoulders of Bermuda's white and black mariners, who shared the labor—but unequally reaped the benefits—of their work.

helpful comments, and constructive criticism.

Notes

1 Pennsylvania Gazette, June 5, 1782; Boston Gazette, June 3, 1782; Robert Morris to President of Congress, June 20, 1782, in E. James Ferguson et al., eds., The Papers of Robert Morris, 9 vols. (Pittsburgh, 1980), 5:453; Book of Protests, 1:16–17, Bermuda Archives. The Regulator was launched in Jan. 1782 and had taken a sloop from Georgetown, S. C., two days before she was captured.


4 Gov. Isaac Richier to the Lords of Trade and Plantations, Feb. 3, 1692/3, asserted "All knowing merchants and mariners who put in here conclude that if Bermuda were in an enemy's hands the American trade would be in Great measure destroyed in time of war"; CO 37/1:30. In Sept. 1696, the President and


² Bermuda Colonial Records (hereafter BCR), vol. 5B:314 (1676 ban); Lefroy, Memorials of the Bermudas, 2:432 (1679 pop.); entry 1341, Cal. St. Papers, Col., 12:3951 (1684 pop.). Bermuda records note 347 commercial transactions involving the exchange of black and Indian slaves between 1638 and 1674, representing 281 Negroes, 19 mulattoes, and 47 Indians. Nearly half the Negroes (116) had been born in Bermuda, while the rest arrived in small numbers sold by privateers; Jarvis, computer database extracted from BCR 2 and 5A, and Jarvis, "In the Eye of All Trade," 156–57. Indians and mulattoes are reported individually in deeds, court records, and probate inventories, but islandwide censuses made only white and Negro designations; figures given for Bermuda's black population thus include a variety of interracial and multiethnic offspring. At 381 persons / sq. mi. in 1679, Bermuda was the most densely populated colony in English America, slightly edging out Barbados's 353 persons / sq. mi., based on an estimated population of 20,000 whites and 38,800 blacks; Richard S. Dunn, Sugar and Slaves: The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624–1713 (Chapel Hill, 1972), 87–88, 327. Barbados surpassed Bermuda's population density by 1684, however. Between 1677 and 1684, Bermuda averaged 120 white and 75 black
births to 51 white and 40 black deaths. The slave population reached 1,917 in 1691, a 10% increase over 7 years during a period when there was no importation from abroad; CO 37/25:93. On successful black family formation, see Bernhard, *Slaves and Slaveholders*, 38–48, 54–64, 94–99. In 1764, the Board of Trade disallowed the 1762 renewal of the Bermuda act requiring free blacks to depart the island, but in 1806 a modified version exiling slaves freed henceforth was once again passed; *Bermuda Acts of Assembly*, 94; CO 37/19:63–64; Edwards, *History Civil and Commercial of the British West Indies*, 5th ed., 5 vols. (London, 1819), 5:116–17.

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This article uses "master" in its nautical sense as a commander or navigator of a vessel rather than as a generic term for slaveowner. Bermudian masters were often simultaneously captains and slaveowners, however, conflating the two meanings of the word.

Bolster, *Black Jacks*, explores the lives of black sailors and watermen along the coasts of Africa, the West Indies, and North America from a sociocultural perspective. He points out one of the great ironies of maritime labor: although white seamen were often deemed socially marginal, slave mariners were among the most privileged. Their mobility put them in touch with black communities throughout the Atlantic world, making them links between slave communities and conduits for information, traditions, and material culture. See Julius Scott, "The Common Wind: Currents of Afro-American Communications in the Era of the Haitian Revolution" (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1986); James Barker Farr, *Black Odyssey: The Seafaring Traditions of Afro-Americans* (New York, 1989); and Martha S. Putney, *Black Sailors: Afro-American Merchant Seamen and Whalemen Prior to the Civil War* (New York, 1987). Daniel Vickers, *Farmers and Fishermen: Two Centuries of Work in Essex County, Massachusetts, 1630–1850* (Chapel Hill, 1994), 144–203, documents how the Essex County, Mass., fishery also captured a rising generation of native-born men in the late 17th century to expand its maritime activities.

CO 37/2:194. In 1699, the adult male black population was 566, of whom 529 were "able-bodied" and could muster in the militia. Perhaps a fifth of the male slave population comprised fishermen, whalers, and wreckers whose activities were confined to local waters, while the remainder built and serviced ships and constructed houses in the colony. Slaves made important contributions as masons and built most of the colony's houses. As shipbuilding grew in importance, Bermudians shifted from building timber-frame houses to ones made of the island's native limestone; Jarvis, "In the Eye of All Trade," 554–61; Randolph, "Account of Bermuda," 632.

1708–1709 ship list in "Passengers, Sailors, . . . and Masters of Vessels Sailing from Bermuda Between 1708 and 1720," Bermuda Arch., C 398. Slaves in Bermuda hired themselves out by day, week, month, or voyage and were fed and housed at their employers' expense. They remitted a portion of their earnings to their owners, who were reportedly "satisfied with receiving a weekly sum, not enquiring how it was procured"; "Report of the Council and Assembly of Bermuda about Slavery," June 24, 1789, *Journal of the House of Lords*, 38:5770–77; CO 37/40:129–35; Gov. Browne to Lord Sydney, June 10, 1788, in "Letters of Governor William Browne," *Bermuda Historical Quarterly*, 2 (1945), 26–27. In 1712, masters were limited to 6 white crew on vessels with keels under 40 ft., 8 men for 40–45-ft. keel, and 10 men for over 45-ft. keel. Temporary wartime limits on white crews were also enacted in 1696 (limiting the number of white and black crewmen), 1702, 1719, and 1724; Minutes of Council, Feb. 2, 1696/7, July 15, 1702, Feb. 5, 1711/2, July 9, 1712, June 26, 1719, Feb. 4, 1723/4, in *Bermuda Hist. Q.*, 3 (1946), 189–90, ibid., 4 (1947), 98, ibid., 5 (1948), 156, 161, 6 (1949), 158, ibid., 8 (1951), 4. The two free black sailors were exceptional in an overwhelmingly enslaved black population.

Hope to Board of Trade, Sept. 30, 1725, CO 37/11:231–33. White sailor-salt rakers received no wages while ashore but shared in the profits after the salt they raked was sold in northern (usually Carolina or Chesapeake) ports. The Turks Islands were invaded by the Spanish in 1715, 1728, and 1753 and by the French in 1764. The vulnerability of the Turks Islands to French and Spanish raids discouraged the use of slaves as rakers; white men were ransomed or exchanged when captured, but slaves were sold as prize goods. When Spaniards invaded the Turks Islands in 1728, they carried off slaves worth £400 and a number of sloops, for which Bermudians petitioned the crown for redress; "Petition of the Governor and Council of Bermuda," Oct. 16, 1729, in Newcastle Papers LXXXIV, Add. MSS 32,769: 228–32, British Library.

Court of Vice Admiralty, July 13, 1725, CO 37/11:236–48; Vice Admiralty Court Proceedings, 1724–1741, VA 101/2, 1:87–90, 101–04, Bermuda Arch. In 1714, London's surveyor of ports, John Lea, unsuccessfully attempted to seize Francis Jones's sloop *Elizabeth* for sailing with a crew of 6 whites and 4 blacks after Jones refused to pay Lea a bribe of 10 guineas. Bristol's naval officer made no objection when
Richard Gilbert's sloop Resolution entered that port manned by 4 whites, 2 blacks, and an Indian. Article 20 of 6 Anne cap. 37 (the act that prompted the keeping of the 1708 crew lists) authorized naturalization for foreign-born mariners who had served on British vessels for more than two years, which could have been used to justify veteran Bermudian slaves as British, but neither Bermudian advocates nor the Board of Trade invoked this precedent. In 1787, the legal question of slave status was once again called into question, and the king's advocate general reaffirmed the earlier Bermudian decision; General Orders for the Government of Officers in the Plantations (London, 1805), chap. 36, quoted in Packwood, Chained on the Rock, 44. Except for a brief hiatus in the wake of the 1761 slave conspiracy, black Bermudians served in the island's militia throughout the 17th and 18th centuries. The 1725 Board of Trade decision that Bermudian slaves were subjects of the crown did not otherwise expand their legal rights or alter the conditions of their servitude.

Gov. Edward Trelawney to Thomas Corbet, "A List of Northern Vessels in the Harbour of Kingston, Dec. 17, 1743," ADM 1/3817, PRO (I am grateful to Nicholas Rodgers for bringing this document to my attention); Bruere, "Answers to Board of Trade Queries," 1773, CO 37/36:31, asserts that Bermuda employed "200 or more white saylors [and] 400 Negro sailors, besides the rakers of salt at Turks Island," a figure that seems low given the merchant fleet size. In 1774, Bermuda's adult male black population was 1,275; Census, CO 37/36:42. The 481 slaves then listed at sea represents only the minimum number of slave sailors. In contrast, 9% of South Carolina's skilled slaves were mariners in the 18th century (the third largest slave profession in that colony), though their proportion in the slave population as a whole was much smaller; Philip D. Morgan, "Black Life in Eighteenth-Century Charleston," Perspectives in American History, N. S., 1 (1984), 187–232.

The profitability of maritime slave labor is difficult to measure, owing to the paucity of recorded wages for white and black Bermudian seamen, the considerable variation of wages by season, state of war, and experience of the sailor in question, and the difficulty of factoring in the additional cost of victuals. The rough rate of return given here is based on Nathaniel Dunscomb's 1731 hiring of his slave Simon to Seth Smith for 27s. sterling per month on a voyage to Philadelphia at a time when the average value of an adult male slave in Bermudian probate inventories (N = 64) was £22.2.0 sterling. Assuming seafaring slaves earned wages for only 10 months of the year and that they received 1/3 of their wages for their own use (see below), they would earn £27 in 3 years; Burgess and Tuzo v. Corbusier, June 7, 1731 in Court of General Assize, AZ 102/6:284–85, Bermuda Arch.; Jarvis, statistical extract of Bermuda probate inventories, 1640–1769, from Books of Wills, vols. 1–10, Bermuda Arch.

In 1784, Capt. Andrew Durnford noted that "Bermudians [seem] by nature to be the Carriers of America, as they can do it at less Expense than any others"; Add. MSS 38,345:169, British Library; CO 37/13:127. The cost of skilled maritime labor was considerable. Black shipwrights, carpenters, and caulkers (or their masters) apparently received full wages for repair work on non-Bermudian vessels and a discounted wage for constructing vessels for Bermudian purchasers; in refitting the Bermudian sloop Hope, for instance, Daniel H. Outerbridge's carpenter slaves Ben, Bay, Joe, James, Will, and Jamie were paid only 2s.6d. and a pint of rum per day for their 12 days' work, rather than the higher rates that prevailed in other ports; Composite Volumes, 15:35 (Mar. 1780). See also Jean Hector De Crèvecoeur, "A Description of Bermuda," c. 1764, in Bermuda Hist. Q., 3 (1946), 202. On the success of Bermudians in competing for the carrying trade in Charleston, see Philip H. Hamer and George C. Rogers, eds., The Papers of Henry Laurens, 13 vols. to date (Columbia, S. C., 1968– ), 1:330, 2:63, 143, 217, 325, 423, 465, 481, 3:305. In Sept. 1755, for instance, Laurens, ibid., 1:330, wrote "Our Gentlemen are so attached to the Bermudians that when they are in [port] . . . 'tis seldom they will give any Freight to other vessels." Laurens shipped a great deal of his intercolonial cargoes on Bermudian vessels and purchased 3 island-built sloops.

Wilkinson, Bermuda in the Old Empire, 21; CO 37/13:185; 20:164; [Colden], "The Second Part of the Interest of the Country in Laying Duties Addressed More Particularly to the City" (New York, [1726]), in Collections of the New-York Historical Society for the Year 1935, 68 (1935), 267–79. Laurens shipped his starch (i.e., rice) to St. Kitts in Bermudian Joseph Outerbridge's sloop Ranger for 5s. 6d. (South Carolina currency) less per barrel than the 18s. that Capt. George Noarth had offered; Hamer and Rogers, eds., Papers of Henry Laurens, 3:243. Bermudian masters and shipowners further minimized their overhead by

On Bermudian smuggling, see the William case cited above; Jarvis, "In the Eye of All Trade," 427–41; and Jarvis, "The Politics of Smuggling: Bermuda's 'Clandestine Trade' with the Dutch West Indies, 1684–1783," International Seminar on the History of the Atlantic World working paper, 1997. In William, Dinwiddie seized the sloop for illegally landing a hogshead of Virginia tobacco but discovered he could not prosecute the case because Solomon Frith, the master, had earlier discharged his 3 white sailors at Turks Island before voyaging to Virginia to buy the contested tobacco. In Bermuda, Frith had his slave-sailors Robin, Sam, and Ben land the tobacco. Since Frith refused to incriminate himself and the slaves were legally barred from testifying, Dinwiddie was forced to abandon the smuggling charge and seek conviction solely on the contested issue of black subjecthood. On the eve of the American Revolution, Gov. Bruere reported that it was still common practice that "in case anything of contraband goods is to be taken in or discharged, the swearing captain [white master] may step aside and the negroes and their leader complet the business"; Bruere to Board of Trade, Sept. 2, 1775, CO 37/36:77.

On patterns of slaveholding, see Crane, "Socioeconomics of a Female Majority in Eighteenth-Century Bermuda," 243–47, and Bernhard, Slaves and Slaveholders, 249–64. In Bermuda, all children (black and white, male and female) apparently learned to swim, fish, and sail at an early age. These were natural activities on an island and prepared them for a life in which sailboats were the chief means of transportation and fish was the staple of the diet. In 1687, Gov. Robinson noted that Bermudian women were skillful in swimming and piloting and that children were "chiefly exercized in fishing, swimming and diving." In 1722, Hope wrote that "all [Bermudians] can swim and tho' their fishing boats are often overset by violent gusts of wind, yet it rarely happens that any of them are lost"; CO 37/10:214, 40/1A:103. Philip Freneau remarked that "from the time of their birth, [children] are familiarized to the water to such a degree, that by the time they are five, six, or seven years of age, all the boys, and many of the girls can live under the water and in it, pretty near as well as the fish"; "Account of the Island of Bermuda," Bermuda Hist. Q, 5 (1948), 98–100. Bermudian mariners were exceptional; most Atlantic seaman (hailing from cold-water home ports) could not swim. Swimming and sail handling also initiated Bermudian girls into a maritime culture in which they would play a significant, albeit limited, part and gave them greater insight into the lives and labors of the mariners whom most of them would marry.

22 On Bermudian smuggling, see the William case cited above; Jarvis, "In the Eye of All Trade," 427–41; and Jarvis, "The Politics of Smuggling: Bermuda's 'Clandestine Trade' with the Dutch West Indies, 1684–1783," International Seminar on the History of the Atlantic World working paper, 1997. In William, Dinwiddie seized the sloop for illegally landing a hogshead of Virginia tobacco but discovered he could not prosecute the case because Solomon Frith, the master, had earlier discharged his 3 white sailors at Turks Island before voyaging to Virginia to buy the contested tobacco. In Bermuda, Frith had his slave-sailors Robin, Sam, and Ben land the tobacco. Since Frith refused to incriminate himself and the slaves were legally barred from testifying, Dinwiddie was forced to abandon the smuggling charge and seek conviction solely on the contested issue of black subjecthood. On the eve of the American Revolution, Gov. Bruere reported that it was still common practice that "in case anything of contraband goods is to be taken in or discharged, the swearing captain [white master] may step aside and the negroes and their leader compleat the business"; Bruere to Board of Trade, Sept. 2, 1775, CO 37/36:77.

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merchant fleet: "About 60 per cent of the sailors who shipped out of Salem on local vessels had been born in Salem or Beverly and had grown up together within a relatively compact world. As children they had played together. . . . When young men decided to go to sea, therefore, they did so in the company of people they knew." Even in the large British port of Bristol there were considerable social, religious, and familial ties linking mariners to their home ports; Gerald Lorentz, "Bristol Fashion: The Maritime Culture of Bristol, 1650–1700 " (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 1997), 380–88. On the challenge to follow seamen onto the shore, see Vickers, "Beyond Jack Tar," WMQ, 3d Ser., 50 (1993), 418–24.

Sloop dimensions derive from a sample of 145 Bermudian entries for 1743 in "An Account of Powder and Cash Received by Virtue of the Act for Collecting a Duty on Gunpowder Commencing the Ninth Day of October 1742," CO 37/15:167–74. In most large merchant ships, seamen lived in the forecastle ("foc's'l") and officers lived in stern cabins. Bermudian crews lived in the small cabin and steerage areas in the stern, since the sloops were apparently too small to have a foc's'l suitable for living quarters; Bermuda Historical Society Collection, Loose Vice Admiralty cases, folder 15, Bermuda Arch.

Rediker, Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea, 77–115; Rodger, Wooden World, 41; Bolster, Black Jacks, 68–101. Rediker, p. 95, notes that, since shipboard labor was such a public activity, "crews were extremely sophisticated in judging the quality of each man's contribution." In reconstructing the maritime world of the early 18th century, he draws sharp social distinction between officers and common sailors, dwelling on the friction and (in his opinion) proto-class tension between the two. Although such distinctions existed aboard large ships whose crews exceeded 20, a substantial volume of the Atlantic trade was carried in small sloops and schooners, where the highly personal level of constant interaction and considerable potential for advancement worked against such differentiation. In the 1780s, asserts Edwards, History Civil and Commercial (1794), 2:12–14, much tension in plantation societies arose because white planters or overseers did not perform fieldwork and thus had unreasonable expectations of the labor they could force their slaves to do. This was particularly common among recent white arrivals from Europe unaccustomed to local climate. Bolster, Black Jacks, 75, 81, qualifies the level to which shipboard working relationships undermined racial hierarchy: "Although formal boundaries [between officers and sailors] could flex to accommodate human relationships, they never entirely broke down. . . . Racial boundaries certainly existed, but they were often secondary to those established by the institution of the ship," and "the degree to which race was mitigated in the hierarchy of the ship" was reflected by the traditional designation of all nonproficient sailors as "boy," regardless of age or race.


On the process of entering a ship through customs and the oaths sworn, see Thomas C. Barrow, Trade and Empire: The British Customs Service in Colonial America, 1660–1775 (Cambridge, Mass., 1967), 265.

When Benjamin Young gave his slave Natt to his 3 daughters in 1761, he gave the man 1/3 of the wages he had earned as a mariner. In 1768, Frances Mallory willed that her slave Jack was to enjoy half of his wages and time after her death; Composite Volumes, 8:161, 14:268, Bermuda Arch. For other bequests of time or wages, see Book of Wills, 12:111, 12a:388, 12b:241, 390, and Composite Volumes, 14:176, Bermuda Arch. Throughout the American Revolution, black slaves made up a significant portion of the crews of Bermuda's 20 privateers on which they "behaved . . . irreproachably," firing cannon and acting as marksmen and snipers; Gov. Browne to Board of Trade, June 16, 1788; CO 37/40:135. In July 1779, Negro Richard Wright was given 3/4 of his prize money after serving on the privateer Triton; Composite Volumes, 15:9. Rear Admiral George Murray, commenting on the privateer Sir George Gray, noted "she is mostly manned with Slaves, but they are quite different from any other Slaves I ever met with, being trustworthy and good Seamen, and their Owners give them half their Prize money"; Murray to ? July 4,

30 "An Act for the Further and Better Regulating of Negroes and other Slaves and for the more Effectual and Speedy Way of Prosecuting them in Criminal Cases," July 3, 1711, Unsigned Manuscripts Acts, 1696–1746, 1755–1799, 39–41, Bermuda Arch.; renewed in 1730, 1733, 1736, 1742; [Legislature of Bermuda], Acts of Assembly, Made and Enacted in the Bermuda or Summer Islands (London, 1736), 94–95, 110, 119; Reginald Gray, comp., *Acts of the Legislature of the Island of Bermuda, 1690–1883*, 2 vols. (London, 1884), 1:xiii. The act forbade ship's captains from allowing their slaves to carry private ventures, but the law was widely ignored; no cases of seizure appear before the Court of Oyer and Terminer from 1704 to 1761, despite frequent protests by the Grand Jury. In 1786, Daniel Astwood, Sr.'s account with one of his ship's captains records 6s. 8d. advanced to his slave Toney in Halifax, Nova Scotia, on Sept. 11; Astwood Wadson Papers, box 9, folder 1, Bermuda Arch. Equiano, *Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*, ed. Carretta, 116–19. As in Bermuda, Equiano also received a portion of his wages as a living allowance; ibid., 101.


32 Minutes of Council, Mar. 26, 1674, BCR 5B:267; "An Act for Exterminating all Free Negroes, Indians, Molattoes such as have been Slaves so as they do not Remain in these Islands above the space of Six Months after such Freedom Given," Mar. 12, 1729/30, renewed 1761; Bermuda Arch.; Unsigned Manuscript Acts, 1696–1746, 1755–1799, 106–09; [Legislature of Bermuda], Acts of Assembly, 94. It is unclear how strictly this law was enforced, but there are several cases of forced bindings, deportations, and re-enslavement. Ann Ford, "a free negro woman," and Black Kate fell victim to the 1674 order; BCR 5B:209. In Feb. 1731, public auctioneer Samuel Smith sold a free mulatto woman and boy who neglected to leave Bermuda by the deadline established in the 1730 act; Composite Volumes, 8:194. Following the counsel of Gov. William Popple, who thought it unfair to "banish a free people from their Native Country" in the wake of rumored conspiracy, the Board of Trade deemed the expulsion of free blacks illegal in 1762 and disallowed the act; CO 37/19:63; Board of Trade, *Journal of the Commissioners for Trade and Plantations*, 14 vols. (London, 1920–1938), 1:296. Bermudian records reveal only two cases of self-purchase on the part of slaves; Composite Volumes, 1:5, 14:57. The surname of free mulattoes Sarah and Samuel Stiles of St. John's Parish, Nevis, suggests they may have come from Bermuda some time around 1748, a possible example of one of the few families that did choose freedom and emigration; Vere L. Oliver, ed., *Caribbeana: Being Miscellaneous Papers Relating to the History, Genealogy, Topography, and Antiquities of the British West Indies*, 6 vols. (London, 1910–1916), 1:324–26, 376. Various Wilkinsons, Friths, and Saunders (18th-century Bermudian surnames) were also resident in the same parish. Equiano, *Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*, ed. Carretta, 122. On the difficult position of free blacks in Jamaica, see Edwards, *History Civil and Commercial* (1794), 2:16–21.

33 BCR 9:28v; *South Carolina Gazette*, Nov. 10–17, 1758 (Saunders). Seamen were proud of their shore-going rig, or best outfit; on sailor adornment, see Bolster, *Black Jacks*, 91–92, 138–39, and Rodger, *Wooden World*, 64–65. "An Act to Prevent Buying, Selling or Bartering with Negroes and other Slaves" (1687) forbade slaves from trading on their own account, prohibited masters from giving their slaves liberty to plant tobacco or provisions, and punished whites who "trafficked" with slaves; [Legislature of Bermuda], *Acts of Bermuda*, 12. The act was renewed in 1704 but lapsed after 10 years. William Popple revived the act in 1745 to protect the colony's slaves, since it "will for the future prevent any unhappy negro from suffering in cases where he is actually innocent, as I fear too many have," when poor white Bermudians encouraged their slaves to steal for them or blamed their own thefts on blacks; CO 37/14:154. Bermuda's Grand Jury regularly protested against slaves who sailed for pleasure in boats, worked for themselves or on Sundays, sold goods, drank and gambled at unlicensed tippling houses, congregated together, and wore apparel often better than that of their owners. These protests and the lack of formal prosecution demonstrate both the lax enforcement of Bermuda's slave property laws and the health and vigor of the hidden slave economy; Court of Assize Proceedings, AZ 102/4:208, 300, 308, 409–11, 480–82, 524, 5:140, 181, 203, 325, Bermuda Arch. Antiproperty laws stemmed from white uncertainty whether items belonging to slaves were legitimately purchased or stolen. Formal markets for licensed slave hucksters established in the early
19th century did much to clear up this ambiguity. On independent slave markets and economies elsewhere, see Hilary Beckles, "An Economic Life of their Own: Slaves as Commodity Producers and Distributors in Barbados"; John Schlotterbeck, "The Internal Economy of Slavery in Rural Piedmont Virginia"; and the introduction to Morgan and Berlin, eds., The Slaves' Economy: Independent Production by Slaves in the Americas (London, 1991), 31–47, 170–81. Orlando Patterson, Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study (Cambridge, Mass., 1982), 182–86, discusses the widespread allowance of a peculium to slaves. Morgan, Slave Counterpoint, 358–59, notes that South Carolina and Virginia masters, like their Bermudian counterparts, "permitted slaves to produce and exchange goods because it served their own interests to do so."

The vast majority of Bermudian slaves lived with their white owners, frustrating attempts by historical archaeologists to reconstruct the material culture of the slave community. Integrated living arrangements make it impossible to distinguish between white- and black-deposited items mixed together in the same midden. Thus in Bermuda's case, one highly useful method of gaining insights into the sparsely documented life of slaves is denied to us. "An Act for Alteration and Amendment of Several Acts" (1717) and "An Act for the Further and Better Regulating of Negroes" (1730) suggest that some slaves lived apart, since these enjoined members of the civil night watch periodically to inspect "negro cabins" and note absent slaves. A survey of the colony's 18th-century probate inventories reveals few "negro cabins" and instead records many slaves in kitchens and cellars; Acts of Assembly . . . in Bermuda, 82, 95; Book of Wills, 14 vols., 1638–1800, Bermuda Arch.

A gombay (from the Bantu ngoma) was a "rustick drum" made from the trunk of a hollow tree covered with a sheep's skin. In Bermuda, around Christmas, masked and costumed male dancers made an "idolatrous procession" to "the Gumba" drum from one end of the island to the other, soliciting money along the way. In 1708, a Christmas gathering attended by slaves from St. George's, Hamilton, Smiths, Devonshire, and Pembroke Parishes near Flatts devolved into "a riotous tumult" in which several slaves were injured. This "unlawfull meeting" was condemned at the next assize, but the slaves' masters refused to present their slaves for prosecution. By the 1790s, slave balls were being held two or three times a week; Hubbard, "Slavery in Bermuda," 29; Edwards, History Civil and Commercial (1794), 2:86–87; General Quarter Court of Assize for Bermuda, 1689–1724, MSS Rawlinson C 910:271, Bodleian Library; Bermuda Gazette, Jan. 23, 1796; Packwood, Chained on the Rock, 95–96. "An Act for the Further and Better Regulating of Negroes and other Slaves" and "An Act to Prevent Persons allowing and encouraging any Negroes or other Slaves from rioting and meeting and unreasonable times in his or their houses," [Legislature of Bermuda], Acts of Assembly, 93–95. Public accounts reveal that Bermudian slaves were given rum and other liquor as part of their wages for working on the island's fortifications, bridges, and public buildings. In Dec. 1743, the Grand Jury complained that, despite the 1730 sumptuary law, slaves "as frequently wear fine cloathes as before"; Court of Assize Proceedings, AZ 102/8:51, Bermuda Arch.,

Perhaps the most curious evidence of black transoceanic trade is the frequent presence of colono ware on Bermudian archaeological sites, found at 6 of the 7 domestic sites (Hill House [Hog Bay], Springfield [Somerset], Stewart Hall, Globe Hotel, Tucker House kitchen, and the St. George's Historical Society Museum [St. George's] but not at Bridge House [St. George's]) excavated to date. This ware is clearly associated with slaves on sites throughout the West Indies and in the mainland southern colonies. Because Bermuda lacks clay suitable for making pottery, the colono ware found on Bermudian sites was almost certainly imported and thus reflects a conscious choice on the part of (probably black but also possibly white) sailors to purchase these objects from slave communities abroad rather than other readily available European ceramics. The cultural implications of colono ware importation are unclear, but its presence is a tangible reminder of the exchange between slave communities in Bermuda and elsewhere in the western Atlantic littoral. The debate on colono ware is extensive; for an introduction, see Leland Ferguson, Uncommon Ground: Archaeology and Early African America, 1650–1800 (Washington, D. C., 1992).

Packwood, Chained on the Rock, 35, 38; Bolster, Black Jacks, 13–14. Pirates also recognized the pull of shoreside family and rarely recruited married men within their crews; Rediker, Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea, 260–61. On Bermuda's demography and the implications of a skewed sex ratio, see Crane "Socioeconomics of a Female Majority in Eighteenth-Century Bermuda," 233–39, and Jarvis, "In the Eye
of All Trade," 583–633.

38 Bermuda Registry of Slaves, 1821, Bermuda Arch. The register additionally lists 76 boatmen, 29 pilots, and 18 fishermen. Recorded at a time when Bermuda's economy was in flux, the list must be used with caution in evaluating slave professions; by 1834, the number of slave sailors had dropped sharply to 208 as Atlantic-wide increases in vessel tonnage and North American competition drove Bermuda out of the shipping trade; CO 37/94:317.

39 In the 1730s, Bermuda suffered from a general depression in trade and from the incursions of Spanish guarda coastas in the Caribbean, which captured at least 13 vessels worth more than £9,000 between 1727 and 1729 alone; CO 37/12:53, 59. More than 1,000 white Bermudians migrated to Virginia, the Carolinas, and the Bahamas, many taking slaves with them. In 1722, Hope wrote the Board of Trade that "no body will sell a negro here that has been born in his family, but upon the last extremity, so that they multiply prodigiously," a sentiment echoed by later governors. Nevertheless, hard times forced Bermudians to send or sell slaves abroad. Between 1725 and 1749, Bermudian vessels transferred 135 slaves to Virginia and 42 to New York, usually in ones and twos; Bermudian vessels landed many more slaves in both ports, but these originated in the West Indies. Transfer does not necessarily mean sale, since many white Bermudian families migrated to American ports during this period. Figures extracted from Walter Minchinton, Celia King, and Peter Waite, eds., Virginia Slave-Trade Statistics, 1698–1775 (Richmond, 1984), 61–145, and Elizabeth Donnan, ed., Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America, 4 vols. (Washington, D. C., 1932), 3:479–512.

40 Hilton to Benjamin Hunt, July 21, 1741, in Minutes of Council, Sept. 1, 1741. The letter, relating that "they were hanging six or seven negroes of a day, so that [Hilton] could not go on Shoar," was found washed ashore and delivered to the Bermuda Council. The letter arrived via a sloop belonging to Capt. Benjamin Morgan, who "knew not of any such letter coming in his Sloop" but did admit "he knew all the Negroes therein named." New York governor George Clark reassured the Bermuda government that no Bermudian slaves were implicated in the "late plot to burn that city"; Bermuda Hist. Q., 27 (1970), 4, 34–35; 28 (1971), 2, 35.

41 Browne, "Answer to Queries to about Slaves in Bermuda," June 10, 1788, CO 37/40:135–36; Windley, comp., Runaway Slave Advertisements: A Documentary History from the 1730s to 1790, 4 vols. (Westport, Conn., 1983), Bermuda-born, ibid., 1:100, 392, 3: 44, 61, 75, 115, 145, 164, 167, 182, 208, 211, 243, 247, 327 (two slaves), 351, 352, 436, 499, 512, 544, 568, 575, 687, 728, 738, 4:34, 81. The overwhelming majority ran away in South Carolina (24), with smaller numbers absconding in Georgia (2) and Virginia (2). To this figure, another 16 cases where slaves were probably Bermuda-born but not mentioned as such might be added: ibid., 3:6, 33, 37, 70, 110, 131, 254, 261, 267, 293, 390, 484, 559, 4:14, 49, 66. Since Bermudian vessels spent most of their time in the West Indies, it is likely that additional slaves ran away there but these cases are impossible to identify and measure, owing to the dearth of surviving pre-Revolutionary War British Caribbean newspapers. On naval desertion, see Rodger, Wooden World, 188–204, which notes that the penalty for desertion was almost entirely financial; although the Royal navy meted out harsh punishments to deserters and offered rewards to those who captured them, relatively few were actually court-martialed, and most of those convicted were eventually pardoned. Rediker, Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea, 40–61, 102–06, 291-94, discusses the reasons why merchant sailors deserted, but does not estimate rates.

42 Windley, comp., Runaway Slave Advertisements, 3:145, 164, 738–39. See also Ben, a caulker, who was sold at auction in Charleston but ran away after 4 months to return to Bermuda, and Tom; ibid., 3:728 (Feb. 24-26, 1784), 3:738.

43 CO 37/20:39. Daniel Keele corroborated Stiles's story, stating that the slaves were "more fearful of falling into the hands of Pirates than white persons were"; Composite Volumes, 8:157, 10, 2:21. George Chaplin's slave Daniel was the one who drowned. The white crews spent a miserable two months in a Spanish jail before the captain of HMS Beaver obtained their release from the governor of Caracas.
Bermudian masters also issued certificates of freedom and retroactively manumitted their slaves so they would be held as prisoners of war rather than be sold after being captured by Spanish and French privateers; Composite Volumes, 8:157, 10, 2:21–22, 155, 12:337. "In Bermuda Owners of Vessels generally man them with their Slaves, and it is very customary, in War Time, to procure Passes for them as Freemen, in Case they should be taken by the Enemy" ran the runaway notice for Archibald Campbell's slave Tom, who used such a pass to claim his freedom in Williamsburg; *Virginia Gazette* (Purdie and Dixon), Sept. 17, 1771. This genuine gesture or legal fiction enabled slaves to return to Bermuda when they otherwise would have been lost for good, but such a return largely depended on the vigorous protests of the slaves themselves.


45 Bolster, *Black Jacks*, 38, 52–53, 70–71, 93–101, notes local pride and identity among slaves undercut feelings of solidarity. Creole-born for generations and lacking strong African cultural roots, Bermudian slaves were considerably Anglicized in speech and dress compared with their enslaved brethren elsewhere. Eighteenth-century observers frequently commented on the European features and ways of black Bermudians, products of racially integrated households and probably some degree of miscegenation. Josiah Meigs found the island's well-spoken slaves "remarkably handsome, having surprisingly assimilated to the European figure and feature"; Meigs to Ezra Stiles, Apr. 24, 1790, in Stiles, *Extracts from the Itineraries . . . of Ezra Stiles*, ed. Dexter, 537. Crévecoeur, "Description of Bermuda," 202, found Bermudian blacks "a race . . . long since refined not only by their stay on this island but by education that they have received from their Masters." In 1800, Methodist missionary Joshua Marsden called Bermudians "a race entirely different from the West India negroes. . . . A Bermuda black man thinks himself a gentleman compared to" plantation slaves, in *The Narrative of a Mission to Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and the Somers Islands* (London, 1816; rpt. 1966), 140. On Bermudian contempt for agriculture, see William F. Williams, *African to creole slaves in the southern North American colonies, see Morgan, Slave Counterpoint, 58–67, and Berlin, Many Thousands Gone*, 110–12.

46 White Outerbridge emigrated from Bermuda to the South Newport District of Georgia with his wife, son, and 5 slaves by July 1756, when he petitioned for 550 acres and a lot in the town of Hardwick. That same month, he advertised for the return of his slave "yellow Sue." The runaway ad for Josiah Saunders noted that he was thought to be with Lt. White Outerbridge's "runaway Wench" in South Carolina. Two other Outerbridge slaves, Old Sam and Mary, who was "well known in Charles-Town, Beaufort, Savannah and Augusta" ran away in 1765 and 1767, raising questions about Outerbridge's character as a master; Allen D. Candler et al., eds, *The Colonial Records of the State of Georgia*, 32 vols. (Athens, Ga., 1904–1916), 7:356, 530; *S. C. Gaz.*, July 8, 1756, Nov. 10, 1758, Aug. 3, 1765, Feb. 2, 1767; *Jamaica Royal Gazette*, Mar. 24, 1792 (Joe Anderson), quoted in Scott, "Common Wind," 111. On the motivations and demographic profile of runaway creole slaves in Virginia and South Carolina, see Morgan, "Colonial South Carolina Runaways: Their Significance for Slave Culture," *Slavery and Abolition*, 7 (1985), 57–78, and *Slave Counterpoint*,


51 Edwards, *History Civil and Commercial* (1794), 1:470; CO 37/40:135; Book of Protests, 1:121–22, 129–30, Bermuda Arch.; Packwood, *Chained on the Rock*, 44–46. Four of the Regulator's officers had given their parole to John Hancock and lodged a protest that they had taken no part in the capture of the *Duxbury*; K. G. Davies, ed, *Documents of the American Revolution, 1770–1783*, 21 vols. (Dublin, 1978), 19:320–21. The Regulator retained her name and operated out of Salem after the Revolution; during the War of 1812, she was re-commissioned as a privateer and was captured off Cape Sable by the *Colibri* in Aug. 1812. Bolster, *Black Jacks*, 153–54, mentions the Regulator case but only reports that the Bermudian slaves
chose to return home to slavery in an endnote. The offer of freedom was not uniformly extended to Bermudian slave sailors; when the Bermudian sloop Ariadne was captured en route from Honduras to Jamaica by the American privateer sloop Washington, she was sent into Charleston where the 6 slaves among her crew were condemned and sold; Composite Volumes, 14:445, Bermuda Arch.

\[52\] Slavery in Belize resembled that in Bermuda in many ways and was also characterized as benign and mild; Bolland, *Formation of a Colonial Society*, 68–84.