

Never Forget: The Slave Trade and the Middle Passage on NJ's Shores

February 23, 2022

Edited Transcription and Responses from the Q & A

[Link to video](#)

The New Jersey Historical Commission is grateful to our panelists for responding to some of the questions that they were unable to respond to during the program.

Please note that the Commission prefers the terminology of enslaved instead of slave in describing Africans and multiracial people held in bondage in the Americas in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. The term “enslaved” centers and calls attention to the humanity of people in bondage rather than the dehumanization of them as property (slave= stagnant, passive noun, enslaved= dynamic, active condition). By using enslaved, you call attention to the imposed condition of slavery on the human experience, centering their humanity and experiences.

A. Responses from Ann Chinn, director of the Middle Passage Ceremonies and Port Markers Project

1. Where were the ships constructed? Were any made in NJ?

The list for New Jersey expanded recently to include “Delaware River” so there are now 8 trans-Atlantic voyages to the colony/state. Additional data on these ships can be obtained from [Voyages: Transatlantic Slave Trade Database](#). None of the ships were constructed in New Jersey:

- *Sally* #24646 constructed in Boston, MA
- *William* #25027 constructed in New York
- *Catherine* #25318 constructed in New York
- *Hannah* #25339 place of construction unspecified
- *Africa* #28045 place of construction unspecified
- *Sally* #37021 place of construction unspecified
- *Africa* #36245 constructed in Providence, RI
- *Mariner’s Adventure* place of construction unspecified

2. Why Madagascar? The voyage seems risky.

Most of the ships that sailed to East Africa were captained by interlopers who wanted to avoid the over taxed and controlled West and Central African trade ports. The potential numbers of available captives for transport, usually far more than at major European dominated West African ports, were larger in the Swahili/Arab trade centers. It was riskier in terms of shipping, but often more captives were loaded in order to adjust for anticipated human loss, voyage length and profit.

3. 1519? I thought the first year a slave ship arrived was in 1619?

U.S. history is skewed towards England and Great Britain unfortunately. That accepted perspective eliminates Iberian invasion and empire building completely. If we factor in Puerto Rico as a U.S. territory then the first direct shipment of Africans was in 1519. At that time Puerto Rico was a Spanish administrative center equal in importance to Hispaniola. For those who wish to limit Middle Passage history only to the U.S. mainland the first shipment of enslaved Africans arrived at Sapelo Sound, GA/SC in 1526. This is where a failed Spanish colonial settlement, San Miguel de Gualdape, occurred and the Africans escaped. Anyone wishing more information can

visit our [Facebook page](#) and search the recorded session by Professor Jane Landers, “Africans on the North American Continent,” September 29, 2021.

4. I see two ship voyages into Camden/Delaware River. Shouldn't be a third?

Voyages Slave Trade Database will provide all the ship information for NJ. Camden, NJ has three ferry ports where typically captives were transported off Middle Passage ships docked in Philadelphia across river to Camden.

5. The 500,000 arrived into the USA or New Jersey?

That number applies to the total number of captive Africans arriving on the U.S. mainland.

6. It's stated that "African slavery in New Jersey began with early English settlement." Is there no evidence of earlier Dutch importation?

I do not know the particular colonial geographic history of New Jersey. If the territory was at any time under Dutch control then the importation would have probably been recorded as part of the history of New York.

7. I do not understand the 1788 slide where it said free Blacks were not allowed to settle in the State. Aree Van Guinee founded the Zion Lutheran Church in his home in 1714. He was freed African American and owned many acres of land. Robert Aaron lived in Bedminster, and he was a free African American and owned land. It is not known if he was ever enslaved. He was married in the Zion Lutheran Church in 1788, and owned land in 1789, and paid taxes and voted.

Several colonies and states viewed free Blacks as a threat to the institution of slavery and were not allowed to migrate and settle. Those Blacks already free by 1788 in most cases remained often in spite of harsher tax structures and levies placed on them to encourage that they leave the area. Be aware that it took two tries before New Jersey banned slavery and ratified the 13th Constitutional Amendment legally abolishing slavery – with the exception of penal slavery. This was the last U.S. State in the North to abolish slavery.

8. Will Ms. Chinn's presentation/info be available for us to see. I am interested in her history of the women who were responsible for the children who were birthed. As women we need to know such facts. Thank you.

The statement that African women were the “mothers of America” is based on research and an abstract by Professor Paul E. Lovejoy, York University, Toronto, Colorado. *The “Middle Passage”*: *The Enforced Migration of Africans across the Atlantic*

9. Can Ms. Chinn specify which people became "wards of the state"? Are these the people who reached an age of emancipation? Or the children of the people still enslaved? Can she tell us more about this? Thank you.

The “wards of the state” in this presentation were those who were born after 1804 and reached either 21 or 25 years of age. These were children of enslaved parents who would not be freed until 1865. There are several dynamics in play here.

- For those remaining in New Jersey as free people there was no policy in place to establish a statewide support system financially, socially or educationally for those who “graduated” into freedom. Those born after 1804 were not born free.

- Another consideration was that during the 21 or 25 years of enslavement (before emancipation at 21 or 25) they had no rights. Many were sold by their owners prior to their legal emancipation. New Jersey was a source of supply for the domestic human trade. Persons who were “lucky” could be sold and transported to nearby Maryland or Delaware. Delaware did not ratify the 13th Amendment until 1901. Many others were transported South and West as the nation expanded the frontier borders and removed Native people off the land.
- Factor in both the Fugitive Slave Act and the Dred Scott decision which boxed many enslaved people into a legal system where no rights were guaranteed.

B. *Responses from William Galetta, Independent Scholar.*

1) Thank you for this presentation. Could you tell us where the slaves who were sold in Camden and Perth Amboy ended up? Plantations in the South? Remained in NJ?

In Julia Martin’s article “Slavery’s legacy is written all over North Jersey, if you know where to look” in the February 28, 2021 of www.northjersey.com “The Meadowlands, now home to the football Giants and Jets and the American Dream mall, was once the site of a notorious market where slave traders bought captive Africans who had been stolen from slave ships.

The slave market was hidden in 5,500 acres of lush cedar forest. The surrounding land, now a maze of marshes and development occupied by the towns of Lyndhurst, North Arlington, Rutherford, Kearny, Newark and Harrison, was subdivided into plantations stretching as far north as Hackensack.

Named New Barbados after the wealthy slave owners who came from the British-owned Caribbean Island, the settlement boomed after the Colonial government offered bounties of 60 acres of free land for each slave imported.

"That's why New Jersey is called the Garden State," said Frank Godlewski, who is writing a book called "Pirates, Slaves and the Meadowlands Fire." "The area jump-started the New World's economy through the free labor provided by enslaved Africans."

Because of its location on a water route from the port of Perth Amboy, where the slave ships arrived, the dense forest became a hideout for pirates who stole slave ships along with their human cargo. They brought kidnapped Africans to the Meadowlands to be sold into slavery. The market thrived, especially after the slave trade was outlawed in New York in the 1760s.

Though at first the governors promoted New Barbados' slave trade, they were eventually forced to confront the pirates' violent criminal activity. In 1791, sheriffs burned the forest down. Sixty pirates were caught and hanged and many others died in the fire.

At low tide, the blackened stumps of the cedar trees are still visible to commuters heading to or from New York City on the trains that traverse the Meadowlands.”

2) Why Madagascar? The voyage seems risky.

It was very risky as the voyage from the Indian Ocean, around the Cape of Good Hope, is considered even today one of the most treacherous sea passages in the world.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, European merchants, evading monopoly controls in the Atlantic, sought to uncover new sources of slaves and a few focused their efforts on Madagascar. **Reports of a bustling slave trade already in operation in Madagascar attracted many of these traders. By the mid-seventeenth century, Europeans were**

convinced that Malagasy merchants could supply American markets with cheap slaves, prompting a brief increase in the number of Malagasy slaves transported to the Americas.

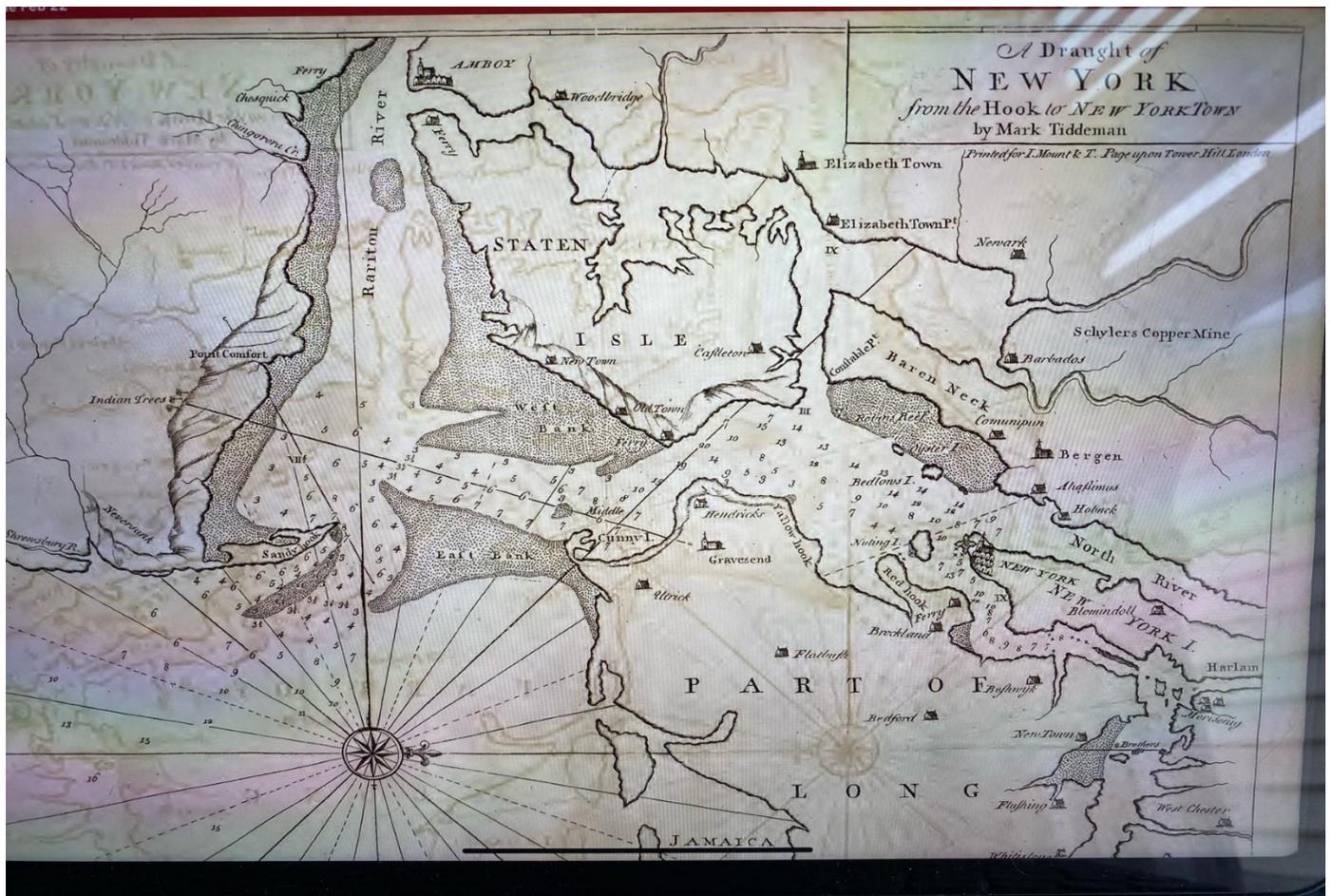
This trade came to a halt within a few decades, due in part to the distances involved. During this period, European monopoly trading companies also purchased Malagasy slaves for their trading posts in the Indian Ocean.¹²

¹² *During the sixteenth century, Portuguese traders tried to use Madagascar as a supplementary source of slaves for Mozambique as well as replenishing and filling the cargoes of their passing ships: See seventeenth century Dutch and French descriptions of the Portuguese trade, "COL C/5A/1." Portuguese traded for slaves for their Indian Ocean holdings in Goa as well. During the seventeenth-century, the Dutch bought slaves for the Cape, Mauritius, and Batavia: Rene Barendse, "Slaving on the Malagasy Coast, 1640- 1700," in Cultures of Madagascar: Ebb and Flow of Influences, ed. Sandra Evers and Marc Spindler (Leiden: International Institute for Asian Studies, 1995), 137-55; J. Moree, A Concise History of Dutch Mauritius, 1598-1710: A Fruitful and Healthy Land (London: Kegan Paul International, 1998), 31; references to Madagascar are scattered throughout the Portuguese documents in George McCall Theal, Records of South-Eastern Africa collected in various libraries and archive departments in Europe, 9 vols. (Cape Town: C. Struik, 1964), vols. 1-6. For a good summary of the slave trade, see Markus Vink, "'The World's Oldest Trade': Dutch Slavery and Slave Trade in the Indian Ocean in the Seventeenth Century," Journal of World History 14, no. 2 (2003):131-77. The French wanted slaves for the Mascarene islands and the English for their Indian Ocean holdings during the eighteenth century. For an overview, see J. M. Filliot, La traite des esclaves vers les Mascareignes au XVIIIe siècle (Paris: ORSTOM, 1974); Richard B. Allen, "The Constant Demand of the French: The Mascarene Slave Trade and the Worlds of the Indian Ocean and Atlantic During the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," Journal of African History 49 (2008): 43-72. The English also bought slaves for St. Helena Island, as well as for their bases in India and Indonesia.*

3) "Was Sandy Hook also a primary place where people in bondage were taken after that first landing? Are there efforts in Monmouth County to add markers or make this history clearer?"

Sandy Hook was the first encounter with land for ships entering New York Harbor. It became a smuggler's haven, along with Perth Amboy and even Staten Island as no taxes would be levied as in New York.

This is a map showing the sea route entrance of the lower and upper New York harbors. Passing Sandy Hook, make a starboard turn around the eastern shore of Staten Island and you're on your way into New York City to the north. Make a hard left to port and you head west into Perth Amboy.



Penelope Stout

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Penelope Van Princis Kent Stout (1622 - 1732) was the first female white settler of [Monmouth County, New Jersey](#). According to *History of the Baptists*^[1] (cited in *Stout and Allied Families* by H.F. Stout^[2]) she lived to the age of 110.

In 1643^[3] Penelope and her husband took a ship from the Netherlands to New Amsterdam. With their ship foundering, she and her husband, John Kent, and several others made land at [Sandy Hook](#). Her husband was not able to travel due to illness and she remained with him. After the couple were abandoned on shore by the other passengers looking for safety and shelter, she and her husband were attacked by natives and her husband was killed. She was gravely injured and left for dead. She took shelter in a hollow tree until she made herself known to the [Navesink tribe](#) of [Leni Lenapi](#). They bound up her wounds, and when she was well enough to travel she was released to the Dutch at [New Amsterdam](#) (now New York City). There in 1644 at the age of 22, she married Richard Stout (1615 - 1705), son of John Stout (1584 - 1620) and Elizabeth Bee (1591 - 1685) of Nottinghamshire, England. They had a large family (7 sons and 4 daughters) mostly born at [Gravesend](#) in the current area of [Coney Island, Brooklyn](#). They moved to [Middletown Township, Monmouth County, New Jersey](#) around 1665. This was where the Leni Lenapi who had earlier helped her were from, and they were still living there when the Stouts arrived.

The surnames for Penelope are quite variable in several references; Van Princis, Princis, Prince, Princes, Princess, Van Prinzen, Prinzen, Kent. The Gravesend Town Records⁴¹ as written by Englishmen at the time of a trial in September 1648 name the defendant as 'Penelope Prince'. However, this does not necessarily mean that she had not yet married Richard Stout, as married Dutch women in that time period traditionally kept and used their maiden names. In honor of her being a pioneer in Middletown, NJ, 'Penelope Lane' off of Kings Highway is named after her.