

Name _____ Date _____ Class _____

DBQ: How did the economy of colonial Rhode Island Become dependent on the Transatlantic slave trade?

- Identify and analyze the motives that RI citizens had for engaging in the trafficking of enslaved Africans during the colonial period.
- Interpret and synthesize information from primary and secondary sources to prove a thesis.

Throughout the 18th century Rhode Island's merchants came to control between 60 and 90 percent of the overall American trade in enslaved Africans.

In this DBQ we explored how this came to be and why a small colony with limited agriculture came to control such a large part in this trade.

Documents:

DOC. A – Cargo Inventory of the Slave ship sally, 1764

DOC. B – Ingoing/Outgoing Ships Newport, 1768

DOC. C – Assorted Advertisements from the Newport Mercury 1768-1769

DOC. D – Map of Colonial Rum distilleries ca. 1770

Directions:

1. Review your answers to each document's question "How might you use this document to prove that Rhode Island was dependent on the slave trade?"
2. Using your answers to each question, write a response which demonstrates how the documents we analyzed support the idea that RI economy was dependent on the slave trade.
3. Remember to state your thesis (fact + opinion) at the beginning of your answer.
4. Remember to mention ALL documents analyzed.
5. This is the **TEST GRADE** for our Rhode Island Slavery unit.

Voyage of the Sally

In 1764, a one-hundred ton brigantine called the Sally embarked from Providence, Rhode Island, to West Africa on a slaving voyage. The ship was owned by Nicholas Brown and Company, a Providence merchant firm run by four brothers – Nicholas, John, Joseph, and Moses Brown. The Sally's voyage was one of roughly a thousand transatlantic slaving ventures launched by Rhode Islanders in the colonial and early national period, and one of the deadliest. Of the 196 Africans acquired by the ship's master, Esek Hopkins, at least 109 perished, some in a failed insurrection, others by suicide, starvation, and disease.

Fitting Out the Sally

While a few Rhode Island families made substantial fortunes in the African slave trade, the real story of the Rhode Island slave trade is not of a few great fortunes but of extremely broad patterns of participation and profit. Even with the inevitable gaps in the historical record, it is possible to identify some seven hundred eighteenth-century Rhode Islanders who owned or captained slave ships. Some merchants even sold shares in slaving voyages, much as we today buy and sell stocks.

Even those who did not invest directly in the slave trade often depended on it for their livelihoods. Preparing and equipping a slave ship for the long trip to Africa took weeks and consumed the energies of an entire community. Local sail lofts and ropewalks prepared canvas and rigging. [1] Caulkers and smiths sealed and sheathed hulls. [2] [3] Distilleries churned out the high-proof New England rum for which Rhode Island ships were famous on the African coast. [4] Farmers supplied flour, beef, tobacco, and onions. Bakers supplied bread. [5] Even the local apothecary contributed, supplying a variety of ointments and elixirs for the ship's medicine chest. [6]

By early September, 1764, the fitting out was finished. Esek Hopkins, the Sally's captain, produced a detailed inventory of everything aboard the ship, down to the exact number of gallons in each hogshead of rum. [7] According to the ship's bill of lading, the Sally carried 17,274 gallons of rum when she sailed, as well as 1,800 bunches of onions, thirty boxes of spermaceti candles (whale oil candles manufactured at the Brown family's Providence candle works), and other supplies and trade goods. [8] It also carried seven swivel guns, an assortment of small arms, "40 hand Cufs & 40 Shakels," chains, cutlasses, and other items needed to control the intended cargo. [9]

Document A Analysis Questions

1. What might the abbreviations Hhds., Bbls, & Gn. Stand for?
2. What was the approximate value of the Sally's cargo?
3. Are there any items in the inventory that surprised you or that you are confused about?
4. What Newport and Rhode Island based businesses would have benefited from such a voyage being funded?
5. How might you use this document to prove that Rhode Island was dependant on the Transatlantic Slave Trade?

The Newport Mercury

The Newport Mercury is Rhode Island's oldest newspapers and one of the oldest newspapers in the country. Founded in 1758 by James Franklin Jr. (Benjamin Franklin's nephew), it was published regularly before and after the American Revolution, being interrupted briefly by the British occupation of Newport.

Attached are several advertisements and articles printed in the Mercury from the years 1768 and 1768. As you analyze these documents answer the questions that follow.

Document B: Custom House Record Newport Mercury Jan. 11-18, 1768

No Eastern Mail arrived since our last.

CUSTOM-HOUSE, RHODE-ISLAND.		
INWARD ENTRIES,		
Brig Africa, Abraham All,		<i>From</i> Jamaica.
Ship Sultan, Peter Thompson,		St. Vincents.
Sloop Neptune, Christopher Whipple,		Grenadoes.
OUTWARD ENTRIES,		
Ship Polly, Benjamin Hicks,		<i>For</i> West Indies.
Sloop Batchelor, George Nicholls,		Ditto.
Sloop Penelope,		Ditto.
Ship Endeavour, Acors Sheffield,		Jamaica.
CLEARED FOR DEPARTURE,		
Sloop Dolphin, James Nichols,		<i>For</i> North-Carolina.
Sloop Defiance, Peleg Smith,		Ditto.
Schooner Betsey Ann, Thomas Tillinghast,		Jamaica.
Sloop Ruth, John Negus,		Surrinam.
Sloop Mary, John Negus, jun.		Barbados.
Brig Dolphin, Henry Weedon,		West-Indies.
Brig Dove, Nathan Stanton,		Ditto.

Analysis Questions:

1. To where are RI ships travelling during this week?
2. From where are incoming ships coming?
3. Based on your prior knowledge, what goods might be coming in and out of Newport aboard these vessels?
4. If you wanted to find exactly what each ship carried, where might you look for this information?
5. How might you use this document to prove that Rhode Island was dependant on the Transatlantic Slave Trade?

To be SOLD, by
James Carpenter,
 At the lower Part of Thames-Street,
A Quantity of LIGHT
FLOUR, RICE, Jamaica RUM
 In Porter Casks, and **SHEEP'S WOOL.**

Peleg Barker, jun.
 Has a Call at his Shop, turning down to Mr Carr's
 Ferry Wharf.

OLD Jamaica Spirits, West-India and
 New England Rum, Molasses, Sugar, Flour,
 Eggs of all Sizes, Wool-Cards, Salt by the Bushel,
 long and short Pipes, Spices, Cotton-Wool; a good
 Assortment of Stone and Earthen Ware, Pig Tail, Hog
 Tail, choice Roll and cut Paper Tobacco, Snuff by the
 Dozen or single Bottle, with a Number of other Arti-
 cles, cheap for Cash.

Those who please to Favour him with their Custom,
 may depend upon the best Treatment. (63)

Ten Dollars Reward.

RAN away from the Subscriber, a likely,
 well built **NEGRO MAN**, named **CUFF**, a-
 bout 26 Years of Age: He has on One of his Legs,
 and also on One of his Feet, a large **SCAR**, and stoops
 very much when he walks, had on when he went away,
 a pair of Kersey Breeches, Flannel Shirt, and Shoes and
 Stockings:—Whoever will take up said Negro, and
 convey him to his Master, or confine him in any of his
 Majesty's Goals, so that his Master may have him again,
 shall receive **TEN DOLLARS** Reward, and have all
 necessary Charges paid, by **JOSEPH CONGDON.**
 South-Kingstown, March 27. 1769. (63)

Daniel Ruffel,

In Thames-Street, next adjoining to Peleg Thurston,
 Esqrs, informs his Customers and others,

THAT he has an Assortment of
 European and India Goods, which he will sell
 cheaper than any Shop in Town, as he is determined to
 break up Shop-keeping.

TO BE SOLD,
 By **Thomas G. Stelle,**
Philadelphia Super-fine and
common FLOUR, Ship-Bread, Bar-Iron
 &c. &c. (14 lbs)

Genuine Tilloch's SNUFF,

By the Dozen or Bottle; choice Capers by the Bottle
 or Pound; a few Dozens of excellent Porter; Pepper
 by the Hundred, Dozen, or smaller Quantity; race and
 ground Ginger, by the Hundred or Dozen; Pimenta by
 the Bag or less Quantity; choice French Indigo; G.
 B. Wool and Cotton Cards,

To be SOLD by
Samuel Lyndon, jun.
 At his Shop in Thames-Street, near the Brick-Market:

Also, a variety of
ENGLISH and INDIA GOODS,
 very cheap for Cash.

N. B. A great ASSORTMENT of Denmark Lace,
 very cheap. Said LYNDON requests every Person in-
 debted to him, to make speedy Payment, to enable him
 to pay his Debts; otherwise he shall (without fail) put
 their Notes and Accounts in Suit at next November
 Court. (62)

To be SOLD, by
JAMES CARPENTER,
 At the lower Part of Thames-Street,

DUM-B-FISH by the Quantity, Ja-
 maica RUM in Porter Casks, and
SHEEP'S WOOL.

JUST imported, and to be SOLD, by
SIMON PEASE,
 at his Store,

A few Hogheads of the very best Shop
SUGAR.

Joseph Belcher

Takes this Method to inform his Customers and others,
THAT he makes and sells Pewter
 Ware by Wholesale and Retail, as cheap as can
 be bought in Boston or elsewhere; those who please to
 favour him with their Custom may depend on being as
 well used by Letter, as if present: He also continues to
 carry on the Braziers and Founder's Business as usual, at
 his Shop next Door to Joseph Wanton, Esq; in Thames-
 Street.

N. B. He will take in pay besides Cash, Old Pewter
 Brass, Copper, &c. (19)

TO BE SOLD,
 On reasonable Terms,
 By **John Perry, jun.**
 AT SWARSEY,

A NEW SLOOP of about 65 Tons,
 with a long Quarter Deck, tumble in Side, and
 main Deck about a foot above the Water; Plank-Sheer'd;
 and calk'd inside and out to the Gunnel. (19)

TO BE SOLD,
 By **Doct. Ezra Stiles,**
 A few COPIES of the dissenting Gentle-
 man's ANSWER to Mr White's
 Three Letters.

TO BE SOLD,
 At the Printing-Office, a few OF
WEATHERWISE'S ALMANACKS,
 For 1769:
 And a few COPIES of the INDEX to the
COLONY LAWS.

John Dockray,
 HAS TO SELL,

CHEESE by the Hundred or Thir-
 ty pound Weight, or single Cheese: Likewise a good
 Assortment of Winter GOODS; New England Rum
 by the Hoghead; and a Quantity of **STONE WARE,**
 consisting of PLATES, DISHES, &c.

TO BE SOLD,
 FOR WANT OF EMPLOY.

MELASSES by the Hoghead, cotton
 Wool, Geneva, by the Case, Oznaburgs by the Bol-
 lered, by the Groat, Cafes with Bottles, &c. a
 cheap for Cash, to be SOLD by

George Buckmaster,
 at his House in High-Street.

Stephen Deblois, jun.
 Has just opened, at the Store formerly in-
 proved by Mr. THOMAS WICKHAM, jun
 on the Wharf adjoining to Col. GOUDRE-
 MALBONE'S;

A Large Assortment of English
GOODS, which will be sold as low as are to be
 bought at Boston. As said Dealers's Stay will
 be but a few Days, those who incline to purchase, will
 apply immediately. Newport, Feb. 15. 1763.

To be sold by **Martin Howard,**
 (Adjoining to the Back of Major Bready's Rope walk
ABOUT eleven Acres of Land, or
 in smaller Parts, either in one, two, three, or four Acres
 Lots, &c. (lying at the higher End of the Long
 Wharf) to be sold by said Howard, a Lot of forty
 eight Feet, or in twelve or eighteen Feet Lots, very con-
 venient for Tradesmen's Shops, &c. to erect, or build
 thereon.
 Newport, 15th February, 1763

To be SOLD,

THE Hull of a likely, well-built
 Coffer, burthen 43 Tons; built of the best White Oak
 Timber and Plank, Locust trimm'd, completely finish'd,
 &c.—now lying at Cowley's Wharf. For further Partic-
 ulars, enquire of **SAMUEL LYNDON, jun.**
 Newport, 15th February, 1763.

For **BOSTON,**
THE Sloop Success, Nathaniel
 Angley, Master, will fill in about a Fortnight, now
 lying at Holmes's Wharf. For freight or Passage, ap-
 ply to **ELEAZER TREVETT,** or to the Master on
 board.

Said TREVETT has to sell, a Quantity of **OUTRIGERS.**

To be sold by **MARY FLAGG,**
A likely **NEGRO Wench**, about 30
 Years of Age. Newport, Feb. 15. 1768.

To be sold by **HENRY JAKWAYS,**
A likely **NEGRO GIRL,**
 between ten and eleven Years of Age.

To be sold, on reasonable Terms,
A few House and Garden **LOTS,**
 situate near the upper End of Thames-Street, and like-
 wise in and near the Back Street. For further Partic-
 ulars, enquire of **TIMOTHY BAICH.**

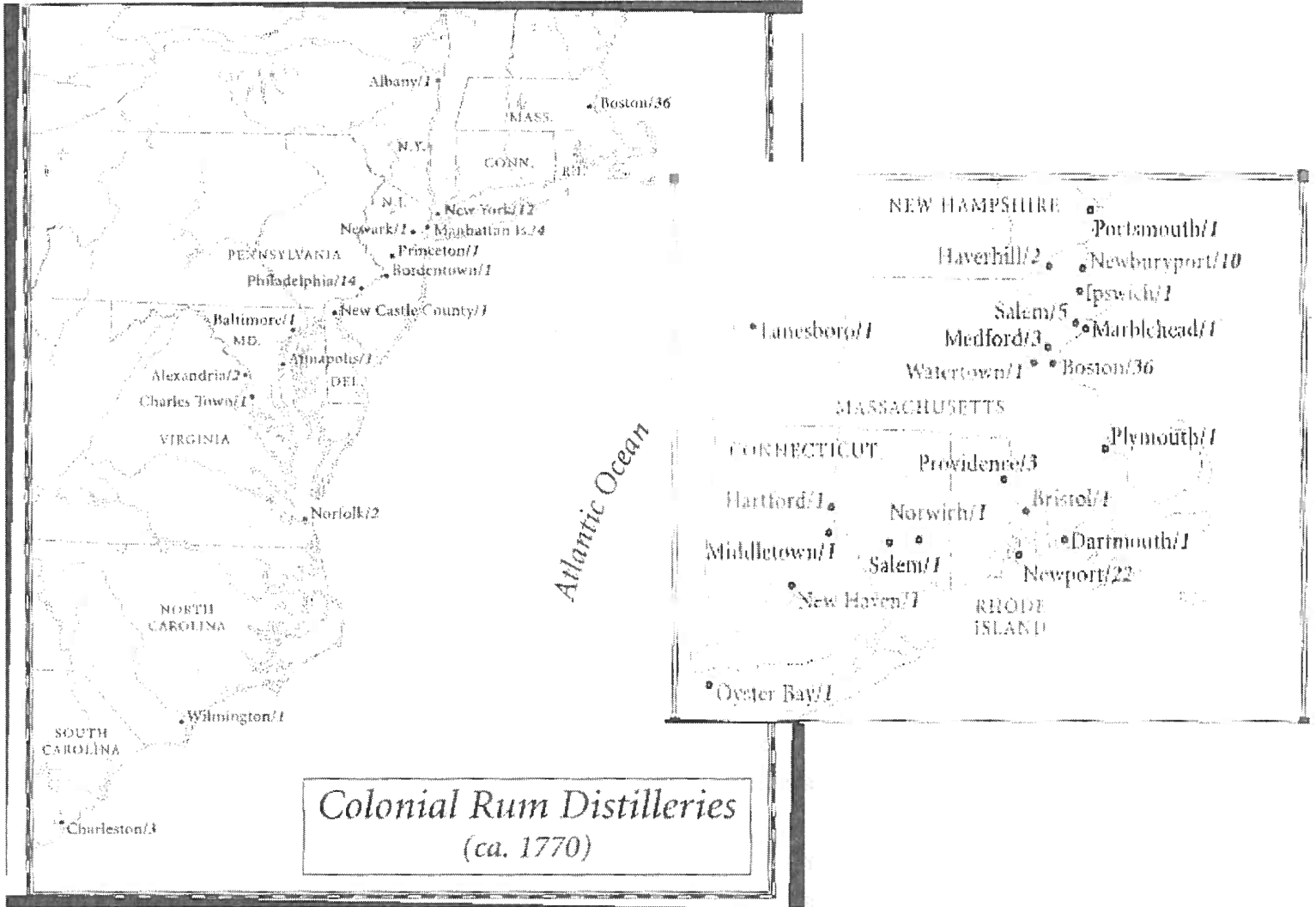
To be SOLD,
 By **SAMUEL GOLDTHWAIT,**
CHOICE White **LIVERPOOL**
SALT,
 and a few Crates of white **STONE WARE**
 Cheap for Cash.

WASH is given, by **JONATHAN**
WILSON, for clean Linen Rags,
 coarse or fine, for the Use of the Paper Mill
 in this Colony.

Document C Analysis Questions:

1. What are some of the goods being advertised for sale?
2. Where do many of these goods appear to be from?
3. Are there any advertisements that confuse you or that you have questions about?
4. In your opinion, what benefits might a port city such as Newport reap from being actively involved in the Trans-Atlantic slave Trade?
5. How might you use this document to prove that Rhode Island was dependant on the Transatlantic Slave Trade?

Document D: Map of Colonial Rum distilleries c. 1770



Document D Analysis Questions:

1. According to the map, how many **total** rum distilleries existed in the Southern Colonies?
2. How does this number compare to the number of rum distilleries located in the New England colonies?
3. What two cities had the highest concentration of rum distilleries in 1770?
4. How might you use this document to prove that Rhode Island was dependant on the Transatlantic Slave Trade?