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## Port Marker location to be unveiled Saturday in Bristol



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**Independence Park will be the site of a new monument commemorating Bristol's role in the trans-Atlantic slave trade.**

Posted Thursday, February 23, 2023 2:17 pm

**By Christy Nadalin**

The Bristol Middle Passage Port Marker Project, a movement to acknowledge the history of Bristol's participation in the transatlantic human trade and its effects on African and Indigenous peoples by erecting a memorial, invites the public to attend a Ceremony of Recognition this Saturday, Feb. 25 at 10 a.m., at Independence Park, the town- approved site chosen for the installation of a memorial marker.

Though the final design and wording of the marker is still being determined, a temporary sign at the permanent memorial location will be unveiled. Brief remarks will be given about the history of the trade and the involvement of Rhode Island and the Town of Bristol.

Beginning in the 17th century, Rhode Islanders enslaved Indigenous peoples from throughout southern New England and forced them into labor both in their ancestral homelands and in the plantation economies of the Caribbean. In the same period, they also brought enslaved Africans to plantations in the Americas and West Indies, as well as to Rhode Island. Although historical research is ongoing, SlaveVoyages.org estimates that between 1649 and 1819, at least 953 voyages to Africa were conducted by ships registered in Rhode Island, enslaving over 113,279 individuals. Of this count, Bristol-registered ships were responsible for at least 166 voyages. According to the Bristol

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Historical & Preservation Society at least 600 enslaved people lived in Bristol between the town's founding in 1680 and 1808, when the trade was outlawed under United States law.

Professor Bernard Freamon, Bristol Middle Passage Port Marker Project co-chair and Director of the Race and the Foundations of American Law course at Roger Williams, will offer his remarks on the occasion.

"Bristol and Newport were key to the transatlantic slave trade and it's very important for the African American and Indigenous communities that we recognize and acknowledge that role," he said. "Independence Park is the best spot in town."

"The memorial marker overlooking the port of Bristol is one step in honoring the people who not only survived the harrowing voyage across the Atlantic, but also demonstrated incredible resilience and persistence that ultimately led to meaningful contributions to the Bristol community, and to America. Our goal is to recognize and honor that story, share educational forums to highlight that history, and to create a safe place for difficult and crucial dialogue to take place."

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**Janine Wolf**

Quote: " Beginning in the 17th century, Rhode Islanders enslaved Indigenous peoples from throughout southern New England and forced them into labor both in their ancestral homelands and in the plantation economies of the Caribbean"

And there you have it! More fabrications for the purposes of race-shaming.

Was there a Rhode Island between 1600 and 1699? Nope. No New England. No United States of America either. Perhaps we should inform King Charles that his people have a new statue over here waiting for them, commemorating their bad behavior...maybe they'll take it to back to England. Look... [See more](#)

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**Mark Anderson**

Ok, let's unpack this for you. The colony of Rhode Island was established in 1636. You say that bringing slaves to the new

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world is a fabrication?? You seriously believe that Rhode Island and the other colonies and later on states did not bring slaves to America? Are you delusional?? Oh, wait, maybe you are since you state all our elections are rigged by "black box algorithm run tabulators". Accepting a person, town or countries past horrible behavior is a key part of effecting actual change in our lives and society as a whole. Maybe you should study actual history and accept that we as a society did some really horrible things and move on.

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## MEET OUR STAFF

### Jim McGaw

A lifelong Portsmouth resident, Jim graduated from Portsmouth High School in 1982 and earned a journalism degree from the University of Rhode Island in 1986. He's worked two different stints at East Bay Newspapers, for a total of 18 years with the company so far. When not running all over town bringing you the news from Portsmouth, Jim listens to lots and lots and lots of music, watches obscure silent films from the '20s and usually has three books going at once. He also loves to cook crazy New Orleans dishes for his wife of 25 years, Michelle, and their two sons, Jake and Max.

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