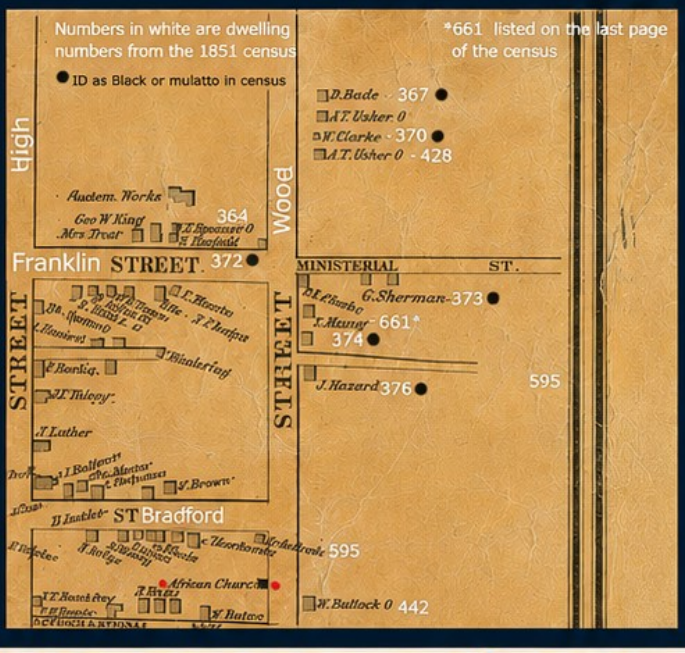
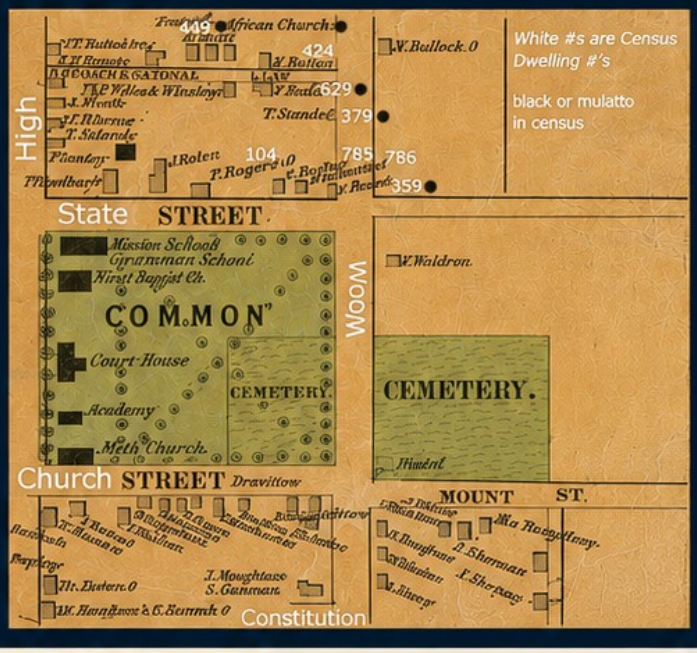
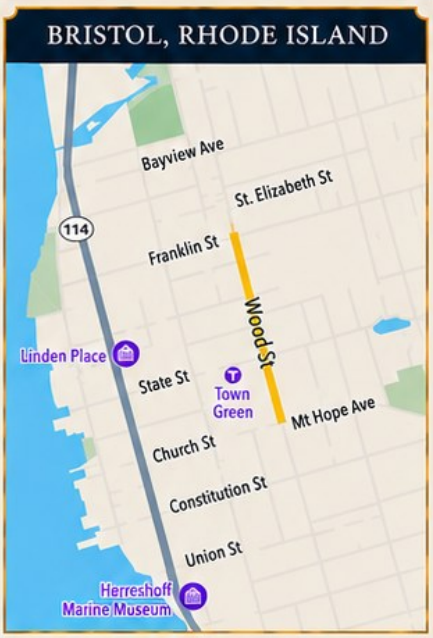
SELF-GUIDED
WALKING TOUR
THE FREE BLACK COMMUNITY OF BRISTOL
circa 1850





1. First Congregational Church
   300 High St
2. York Usher/Daniel Slade Home
   rear of 562 Wood St
3. Marie Hazard Home
   495 Wood St
4. National India Rubber Factory
   500 to 530 Wood Street
5. AME Church
   417 Wood St (Sports Club)
6. Original St. Mary's Catholic Church
   around 404 Wood St
7. East Burial Ground
   south of 318 Wood St
8. Town Common
9. Bristol Train of Artillery
   135 State St

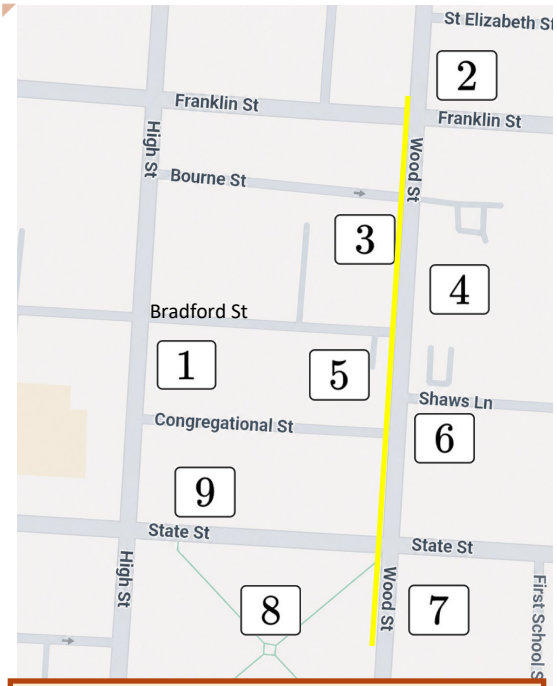




NAMED
"NEW GOREE"

This self-guided tour highlights places that shaped the lives, work, worship, and community of Free Black residents in Bristol during the mid-19th century.

The 1850 Federal Census, an 1851 map from the Norman Leventhal Collection, and meticulous research by the Bristol Historical Society converge to paint a picture of a resilient community.



By taking the 1850 Federal Census and overlaying that information onto an 1851 map of Bristol from the Norman Leventhal Collection, clues and patterns emerge of the growth of a free Black community. Wood Street in the early 1800s was a narrow path far outside the town's central area. The focus of ongoing research is to continue to uncover the story of this community and to provide primary source documentation of the people who once lived here. In this narrative, African-descended peoples' names are in **bold**.

Historical Context

Although there are no primary source documents, it is reasonable to assume the name New Goree was given to the neighborhood in the late 1700s by white residents to identify it as a place where people of color lived – much like today we use the term Chinatown or Little Italy. Goree is an island off Senegal in Africa, and was used as a trans-shipment center during the years of the Triangle Trade. Bristol and Rhode Island were heavily involved in that trade. For example, primary source documents disclose that in 1718 Town Founder Nathaniel Byfield purchased a 13 year old girl named Rose, who had just been brought to Bristol from the West Indies.

After the American Revolution, Bristol's elite families embarked on an intensely profitable period of human trafficking. Most famous among them were the DeWolfs, but other families, including the Wilsons, Fales, Ushers, Wardwells, and Munros, also participated in the slave trade and in the manufacture of slave-related goods. Ships sailing to Africa required captains and agents, as well as goods and provisions purchased from merchants, blacksmiths, coopers, carpenters, tradesmen, and farmers. Almost everyone in Bristol found ways to profit from human trafficking, including through investments in local banking and insurance institutions or through the purchase of slave-produced commodities, like sugar and coffee.

Volunteer researchers guided by the Bristol Historical & Preservation Society continue to work on this project. For more detailed information, including my footnotes and references for the data and information contained in this brochure, visit my WordPress blog www.lynn-smith.com or email Lynn Smith at

madeline.smith815@gmail.com



1 Start your walk at the **First Congregational Church, 300 High Street** at the corner of Bradford. Erected in 1854, this is their fourth church building. The first services were in a private home called Silver Creek; the second church was on the Town Common; the third church was on Bradford Street at Hope Street. Reverend John Burt was the pastor there and according to church records it was his African-descended enslaved servant **Scipio Burt** who first approached the Town Council in 1805 to ask permission to build a home on Wood Street. Across the street note the stick style home built around 1830 for William Henry DeWolf; to the left of it is a barn built in 1824 by James DeWolf. He profited from what is called the Transatlantic Triangle Trade – sugar cane grown in Cuba, rum distilled in Rhode Island, and the enslaved purchased in Africa. In 1807 he purchased and enslaved two young African people to serve as house servants in Bristol. They were named **Polydore and Adjua.**





2 **568 Wood Street**: In 1805, **York Usher**, a freed man, purchased land on Wood Street and built a two room cottage here. In 1828 he sold the house to another freed man. The home then was owned by **Daniel Slade**, a free Black man. He married a woman named Amaretta Munro. Her first husband was a Greago. Her son **Stephen Greago** married **Alice DeWolf**, the daughter of **Polydore and Adjua.** Daniel and Amaretta's son Daniel Jr. married Charlotte Tanner, a daughter of **Daniel Tanner** – barber, clambake purveyor, and small dollar lender in the community. Mr. Tanner's other daughter Mary married a man named **John Thomas Hazard.** He is the son of **Marie Hazard** whom we will meet at the next stop. As you cross Franklin Street and continue south on Wood Street, you will pass a bust of Dr. Manuel DaSilva in Mosaico Corner. Both honor the Portuguese descended people who settled as immigrants in this area.

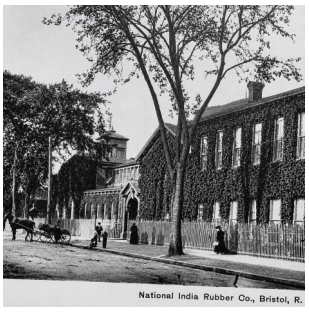
When prompted to imagine what this small home may have looked like in 1805, Chat GPT created this image.





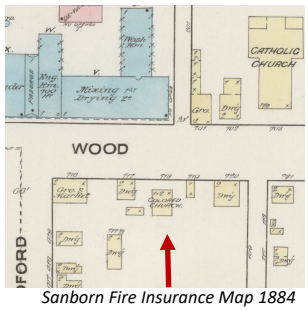
3 **495 Wood Street: Marie Hazard** was born a free black woman in 1812. In 1832 she married **James Morgan Catskill Hazard**. His obituary in 1864 describes him as a descendant of the Narragansett tribe. The growth of the National Rubber Company meant houses were being taken to make room for their expansion. However, Marie Hazard negotiated a deal in which she sold her land on one side of Wood Street for $1300 and simultaneously bought a parcel on the other side and arranged for her dwelling to be moved to that new location, where it stands here today. The fascinating detail about this house is that the building dimensions of the original foundation do not conform with typical Ango-Saxon measurements. Known as a "New Goree" house, these structures were built to reflect a traditional African cultural memory, similar to Yoruba houses and Haitian shotgun houses and the houses researched by historian James Deetz in the 'Parting Ways' free Black settlement close to the Plimoth Patuxet Museum in Massachusetts. There are a number of these structures in Bristol.

Prompted by a request to imagine what this house might have looked like in 1870, Chat GPT created this image.



4 **500 to 530 Wood Street:** The huge brick and stone building along Wood Street is where a factory once operated. It has been repurposed to house an assisted living facility, offices, small businesses and a retail complex. Building began in 1864 when Augustus 0. Bourn (1834-1925) organized the National Rubber Company. The factory continued to expand and in 1892 Samuel Pomeroy Colt, a DeWolf grandson, merged it with several others to form the United States Rubber Company monopoly. Eventually the company was Bristol's largest industry and major employer; at one time it employed 1500 workers and produced 24,000 pairs of rubber boots and shoes daily. Although primary source documents have not been uncovered to date, oral history confirms that the company did not hire Black workers.



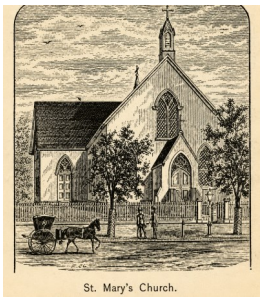


Sanborn Fire Insurance Map 1884



5 **417 Wood Street: Bristol Sportsmans Club, site of the AME Church:** Here is the site of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. A newspaper article in 1850 reports a group of residents approached Mr. William Spooner for guidance in building a neighborhood church. He was an elected official at the time, having served on the Town Council and the School Committee. $400 was raised. The building served as both an AME Church and as a neighborhood school. The land underneath it had been designated as "school lands." Money the town collected for rent from those lands was used to pay for public education. Primary source documents indicate that about 30 Black children attended the school. **George Downing**, a prominent Newport black businessman, led a twelve year effort to end segregation in Rhode Island Schools stating that separate but equal was not true, and not acceptable. So in 1866 the RI General Assembly passed a measure, the school closed and the neighborhood children were moved to other schools. It appears that as the congregation dwindled, the church could not operate independently and in the 1870s became "The Colored Mission of Trinity Episcopal Church." By the time the 1896 Sanborn Fire insurance Map of Bristol was published, the plot of land where the church once stood was drawn as an empty lot. The man who originally held the lease on the land under the church was named **William H. Munro**. Primary source documents describe him as "mulatto" and a carpenter who served in the Civil War; during various campaigns he was a wagoner with a six mule team, serving under Gen Frank Wheaton; his obituary describes his mixed African and Pokanoket heritage as a descendant of Chief Annawam, a captain under Osamequin Massasoit. Research is ongoing to track the history of the church after the late 1800s.

Prompted by a request to imagine a modest AME Church built in 1850 in the New England area, ChatGPT produced this image.


St. Mary's Church.

6 **C. 404 Wood Street: site of the original St. Mary's Catholic Church, built 1855.** Although the building is no longer here, this is the site of the original wooden Catholic Church built in Bristol in 1855. It once stood across the street from the AME Church on Wood Street. It was replaced by the stone church at the corner of Wood and State Streets, built in 1911. Both are a reminder of the Irish immigrants who settled along Wood Street in the mid and late 1800s.



7 **South of 318 Wood Street: East Burial Ground:** In 1737 part of the Town Common was designated as a burying ground. An 1853 town meeting vote ordered removal of any tombstones remaining on the Common to the East Burial Ground. It is likely that bodies were left in the ground. Among over 1,000 graves Bristolians of color buried here include **Charlotte Tanner** (1796-1850); **Scipio Burt's** children; and a marker for **Cato Howland** who died on a voyage and was buried at sea. A local geology professor has identified the striations and composition of the 600 million old granite schist outcroppings in the cemetery as a match to schist found on the west coast of Africa. The current two continents were once part of a single land mass named Pangea.



8 **Town Common:** First Congregational Church records include an entry that in the late 1700s **Scipio Burt** approached the town council to request permission for the African descended community to set up a form of self-governance in their new neighborhood, following their African cultural tradition. In New England, the election of Black governors or kings began in Lynn, Massachusetts in the early 1740s. Black governors enforced laws and mediated disputes between the Black and white communities. Historian William D. Pierson wrote: "The Black governors personified this dignity of the black community, and the bearing of the rulers reflected the personal self-respect and pride of the men chosen." Research is ongoing to learn more about "Negro Election Day" and the community's governors in Bristol.



9 **Bristol Train of Artillery, 135 State St.** Tucked next to Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church, built in 1918, and a reminder of the Italian immigrants who came to this town, is a small blue building. As your walking tour of New Goree ends, pause at this building to remember the service of the enslaved and Indigenous men who served in the First Rhode Island Regiment during the American Revolution. Although this hall was built in 1842 and expanded in 1869, the artillery company was organized in 1776. The 1st Rhode Island was authorized in 1778 and freedom was promised to those who joined, which numbered over 130. Among those enslaved from Bristol who served, **Prince Ingraham** stands out. Because of his skill as a blacksmith, he was soon assigned to General George Washington's elite Sappers and Miners unit, made up of soldiers who prepared the battlefields for conflict. That unit is considered the forerunner of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Research has tracked Prince Ingraham to the Battle of Yorktown in October of 1781, and work to uncover the story of the rest of his life continues.

From Lynn Smith: "I have been researching this story for over five years, and I know that much work is still ahead. There is more to the story than these pages can hold. I would like to thank local volunteer researchers who have spent hours helping me make this account as accurate as possible, finding, documenting, and footnoting the facts that make up this narrative. As more facts are uncovered, they will be added to this story, most likely in places with more room for detailed and expansive information. I am grateful as well to those who came well before me and who do this work every day, especially to the experts of the Rhode Island Black Heritage Society, the Black History Center of Newport, RISHM, and the Bristol Historical and Preservation Society. By nature I am a storyteller and a tour guide. By occupation they are fact finders. Their guidance keeps me searching, their oversight of this fascinating, ongoing, evolving story keeps me humble."