



An estimated 12 million Africans were kidnapped from their homelands and transported across the Atlantic Ocean to the Americas. During those months-long voyages, known as the Middle Passage, some 2 million people died from disease, dehydration, malnutrition, abuse, and suicide. The 10 million who survived played a significant role in building the Americas. They were trafficked to the Connecticut shoreline in Greenwich, New Haven, Middletown, and New London. In this section, Williams offers views of the places where residents of historic Lyme may have acquired their enslaved people.

Perth Amboy, New Jersey, was a primary arrival point for slave ships. Rhode Island played a leading role in the trans-Atlantic slave trade and received more enslaved people than any other New England state. Bristo, who was enslaved in historic Lyme, was likely named after Bristol, Rhode Island.



53 Douglass Landing Site, Battery Park City,
New York City, 2024

54 Wall Street, New York City, 2024



55 Quinnipiac River, New Haven, Connecticut, 2010

56 Harbor Park, Middletown, Connecticut, 2016





58 *Soldiers and Sailors Monument,*
New London, 2024

59 *Waterfront, New London, Connecticut, 2024*



60 *Pier at Bristol, Rhode Island, 2024*





62 *Linden Place, Bristol, Rhode Island, 2024*

63 *Sculpture at Linden Place, Bristol, Rhode Island, 2024*



64 *DeWolf Tavern Restaurant, Bristol, Rhode Island, 2024*

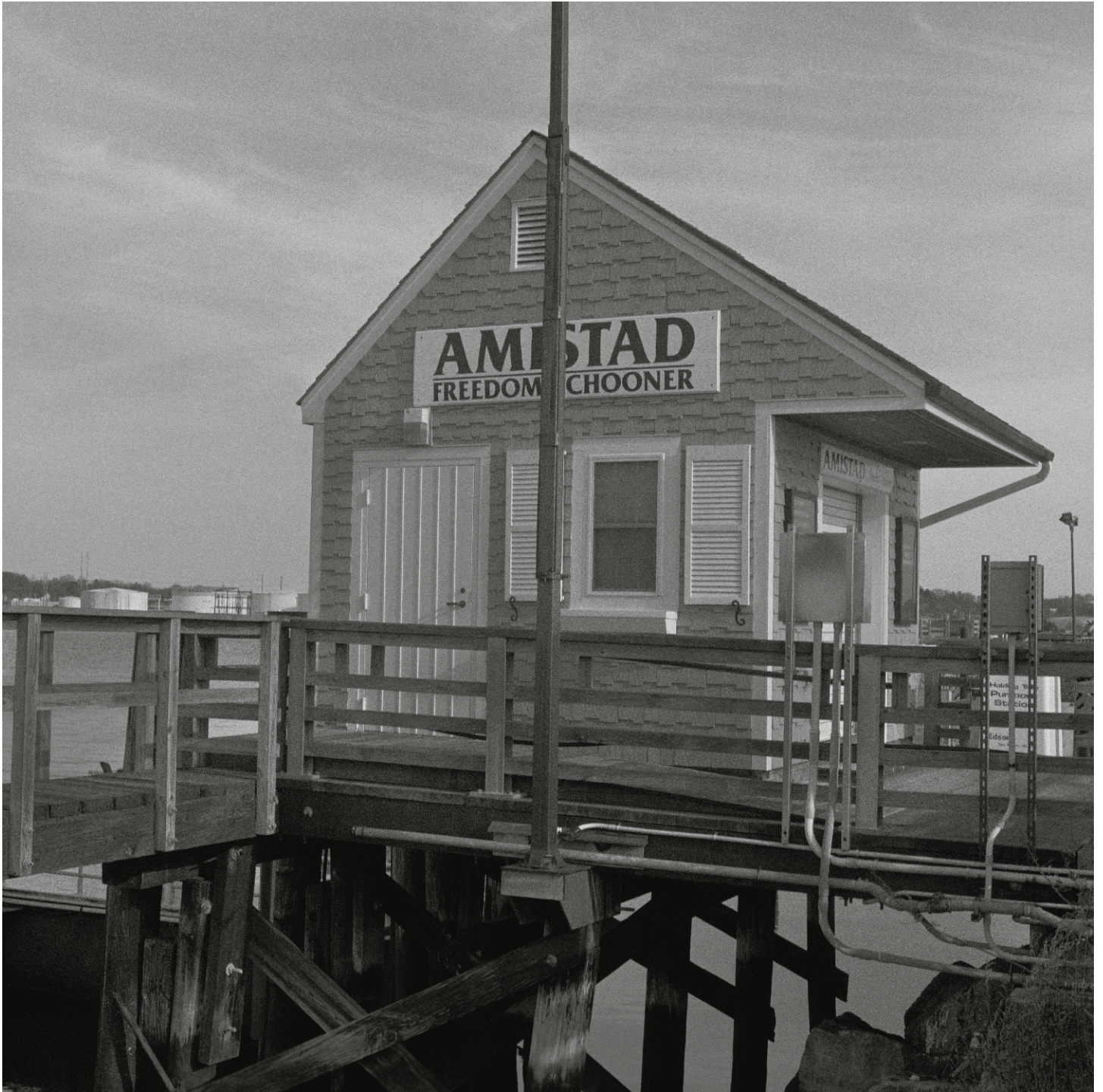
65 *Old Slater Mill, Pawtucket, Rhode Island, 2024*



The story of *La Amistad* is intertwined with Connecticut's complex history of enslavement and abolition in the mid 19th century. On August 26, 1839, the Spanish schooner *La Amistad* was spotted off the coast of Long Island. On board were the surviving 39 African men, 4 children, a Creole cook, and two bound Spanish plantation owners. The Africans had been captured from Mendeland in present-day Sierra Leone and sent to Havana, Cuba, where they were purchased and destined for Cuban plantations. Three days into the journey a 25-year-old Mende named Sengbe Pieh (Joseph Cinqué), managed to unshackle himself and lead a revolt.

After two months of attempts to steer toward Africa, *La Amistad* was towed to New London and moored near the U.S. Custom House. The Mende captives were then jailed in New Haven. A two-year legal battle followed. Ultimately the Supreme Court decided in favor of the Africans, ruling that they were never slaves and had been kidnapped and transported illegally. Williams's photographs depict sites associated with the *Amistad's* capture, the trial, and its aftermath.









70 *United States Custom House, New London, Connecticut, 2024*

71 *Interior, United States Custom House, New London, Connecticut, 2024*



72 *View of the Farmington River from Burial Ground of the Mende, Farmington, Connecticut, 2012*

73 *Gravesite of Foone, Mende African on the Amistad, Riverside Cemetery, Farmington, Connecticut, 2012*



ABOLITIONISM IN CONNECTICUT

74 *First Church of Christ, Congregational, 1652,
Farmington, Connecticut, 2012*

Connecticut was the last state in New England to abolish slavery in 1848. Laws were adopted gradually, beginning in 1784, which freed children born into slavery when they turned twenty-five. Connecticut's slow approach to emancipation was justified by white lawmakers who claimed a need to maintain civic order. Self-emancipating slaves traveled through Connecticut on several routes, often stopping in Farmington, the state's "Grand Central Station" on the Underground Railroad. This section combines Williams's views of well-known historical sites, such as Connecticut's Old State House and the homes of writers Mark Twain and Harriet Beecher Stowe, with lesser-known sites where abolitionists operated secretly. When asked about his work as documentary versus art, Williams answered, "Art is feeling and feeling is meaning," paraphrasing Henry James. "You can't be a documentarian and be subjective. I'm going for something bigger."^f





FACING PAGE

75 *Union Hall, Historic Farmington Academy, Connecticut, 2012*

76 *Samuel Deming's Store, Farmington, Connecticut, 2012*

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77 *Old State House, Hartford, Connecticut, 2024*

78 *Mark Twain House, Hartford, Connecticut, 2023*

79 *Harriet Beecher Stowe House, Hartford, Connecticut, 2023*

80 *Pathway, Harriet Beecher Stowe House, Hartford, Connecticut, 2023*

