



TRACES OF THE TRADE: A STORY FROM THE DEEP

FILM SYNOPSIS

By Katrina Browne with Co-Directors Alla Kovgan and Jude Ray, and Co-Producers Elizabeth Delude-Dix and Juanita Brown.

In *Traces of the Trade*, Producer/Director Katrina Browne discovers that her forefathers were the largest slave-trading family in U.S. history. Given the myth that the South is solely responsible for slavery, viewers will be surprised to learn that Browne's ancestors were Northerners. The film follows Browne and nine fellow family members on a remarkable journey, which brings them face-to-face with the history and legacy of New England's hidden enterprise.

From 1769 to 1820, DeWolf fathers, sons and grandsons trafficked in human beings. They sailed their ships from Bristol, Rhode Island to West Africa with rum to trade for African men, women and children. Captives were taken to plantations that the DeWolfs owned in Cuba or were sold at auction in such ports as Havana and Charleston. Sugar and molasses were then brought from Cuba to the family-owned rum distilleries in Bristol. Over the generations, the family owned ships that transported thousands of Africans across the Middle Passage into slavery. They amassed an enormous fortune. By the end of his life, James DeWolf had been a U.S. Senator and was reportedly the second richest man in the United States.

The enslavement of Africans was business for more than just the DeWolf family. It was a cornerstone of Northern commercial life. The Triangle Trade drove the economy of many port cities (Rhode Island had the largest share in the trade of any state), and slavery itself existed in the North for over 200 years. Northern textile mills used slave-picked cotton from the South to fuel the Industrial Revolution, while banks and insurance companies played a key role throughout the period. While the DeWolfs were one of only a few "slaving" dynasties, the network of commercial activities that they were tied to involved an enormous portion of the Northern population. Many citizens, for example, bought shares in slave ships to make a profit.

The film follows ten DeWolf descendants (ages 32-71, ranging from sisters to seventh cousins) as they retrace the steps of the Triangle Trade, visiting the DeWolf hometown of Bristol, Rhode Island, slave forts on the coast of Ghana, and the ruins of a family plantation in Cuba. Browne pushes the family forward as they struggle through the minefield of race politics. Back home, the family confronts the thorny topic of what to do now. In the context of growing calls for reparations for slavery, family members struggle with the question of how to think about and contribute to "repair." Meanwhile, Browne and her family come closer to the core: their love/hate relationship with their own Yankee culture and privileges; the healing and transformation needed not only "out there," but inside themselves.

The divide between white and black Americans is a perennial challenge to the conscience of our nation. The challenge of today is that the majority of whites see themselves as not prejudiced, yet serious gaps in wealth, health, education and housing persist, as do gaps in comfort and trust between the races. In a groundbreaking approach, *Traces of the Trade* invites viewers to consider how the system of slavery affected the white populations of the time, their descendants, and subsequent generations of white Americans. It invites all to ask: What history do we inherit as individuals and as citizens? How does Northern complicity change the equation? What would repair—spiritual and material—really look like and what would it take?



TRACES OF THE TRADE: A STORY FROM THE DEEP

CAST AND CREW

Director/Producer/Writer Katrina Browne
Co-Director/Editor/Writer Alla Kovgan
Co-Director/Executive Producer Jude Ray
Co-Producer/Executive Producer Elizabeth Delude-Dix
Co-Producer Juanita Brown
Director of Photography Liz Dory
Production Sound Mixer Jeffrey Livesey
Original Score Roger C. Miller
Animation Handcranked Productions
Supervising Editor William Anderson
Consulting Producers William Anderson, Llewellyn Smith
Associate Producers Sara Archambault, Catherine Benedict, Heather Kapplow,
Leslie Koren, Beth Sternheimer

Production Unit, United States
Line Producers Amy Geller, Lucia Small
Second Unit Camera Allison Humenuk
Second Unit Sound Stewart Adam
Gaffer/Grip Steven Ramsey

Production Unit, Ghana
Content Consultant & Facilitator Kofi Peprah
Line Producer Africanus Aveh
Second Unit Camera Amishadai Sackitey
Second Unit Sound Ebenezer Quaye
Gaffer/Grip Francis Kpatah

Production Unit, Cuba
Line Producer Boris Iván Crespo
Production Coordination & Research Patrice Migliori-Farnes
Unit Production Manager Santiago Llapur
Second Unit Camera Ariam R. Grass
Second Unit Sound Ricardo Pérez Ramos
Gaffer Luís Manuel Escuela
Electrician Ovidio Gastón
Translators María Teresa Ortega, Lisa Maria Cabrera

Post-Production
Script Consultants Patricia Garcia Rios, Adam Zucker
Historical Consultants Ronald Bailey, Kevin Jordan, James Perry, Joanne Pope
Melish
Researcher Jennifer Anderson
Sound Mix Richard Bock
On-line Editor & Colorist Michael H. Amundson
Music Supervisors Daniel Arriaga, Alla Kovgan
Music Consultant Marc Gidal
Assistants to Producer/Director Maria Edwards, Leslie Koren, Jessica Majno, Liz Martins,
Darcie Moore, Meredith Vass, Margaret Warren

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About the Filmmakers

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

Katrina Browne, Producer/Director/Writer.

Katrina Browne initiated the production of *Traces of the Trade*, and the family process at its core, in 1999. Over two hundred people and institutions gave of their hearts and talents as part of the filmmaking and dialogue process over nine years. While still in rough-cut form, the film contributed to the Episcopal Church's 2006 decision to atone for its role in slavery. *Traces* premiered in 2008 at the Sundance Film Festival, and then aired nationally on PBS's premier showcase of documentary film – P.O.V. – reaching over 1.5 million Americans. Millions of others were reached through extensive press coverage in: *The New York Times*; *The Washington Post*; numerous daily papers in major cities; AP Newswire and Gannett News Service stories; *The Early Show* on CBS; *Bill Moyers' Journal* on PBS; several interviews on NPR and on black radio stations; etc. Browne and the rest of the research team were nominated for an Emmy Award for research. Along with numerous other awards, Ms. Browne received the Women Film Critics' Courage in Filmmaking Award and the film received the prestigious Council on Foundations Henry Hampton Film & Video Award. Major funding has been granted by the Ford Foundation, the Kellogg Foundation, the Wyncote Foundation and many others – for the film and its distribution/outreach.

Katrina has traveled extensively with the film since its release – in the U.S. and overseas – as a public speaker, facilitator and trainer. She has presented, whether solo or with her esteemed colleagues and family members, in public and independent schools, colleges and universities, museums and historic sites, religious congregations and conventions, workplaces and professional conferences, and for government groups. Highlights include screenings for: several hundred foundation executives at the Council on Foundations annual conference; State Legislature of Connecticut at invitation of Senate President and on Capitol Hill as part of Congressional Conversations on Race; the Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference for black clergy; for the Union of Black Episcopalians and other denominations' conventions; cadet training at the US Coast Guard Academy; National Constitution Center; UCLA School of Public Affairs; Rhode Island headquarters of Bank of America; at the United Nations for slavery/slave trade remembrance day; and state-wide series with state humanities councils. It has been an honor to serve as a resource for the work of racial justice and healing networks/efforts such as Coming to the Table; Rhode Island for Community and Justice and Connecticut's NCCJ; the Kellogg Foundation's *America Healing* initiative; and Initiatives of Change's *Healing History*.

Internationally, *Traces* was selected by the U.S. State Department to be part of the American Documentary Showcase, with screenings hosted by U.S. embassies around the world; and by the Caribbean Traveling Film Festival to tour to numerous Caribbean and Latin American countries. Katrina has been hosted for events by U.S. embassies in the Dominican Republic, Sweden, and at the European Union headquarters in Brussels, and upcoming: by the U.S. embassy in France which has made a grant for French subtitles on the film. Broadcasts have taken place in Canada, Bermuda and Cuba. The Cuban premier took place in connection with the historic visit of the replica of the slave ship *Amistad* in 2010.

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In late 2009, with her cousin James Perry and colleague Juanita Brown, Katrina founded a non-profit – the Tracing Center on Histories & Legacies of Slavery – to deepen their work with schools, public history sites, and religious institutions. She served as the founding executive director. She and her colleagues, including also Marga Varea and Kristin Gallas, have received accolades for their programs at numerous public and independent schools, their teacher trainings including through state departments of education and humanities councils, and at venues such as the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture. Ms. Browne has a published essay in the book *The Transatlantic Slave Trade and Slavery: New Directions in Teaching and Learning*, in which she explores the psychological legacies of slavery for white Americans and the implications for how slavery is taught to students of all backgrounds. Katrina has also contributed to the text panels at the President's House exhibit on slavery in Philadelphia (where George Washington held enslaved people while serving as the first U.S. President) and to training for National Park Service rangers who work at the Liberty Bell and Independence Hall.

Prior to producing *Traces*, Ms. Browne co-founded Public Allies, an AmeriCorps program now operating in 22 cities, and she served as Outreach Planning Coordinator for the film adaptation of Anna Deavere Smith's award-winning play on the L.A. riots: *Twilight: Los Angeles*. She has an M.A. in theology from the Pacific School of Religion where she wrote a thesis on film and civic dialogue. In addition to her on-going work with *Traces of the Trade*, she is currently exploring racial healing through dance, movement and storytelling, including via InterPlay.

Alla Kovgan, Editor/Co-Director/Writer, is a Boston-based filmmaker born in Moscow. Her films have been screened at the Sundance Film Festival, Boston's Museum of Fine Arts, Lincoln Center (New York), Brooklyn Academy of Music, Montreal Film Festival (Canada), New York African Film Festival, and broadcast on ZDF TV (Germany). Alla has been involved in creating "intermedia" performances (with KINODANCE and Elaine Summers), making dance films (with Alissa Cardone, Victoria Marks and Nicola Hawkins), and working on documentaries about dance (Movement (R)evolution Africa with Joan Frosch and Terpsychore's Captives II with Efim Reznikov). She is an international director of the St. Petersburg Dance Film Festival KINODANCE in Russia and a co-curator of Balagan Experimental Film Series in Boston. In 2007, Alla was awarded a film commission from the Experimental Media and Performance Arts Center for *nora chipaumire: a physical biography*. Together with Robin Hessman, Alla is currently working on a documentary, *Russia's Pepsi Generation*, about the last generation of Soviet children to grow up behind the "Iron Curtain," to be broadcast on PBS's P.O.V. in 2009.

Jude Ray, Co-Director/Executive Producer, is an award-winning writer, producer, and director with wide-ranging experience as a filmmaker of social issue, cultural and historical documentaries and investigative reports. Her credits include programs on PBS, HBO, BBC, A&E and Turner Broadcasting, and a five-year freelance stint with the BBC as an investigative reporter, U.S. producer, field, segment and associate producer for the acclaimed public affairs series, *Panorama*. Her producing, associate producing and writing credits on prime-time documentary specials and series for major broadcasters include *Fare Game* (PBS, NHK and international broadcast), *What Price Clean Air?* (PBS), *Russia for Sale: The Hard Road to Capitalism* (PBS), *"Increase and Multiply"* (PBS), *A Walk Through the Twentieth Century With Bill Moyers* (PBS), and *Anatomy of Love* (TBS). She has also served as senior writer and consulting producer for independent feature documentaries, including *H2 Worker*, which won a Sundance Grand Jury Prize, and *Calling the Ghosts: A Story about Rape, War, and Women* (Sundance/Soros Fund, HBO).

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Elizabeth Delude-Dix, Co-Producer/ Executive Producer, directed and produced *Stories from Stone* and *No Simple Truth*, two short films on slavery in Rhode Island that screened on RI PBS. She is a co-producer of *First Face*, an ITVS documentary currently in production. She produced *Tell Another Mother*, an independent radio project of first-person 2004 presidential campaign spots that aired in Florida, Ohio and Pennsylvania. She is a founder of Rhode Island's first public radio station, WRNI and a past Vice-President of the Foundation for Ocean State Public Radio. She currently serves on the Advisory Board of I-Witness Video a New York based archive. As an International Observer with IPEC, an independent human rights organization, she filmed and photographed contentious parades in Northern Ireland. Ms. Delude-Dix taught as an Adjunct Professor of Cultural and Historic Preservation in an undergraduate program she helped develop at Salve Regina University, Newport, Rhode Island. She is a past Board Chair and Grants Chair of the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities and has served as a board member and advisor to a number of arts and advocacy organizations.

Juanita Brown, Co-Producer, has led *Traces* dialogues and workshops around the country and internationally. She now works with educational institutions to explore challenging issues such as cultural competence and global citizenship, and consults for non-profit and government organizations in strategic meeting design and facilitation, and organizational development via Juanita Capri Brown and Associates. Juanita co-designed *Traces of the Trade's* trans-Atlantic journey and served as a facilitator during some of the DeWolf family discussions. Prior to the film, Juanita creatively engaged students and teachers at San Francisco Bay Area schools in difficult dialogue around community building, race, class and gender identity politics. She also developed policy and organizational analyses for education and nonprofit organizations in California such as Oakland Unified School District, Oakland Small Schools Foundation, and Bay Area International Development Organizations. She most recently served as the Assistant Director for Development at the Coalition of Essential Schools, a national education reform organization. Juanita holds a Bachelor's from Stanford University and a Master's of Public Policy from the Goldman School of Public Policy at the University of California at Berkeley. She also studied at the University of Ghana in West Africa. Currently, she is pursuing a career in dance and choreography, and is facilitating post-screening dialogues with *Traces of the Trade* part time. A Chicago native and lover of things creative, Juanita lives in San Francisco where she enjoys writing and tea-warmed conversations.

Liz Dory, Director of Photography, has shot numerous documentaries, ranging in cinematic style from formal, pictorial composition to verité hand-held camerawork. Equally adept at manipulating various presenting formats from mini DV to HD and 35mm, Liz continues to build her expertise with an inclusive list of cameras, using everything from a Canon Scoopic to the latest HD and prosumer camcorder systems. Her cinematography is featured in the documentary *An American Soldier* for filmmaker Edet Belzberg, also premiering at Sundance 2008 in competition. More cinematography work is represented in *Refuge*, a film about Tibetan refugees featuring the Dalai Lama, Melissa Mathison and Martin Scorsese, and with the directing and producing team of David and Laure Shapiro, makers of *Keep The River on Your Right*. She is currently in production with the Shapiros on their latest film, *Finishing Heaven* for director Mark Mann. Her camerawork is featured in broadcast documentaries for Nova, The Discovery Channel and National Geographic and television presenters such as 60 Minutes.

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Roger C. Miller, Composer, Original Score. Musician Roger Miller currently performs in The Alloy Orchestra, on keyboards. This critically-acclaimed group composes new scores for silent era films and tours internationally. He is also in the rock band Mission of Burma, on guitar and vocals. This group has 6 albums out, tours internationally, and has been praised in the *New York Times*, *Spin*, *Rolling Stone*, etc. He began scoring animation and film in 1993 and continues this work today.

Handcranked Productions, Animation/Graphics. The company was formed in 2001 by Bryan Papciak & Jeff Sias who first worked together at Olive Jar Studios in Boston, where they directed highly original mixed-media spots for television and film. Handcranked produces commercials and graphics for clients such as *Sesame Street*, *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*, Samsung, HBO, NBC, ESPN, and the Sundance Channel. They are also producing their own independent art & film projects including the feature documentary, *American Ruins*.

William Anderson, Supervising Editor/Consulting Producer, has over 100 theatrical and broadcast editing credits (for PBS, HBO, NBC, etc.) including: *Tupperware!*, *Sweet Old Song*, Al Pacino's *Looking for Richard*, Errol Morris's *A Brief History of Time*, *Slavery Documents*, *The Holocaust*, and *Hellfire: A Journey from Hiroshima* (Academy Award nominee, Best Documentary Feature). He has received four Emmy nominations, an Emmy Certificate, and the American Cinema Editors Eddy.

Llewellyn Smith, Consulting Producer. From 1988-1995 Mr. Smith served as Series Editor for the critically acclaimed PBS history series *American Experience*. He was Project Director for the Emmy Award-winning series *Africans in America: America's Journey Through Slavery*, and produced/directed Part IV. He also produced/directed *Jubilee Singers: Sacrifice and Glory* (PBS, 2001), and Part III of *Race: The Power of an Illusion* (PBS, 2003); and *Forgotten Genius* (PBS, 2007).



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AWARDS

News & Documentary Emmy Award Nominee, Research Craft Category, 2009
Council on Foundations “Henry Hampton” Award, 2009
Women Film Critics “Courage in Filmmaking” Award, 2008
Woods Hole Film Festival “New England Emerging Filmmaker” Award, 2008
Rhode Island Black Heritage Society “Rowena R. Stewart Founders” Award, 2008

FILM FESTIVALS

Bahamas International Film Festival, 2009
Tallgrass Film Festival, Kansas, 2009
International Christian Film Festival, Wales, 2009
ReelMIXED Film Festival, Michigan, 2009
REEL Culture Festival, Minnesota, 2009
Knoxville African-American Film Festival, 2009
Pan African Film & Arts Festival, California, 2009
Human Rights Watch International Film Festival, Boston, 2009
Cambridge African Film Festival, England, 2008
St. Louis International Film Festival, 2008
Global Issues Film Festival, Michigan, 2008
Northampton Independent Film Festival, Massachusetts, 2008
Bend Film Festival, Oregon, 2008
Oakland International Film Festival, California, 2008
Cambridge Film Festival, England, 2008
Global Peace Film Festival, 2008
Roxbury Film Festival, 2008
Woods Hole Film Festival, 2008
Human Rights Watch International Film Festival, New York, 2008
Newport International Film Festival, 2008
New Orleans International Human Rights Festival, 2008
Sundance Film Festival, Official Selection, 2008



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ABOUT THE FAMILY

Keila DePoorter and her sister Holly (below) both grew up in Bristol, Rhode Island. Keila currently lives with her husband Jerry on a small ranch outside of Boulder, Colorado. In 1998, Keila and Jerry led a group of 20 students to South Africa for a month. They visited mining sites, traveled and studied South Africa's current social, economic and political issues.

Thomas Norman DeWolf is the Executive Director of [Coming to the Table](#) and the author of [Inheriting the Trade: A Northern Family Confronts Its Legacy as the Largest Slave-Trading Dynasty in U.S. History](#) (Beacon Press, 2008), about his experiences during the family's journey. He is co-author, along with Sharon Leslie Morgan, of [Gather at the Table: The Healing Journey of a Daughter of Slavery and a Son of the Slave Trade](#) (Beacon Press, 2012). Tom speaks at colleges, conferences, and other venues throughout the United States about hidden elements of history, racism and intolerance, and illuminates a path toward healing and a more hopeful future. Tom and his wife, Lindi, have four grown children and six grandchildren.

Holly Fulton teaches English as a Second Language and French, and currently resides in Peabody, Massachusetts with her husband, Bill. Prior to teaching, she was an interpersonal skills and diversity trainer for public and private industries, which included running her own practice and delivering programs for training companies.

Ellen DeWolfe Hale grew up in Reno, Nevada. After studying East Asian Studies and living in Tokyo, she now lives in Seattle, Washington where she works at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on Superfund cleanup projects. Elly has a passion for music of all kinds.

Ledlie Laughlin has been an Episcopal priest for 50 years, with parishes in Jersey City, Newark, Greenwich Village and Florence, Italy. Ledlie and his wife, Roxana, have three grown children and seven grandchildren. As Dean of the Cathedral in Newark, he helped bring about the merger of a small, white cathedral congregation with a large black middle class congregation.

Dain Perry participated in the documentary along with his brother, Jim, and nephew, James (see below). He grew up in Charleston, South Carolina. During the 1970s, he worked for a non-profit agency that promoted reform in the criminal justice system, particularly prison reform. Dain has been a member of his church vestry and has been an active volunteer in his community for many years, including serving on the boards of several nonprofit organizations. Dain and his wife travel extensively doing screenings of the film at Episcopal parishes.

James DeWolf Perry is the executive director of the Center for Reconciliation in Providence, R.I. In addition to appearing in the film, James served as the film's principal historical consultant, for which he and the research team were nominated for an Emmy® Award. James attended law school at Columbia University and his graduate work at Harvard has focused on international institutions and the evolution of international norms, including the transatlantic slave trade and its abolition.

Jim DeWolf Perry was born in Providence, Rhode Island and is now retired with his wife, Shirley. In his career, Jim served as a Foreign Service Officer in Vietnam, Belgium, and Laos, as a manager for several non-profit organizations, and then as a management consultant. Jim was the Executive Director of the Big Brother Association of Boston when the association shifted to recruiting large numbers of African American men as big brothers.

Elizabeth Sturges Llerena is an artist and art teacher who teaches in New York City public high schools. She grew up in Bristol, and has studied and lived in China.



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FEATURED SUBJECTS: EXPERTS AND SCHOLARS

Robert Addo-Fening, Professor of History, University of Ghana

Kofi Anyidoho, Professor of Literature, University of Ghana; award-winning poet

Ron Bailey, Professor, African American Studies, Northeastern University

Juanita Brown, Co-Producer, *Traces of the Trade*; Assistant Director of Development, Coalition of Essential Schools

Harold Fields, Facilitator for race dialogue

Kevin E. Jordan, Architectural historian; Professor of Historic Preservation (retired), Roger Williams University.

Glenn Loury, Professor of Economics and Director of the Institute on Race and Social Division, Boston University

Charles Ogletree, Executive Director, Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race and Justice and Jesse Climenko Professor of Law, Harvard University; Co-Chair, Reparations Coordinating Committee

Joanne Pope Melish, Associate Professor of History, University of Kentucky

Elizabeth Warren, Principal Historic Preservation Specialist (retired), Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

ADVISORS

Macky Alston, Director, *Family Name*

Ron Bailey, Professor of African American Studies, Northeastern University

Edward Ball, Journalist and author, *Slaves in the Family*, winner of the 1998 National Book Award

Chuck Collins, Director, Program on Inequality and the Common Good at the Institute for Policy Studies; Co-founder, Responsible Wealth and United for a Fair Economy; Co-author, *Wealth and Our Commonwealth* with Bill Gates Sr.

Franklin D. Gilliam, Jr., Dean and Professor of Public Policy and Political Science, UCLA School of Public Affairs

Joy Degruy Leary, Associate Professor, Portland State University; author, "Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome: America's Legacy of Enduring Injury and Healing"

Norman Lear, Award-winning television and film producer and director; civic leader

Peggy McIntosh, Associate Director, Wellesley College Center for Research on Women; author, "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack"

Joanne Pope Melish, Associate Professor of History, University of Kentucky; author, *Disowning Slavery: Gradual Emancipation and "Race" in New England, 1780-1860*

Alyce Myatt, Managing Director, Grantmakers in Film + Electronic Media; former Vice President of Programming, PBS

Rev. Canon Edward Rodman is the Professor of Pastoral Theology and Urban Ministry at the Episcopal Divinity School

Ellen Schneider, Executive Director, Active Voice

MAJOR FUNDERS

Akonadi Foundation

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The Fetzer Foundation

The Ford Foundation

The Nathan Cummings Foundation

Sundance Institute Documentary Program

Threshold Foundation

Trinity Grants Program

The W. K. Kellogg Foundation



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DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

As a young adult I was deeply influenced by Holocaust films: Marcel Ophuls' *Le Chagrin et la pitié* (*The Sorrow and the Pity*), Alain Resnais' *Nuit et brouillard* (*Night and Fog*) and Michael Verhoeven's *Das Schreckliche Mädchen* (*The Nasty Girl*). I wrote an undergraduate thesis about Vichy France's complicity in the Holocaust and the country's subsequent amnesia. While it's a crude analogy, France is to Germany with regard to the Holocaust as the North is to the South with regard to slavery. Victors write the history books, and thus forget their guilt.

At 28, when I was in seminary, I received a booklet from my grandmother about our family history. There were a few brief sentences about our DeWolf ancestors being slave traders in Bristol, Rhode Island. I was shocked, but realized immediately that I already knew about my family's role in the slave trade, but had somehow buried it. So the bigger shock was what I was now discovering: *my* amnesia.

I dove into the historical literature, and was horrified to learn that the DeWolfs were actually the largest slave-trading family in U.S. history due to the "successful" three-generation dynasty they created. But they were not alone in New England. While exceptional in terms of the scope and scale of their activities, it turned out that they were part of a broad-based pattern of Northern complicity in slavery. The Triangle Trade drove the economy of many cities and towns, including through average citizens buying shares in slave ships. Northerners themselves held enslaved Africans for over 200 years. Northern textile mills used slave-picked cotton from the South to fuel the Industrial Revolution, while banks and insurance companies profited.

Slavery was thus the foundation of the U.S. economy, not a Southern anomaly. Historian Joanne Pope Melish had just released a book, *Disowning Slavery: Gradual Emancipation and Race in New England, 1780-186*, on how the North had constructed an abolitionist identity as pure and heroic to cover over these facts. No one wants to be related to bad guys. I realized that our family story was a microcosm of this larger narrative.



Katrina Browne at Cape Coast Castle, Ghana, in a room where slave ship captains, including her ancestors, negotiated to purchase Africans. Photo courtesy Elly Hale.

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Director's Statement cont.

Also while in seminary, I wrote a master's thesis on Aristotle's theories on the power of Greek tragedies to create empathy and emotional catharses that can lead citizens to better judgment on civic and political affairs. Having worked in Washington, this resonated with my growing sense that internal transformation is as important as external transformation.

In black/white relations, it seems that there is a tangle of emotions/narratives that need to be addressed for there to be policy change. At this point in American history the vast majority of white Americans define ourselves as "not racist." Especially in the North, we presume ourselves innocent. Hence the defensiveness and resistance to black anger and to calls to level the playing field. Hence the vicious cycle of resentments, recriminations, tensions and distrust that manifest in small and large ways and keep the black/white divide painfully in place.

Theater and democracy went hand in hand in Ancient Greece. There would be important civic debate about social issues lifted up in plays. Today we go to movies. I knew that the role of the North in slavery was a story I needed to tell. And I suspected that I should make it a personal journey into the uncomfortable emotional terrain of my and my family's relationship to the legacy of slavery.

So in 1998 I decided to make a documentary film. I was inspired by Macky Alston's documentary *Family Name*, and Edward Ball's book *Slaves in the Family*, which came out around the same time. The two men were descendants of Southern slave-holders, breaking codes of silence.

I began my journey and invited family members to come with me to retrace the Triangle Trade, on camera. I hoped that as we traveled to Rhode Island, Ghana and Cuba, we could explore our struggles with our history and that there would be a larger resonance. I told family members that we should all be prepared to make mistakes, to embarrass ourselves as we felt, and perhaps fumbled our way through the treacherous landscape of slavery, race and class. We're human, and I wanted to humanize our attempts to get things right.

On the journey a core theme emerged that brought me back to Holocaust studies: the idea of regular folks, "good people," who participate (wittingly or unwittingly) in systems that do immense harm. They're not initiating; rather, they're looking the other way. The DeWolf slave traders were extreme — they knew what they were doing — but many well-intentioned New Englanders back then were a step or two removed from slavery while still fueling the system — just as our family today, and many other white Americans, are a step or two removed from the persistent harms being experienced by African-Americans, especially the poor. Yet what is our responsibility?

In the end, I hope that *Traces of the Trade: A Story from the Deep North* invites Americans into heartfelt and honest dialogue on these core questions: What, concretely, is the legacy of slavery — for diverse whites, for diverse blacks, for diverse others? Who owes whom what for the sins of the fathers of this country? What would repair — spiritual and material — really look like, and what would it take?

— **Katrina Browne, Producer/Director/Writer**



U.S. SLAVE TRADE & DEWOLF FAMILY TIMELINE

<u>Year</u>	<u>Event</u>
1619	20 Africans brought to Jamestown, Virginia on a Dutch ship and sold as involuntary laborers to British colonists.
1641	Massachusetts Bay becomes first colony to give legal status to slavery.
1715	20% of enslaved Africans are in the North.
1769	Mark Antony D'Wolf commands his first slave-trading voyage. By virtue of three generations of involvement, the family would come to have the largest interest in the African slave trade of any American family before or after the Revolution, transporting at least 10,000 Africans, owning five plantations in Cuba, an auction house in Charleston, a rum distillery in Bristol, a bank, an insurance company, and more.
1774	Rhode Island prohibits importation of slaves for sale within the colony (Rhode Island merchants remain active in slave trade to markets outside Rhode Island).
1776	Declaration of Independence adopted on July 4 by Continental Congress. Signers remove a section denouncing the slave trade.
1787	Rhode Island outlaws the slave trade. The law proves ineffective.
1789	U.S. Constitution ratified with clause counting slaves as 3/5 of a white citizen for the purpose of allocating seats in Congress, and the provision that the federal government will not prohibit the slave trade prior to January 1, 1808.
1780	New Hampshire becomes the first colony to abolish slavery by law, although the law calls for existing slaves to remain in bondage for up to twenty-eight more years.
1783	Massachusetts becomes the first colony to abolish slavery in practice, through a judicial interpretation of its constitution.
1784	Rhode Island passes a law for the gradual emancipation of slaves.
1795	William and James D'Wolf purchase land on Bristol Harbor which eventually houses a rum distillery, store, insurance company and other family businesses.
1801	U.S. Congress establishes a separate federal revenue district for Bristol and Warren, R.I.
1803	James D'Wolf gives his wife two African children, Adjua and Paulemore, as a Christmas gift. By this time, he has acquired three plantations in Cuba.
1804	President Thomas Jefferson replaces the collector of the Bristol revenue district with Charles Collins, brother-in-law of James D'Wolf and a former slave ship captain. Jefferson is acting on behalf of the D'Wolf family, who wished to avoid enforcement of the revenue laws.

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United States Slave Trade and DeWolf Family Timeline cont.

- 1804 New Jersey becomes the last northern state to act to abolish slavery, providing that all slaves born after this date would not be freed until reaching the age of 21 or 25.
- 1808 U.S. Congress passes federal law outlawing slave trade, and President Jefferson signs the bill March 2, 1807. Its effective date is January 1, 1808. Some slavers ignore the law. A vigorous, clandestine trade continues to operate out of Northern ports. In decades after 1808, free blacks in the North celebrate January 1st as a “Black Fourth of July” to commemorate abolition of the trade.
- 1810 Linden Place (the only family mansion remaining in Bristol, Rhode Island) is built by George D’Wolf with the proceeds from one year in the illegal slave trade.
- 1818 Warehouse is added to D’Wolf Wharf to support the growing family businesses.
- 1819-21 James D’Wolf serves as Speaker of the Rhode Island State House of Representatives.
- 1820 U.S. law equates slave trading with piracy, punishable by death.
- 1821-25 James D’Wolf serves as U.S. Senator from Rhode Island.
- 1825 George D’Wolf goes bankrupt, driving most of Bristol into bankruptcy with him, and flees to his plantation in Cuba.
- 1837 James D’Wolf dies, reportedly the second richest man in America.
- 1843 Rhode Island formally abolishes slavery, having continued to list slaves in the state census until this time.
- 1857 New Hampshire formally abolishes slavery.
- 1860 U.S. Census still lists 18 slaves living in New Jersey.
- 1861 Civil War begins.
- 1862 President Lincoln issues Emancipation Proclamation on September 22, granting freedom to those enslaved in areas of the South in active rebellion on January 1, 1863.
- 1862 Slavery abolished in District of Columbia. Slave owners are compensated for the emancipation of their slaves.
- 1864 General William T. Sherman issues Field Order No. 15 distributing 40 acres per black family in the Sea Islands and surrounding countryside. The order is later rescinded.
- 1865 Civil War ends. Enslaved Africans in Texas are finally informed (more than 2 years late) of the Emancipation Proclamation on June 19, 1865.
- 1865 Slavery abolished in the U.S. by the 13th Amendment to the Constitution.
- 2008 January 1, 2008 is the 200th anniversary of the U.S. abolition of the slave trade.

Sources:

<http://amistad.mysticseaport.org/timeline/united.states.html>

Slavery and the Making of America, by James O. Horton & Lois E. Horton

Sons of Providence, by Charles Rappelye

Disowning Slavery, by Joanne Pope Melish

Inheriting the Trade, by Thomas N. DeWolf



TRACES OF THE TRADE: A STORY FROM THE DEEP

NATIONAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CAMPAIGN

Traces of the Trade was released in 2008 on the occasion of the Bicentennial of the U.S. Abolition of the Slave Trade in 1808. It is intended as a catalyst for education and dialogue around issues of reconciliation and repair. Discussion guides, study guides and other materials have been developed to facilitate use of the film among community groups, and in religious settings and classrooms nationwide. As part of this outreach effort, *Traces of the Trade* has screened nationally and internationally at film festivals, conferences and special events to foster interest among leaders in the educational, faith-based, philanthropic and policy-making communities.

The film had its world premiere in January 2008 as an Official Competition Selection in the Sundance Film Festival. It has been selected by numerous festivals, including the Newport International Film Festival, the Human Rights Watch International Film Festival and the Pan-African Film & Arts Festival. Significant screenings include the National Constitution Center's *Legacy of 1808* series, the Center for Urban Ministry's City of God Conference, the National Cathedral in Washington DC, and the 9th annual White Privilege Conference in Springfield, MA, among others.

In May 2008, Grantmakers in Film + Electronic Media and the Council on Foundations hosted a special screening and panel discussion at the Newseum in Washington DC. The panel was co-moderated by Charles Ogletree, Harvard Law School Professor, and Judy Woodruff, Senior Correspondent for PBS's *The NewsHour* with Jim Lehrer.

Traces of the Trade had its national television broadcast premiere on the PBS award-winning independent documentary series [P.O.V.](#), and is now available for purchase on DVD. The film kicked off P.O.V.'s 21st season on June 24, 2008 reaching 1.4 million people, and has had many subsequent local public television stations rebroadcasts. Since the broadcast, we have taken on a multi-faceted, national campaign that has included civic and community associations, libraries, museums and historical societies, high schools, colleges and universities, religious congregations, racial justice organizations, and more. The film's research team was nominated for an Emmy Award® in 2009.

We are always interested in bringing *Traces of the Trade* to new audiences. To learn more about the national community engagement campaign visit www.tracesofthetrade.org.



OUTREACH AND DISTRIBUTION TEAM

During the first year and a half of outreach surrounding release of the film, *Traces of the Trade* staff collaborated with the media outreach firm Borderline Media, as well as with our broadcaster, P.O.V., on a highly successful national outreach campaign. With interest in the film continuing to expand, we then developed in-house capacity through the work of our excellent distribution director and events manager, [Marga Varea](#), who served from 2009-2015.

Katrina Browne, Producer/Director, see bio in *About the Filmmakers*.

Marga Varea, holds a master's in Journalism and Media Studies from Complutense University of Madrid (Spain). She worked in the film and television industry in Spain for several years as a screenwriter, script supervisor, and producer and was the founding partner of Great Ways, a thriving production company in Madrid. After relocating to the U.S., Marga gained experience as a fundraiser, grant writer and event's organizer working for nonprofit social justice organizations and local film festivals. In 2009; she joined "Traces of the Trade", also working for the Tracing Center, a nonprofit organization founded to build on the work of "Traces". Marga is now an independent consultant, event's organizer and outreach campaign manager for social issue documentary films and art/cultural events. She also freelances as a scriptwriter, editor and translator.

For information on organizing a screening or other event please contact info@tracesofthetrade.org.



FILM SPECS

Running time: 86:46

Aspect ratio: 16x9 (1.78)

Formatted to 1080i/59.94

L/RT stereo

Available in NTSC or PAL

SCREENINGS AND SPEAKERS

info@tracesofthetrade.org

PRESS

info@tracesofthetrade.org

GENERAL INFORMATION

info@tracesofthetrade.org

DVD PURCHASES

www.tracesofthetrade.org/buy-use-the-film