



Review of Historical Statistics of the United States

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THERE IS A REFERENCE BOOK
CALLED THE HISTORICAL
STATISTICS OF THE UNITED
STATES FROM COLONIAL
TIMES TO 1957. IN IT ARE
TABLES OF IMPORTS AND EX_
PORTS IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER.
RIGHT AFTER RICE AND JUST
BEFORE TAR AND TURPENTINE
UNDER S. ARE THE HUMANS. THE RICE
IS MEASURED BY POUNDS: THE
PITCH, TAR AND TURPENTINE
BY THE BARRELWEIGHT. HEAD-
COUNT , HOWEVER, IS USED TO
MEASURE THE HUMANS. EVERY
EFFORT SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN MADE
MADE TO ASSURE THE ACCURACY OF
OF THE TABLES. BELOW THE
NEAT COLUMNS OF FIGURES,
FOOTNOTES SEEM TO APOLOGIZE
FOR OCCASIONAL LAPSES IN
COMPLETE DATA. "WE ARE SORRY,"
THE BUREAU OF CENSUS SEEMS TO
BE SAYING, "THAT BETTER RECORDS
WERE NOT KEPT OR AVAILABLE TO
US. THE COUNTRY WAS JUST
GETTING ITSELF TOGETHER, YOU
KNOW, AND THINGS WERE LESS

Miner
V601 B
STATISTICS
March 23, 1979

THAN EFFICIENT. ONE
SENSES REASONABLENESS
AND GENTLEMANLY ASSERT_
TION EVERYWHERE IN THESE
PAGES. BUT IT IS REASON_
ABLENESS WITHOUT THE LEAST
HOPE OF SUCCESS, FOR THE
LANGUAGE ITSELF CRACKS
UNDER THE WEIGHT OF ITS
OWN IMPLICATIONS. FOOTNOTE
3, FOR EXAMPLE, UNDER
SLAVES CLARIFIES THE AM-
BIGUITY OF ITS REFERENCE
IN THE FOLLOWING WORDS:
"SOURCE SHOWS 72 INDIAN SLAVE
SLAVES IMPORTED; 32311 SLAVES
DIED AND 103 DRAWN BACK
FOR EXPORTATION." DIED?
DRAWN BACK? STRANGE VIO-
LENT WORDS THAT COULD
NEVER BE USED TO DESCRIBE
RICE, OR TAR OR TURPENTINE.
FOOTNOTE 5, BY FAR THE
COOLEST IN ITS CIVILIZED
ACCURACY, IS AS FOLLOWS:
"NUMBER OF NEGROES SHIPPED,
NOT THOSE ACTUALLY ARRIVED."

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THERE WAS A DIFFERENCE
APPARENTLY, BETWEEN THE
NUMBER SHIPPED AND THE
NUMBER THAT ARRIVED. THE
MIND GALLOPS TO THE FIRST
QUESTION: HOW MANY? HOW MANY
WERE SHIPPED? HOW MANY DID
NOT ARRIVE? THEN THE MIND
SLIDES TOWARD THE NEXT
QUESTION: THE VITAL ONE
THAT WITHERS ALL OTHERS:
WHO? WHO AS ABSENT AT THE
FINAL HEAD-COUNT? WAS THERE
A 17 YEAR-OLD GIRL THERE
WITH A TREE-SHAPED SCAR
ON HER KNEE? AND WHAT
WAS HER NAME? THAT IS
WHAT INDICES ARE LIKE OF
COURSE. NOT THE FAN-SHAPED
SPREAD OF RICE BURSTING
FROM A GUNNYSACK: NOT THE
THUNDER OF BARRELS OF
TURPENTINE CASCADING DOWN
A PLANK: AND NOT A 17 YEAR
OLD GIRL WITH A SCAR ON HER
KNEE. HISTORY IS PERCENTILES:
THE :THOUGHTS OF GREAT MEN.

IT IS AWKWARD TO DIFFER
FROM A GREAT MAN, BUT
TOLSTOI WAS WRONG. KINGS
ARE NOT THE SLAVES OF
HISTORY. HISTORY IS THE
SLAVE OF KINGS.

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I'M TONI MORRISON