

## *Building the College Edifice*

The Summer 2008 issue of *Rhode Island History* features an article by Robert P. Emlen, the university curator of Brown University and a senior lecturer in the Department of American Civilization. “Slave Labor at the College Edifice: Building Brown University’s University Hall in 1770,” provides a fascinating glimpse into labor and business practices in Rhode Island just before the American Revolution. Although there are countless teachable points in this text, we have decided to feature a few activities based on the primary source so central to Emlen’s argument.

Please use the following instructions to access the document on-line and begin the activities:

This primary source *The College to Nicholas Brown & Co., Dr. 1771* is a ledger of more than 16 pages and one of the documents that Robert P. Emlen cites in the article “Slave Labor at the College Edifice: Building Brown University’s University Hall in 1770”

To access this document in full please use the following steps.

Brown University, Center for Digital Initiatives

Link:

<http://dl.lib.brown.edu/repository2/repoman.php?verb=render&id=1098447551250000>

*The College to Nicholas Brown & Co., Dr. 1771*

Under Retrieval Options:

Click View Document (Images)

To Print Images: Click on image you are viewing.

You may have to adjust the printer setup to print the entire page.

Divide the class into small groups and assign each group pages from ledger. From this document, they will be able to research what types of building materials were used to construct the first building of the College of Rhode Island (Brown University), known as the “edifice,” and the college president’s house.

1. Both the supplier and the cost of materials are listed in this document. Use Ledger #1 to list building material, cost of items, and suppliers for each building.
2. The document also has the names, jobs and salaries of the individuals who worked in the construction of these two buildings. Use Ledger #2 to list this information.
3. The vocabulary in the document may be unfamiliar to the students. Using a dictionary, or the Internet, have the students define the words listed in the lexicon.

**Extension Activity:**

Now the students have an understanding of the materials used in the construction. Have the students try to create a representation of either building. After they have created their building, have them search on-line for images of 18<sup>th</sup> century buildings, including University Hall.

**Ledger #1**

<i>Materials</i>	<i>Name of Supplier</i>	<i>Cost</i>	<i>College/President's House</i>

The document entitled *The College to Nicholas Brown & Co., Dr. 1771* is a ledger that lists all the supplies and expenses for the construction of the first building of the College of Rhode Island (Brown University), known as the “edifice,” and the president’s house. From the ledger entries you will be able to find building materials that were used in both buildings, as well as the name of, the suppliers (which could be a person or a company) and the cost of the items. List the materials, the name of the supplier, the cost\*, and if the material was used for the college edifice or the president’s house.

\*Payment for materials may not have been made in money but in goods or services.

Ledger #2

<i>Name of Worker</i>	<i>Type of Job</i>	<i>Time, Worked</i>	<i>Payment*</i>

The document entitled *The College to Nicholas Brown & Co., Dr. 1771* is a ledger that lists all the supplies and expenses for the construction for the first building of the College of Rhode Island (Brown University), known as the “edifice,” and the president’s house. From the ledger entries you will be able to find a list of workers, the type of work they did, often the number of days worked and the payment\* for the work.

\*Payment for work may not have been made in money but in goods or services.

	<i>Lexicon</i>
<b>lime</b>	
<b>bricks</b>	
<b>rafter</b>	
<b>ditto</b>	
<b>glazing</b>	
<b>(joice) joist</b>	
<b>slate</b>	
<b>mantle</b>	
<b>shingles</b>	
<b>(clabbords) clapboards</b>	
<b>sashes</b>	
<b>timber</b>	