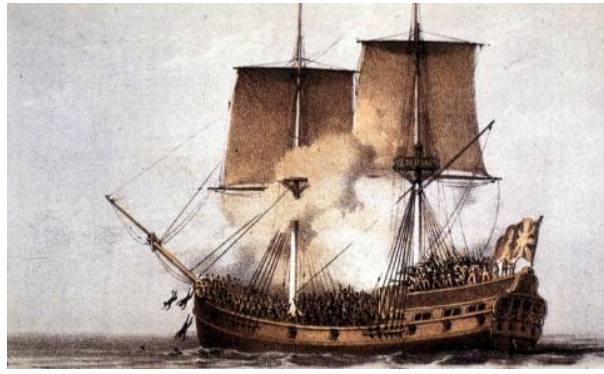




0. MIDDLE PASSAGE REALITY - Story Preface

1. AFRICA, BEFORE SLAVERS

2. SLAVE-TRADE BEGINNINGS

3. THE TRIANGLE TRADE

4. THE MIDDLE PASSAGE MYTH

5. MIDDLE PASSAGE REALITY

6. JOHN NEWTON, SLAVE TRADER

7. OLAUDAH EQUIANO

8. HUMANS: PROPERTY and AUCTIONS

9. WILLIAM WILBERFORCE

10. VOICE of a MOVEMENT

11. MASSIVE EXPLOITATION

12. THE FAMOUS SPEECH

13. CONVINCING the PUBLIC

14. SLAVE TRADE ABOLISHED - FEBRUARY 23, 1807

15. MORE TRAGEDIES

16. AMAZING GRACE

In 1787, a revolt takes place aboard an overcrowded slave ship en route on a “Middle Passage” journey from Africa to the New World. The crew fires on the slaves while some Africans dive overboard. The image was originally published, as a black-and-white illustration, in 1794. [Learn more about it](#) by clicking on the first link of this chapter’s “Media Stream.”

In July of 1788, Liverpool slave-trade participants testified about [their activities](#) in Parliament. They told MPs that slaves, among other things, were comfortable during transatlantic crossings.

Then, under intense cross examination, they acknowledged the truth. We pick up the story in [chapter 23](#) of Clarkson's history:

Every slave, whatever his size might be, was found to have only five feet and six inches in length, and sixteen inches in breadth, to lie in. The floor was covered with bodies stowed or packed according to this allowance: but between the floor and the deck or ceiling were often platforms or broad shelves in the mid-way, which were [covered with bodies](#).

When [captives](#) were [brought](#) to the African ports, they were bound together, two by two. Were they also [tethered](#), in some manner, aboard ship?

The men were chained two and two together by their hands and feet, and were chained also by means of ring-bolts, which were fastened to the deck. They were confined [in this manner](#) at least all the time they remained upon the coast, which was from six weeks to six months as it might happen.

If they were captured to provide free labor, Africans needed nourishment. What did they eat?

Their allowance consisted of one pint of water a day to each person, and they were fed twice a day with yams and horsebeans.

Some of the captives refused to eat, wishing to die rather than to live in such [horrific conditions](#). When that happened, slavers would force-open their mouths [with a device](#) (called a *speculum oris*) which looked like an instrument of torture. (See Clarkson, [chapter 17](#).)

[Confined](#) in cramped quarters, how did the captives keep their bodies limber?

After meals they jumped up in their irons for exercise. This was so necessary for their health, that they were whipped if they refused to do it; and this jumping had been termed dancing.

Young girls could also be whipped if they refused the captain's order to dance without their clothes. One example was memorialized by George Cruikshank on the 10th of April, 1792.

John Kimber, captain of the slave ship *Recovery*, whipped a fifteen-year-old captive while she was suspended by her ankle. Although she died of her injuries, a jury in the High Court of Admiralty acquitted Kimber. They concluded the girl had died of disease, not mistreatment.

Were captives allowed to breathe fresh air, or did they spend most of their time below deck?

They were usually fifteen and sixteen hours below deck out of the twenty-four. In rainy weather they could not be brought up for two or three days together. If the ship was full, their situation was then distressing. They sometimes drew their breath with anxious and laborious efforts, and some died of suffocation.

It is said one could smell an approaching slave ship ten miles away, so horrific were its onboard conditions.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/MIDDLE-PASSAGE-REALITY-Amazing-Grace>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/MIDDLE-PASSAGE-REALITY-Amazing-Grace>

Questions 2 Ponder

What Was the Middle Passage of the Triangle Trade?

After slave-traders loaded captured Africans onto their slave ships, they sailed to the "New World." This journey was known as the "Middle Passage" of the "Triangle Trade."

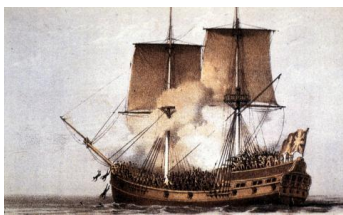
Setting aside the fact that free people had now become slaves, conditions aboard the slave ships were unimaginably atrocious. Chained together, people spent most of their time below decks in appalling conditions.

Thomas Clarkson's history, and the evidence he gathered which William Wilberforce used in his pleas to Parliament, make clear that conditions of the Middle Passage were inhuman.

What would cause human beings to treat other human beings so appallingly?

Just because a law exists, allowing such events, why would slave-traders and ship-owners harm people the way they did?

Media Stream

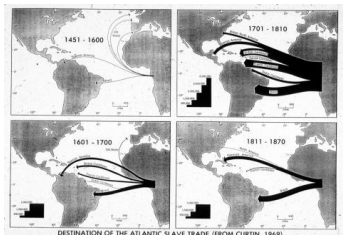


Revolt on a Slave Ship - 1787

From "A Brief History of the Wesleyan Missions on the West Coast of Africa," by William Fox, (London, 1851), facing page 116. The image was first published, as a black-and-white illustration, in "An Essay on Colonization, Particularly Applied to the Western Coast of Africa... in Two Parts," by Carl B. Wadstrom, (published in London, 1794, 1795; reprinted New York, A.M. Kelley, 1968). Revolt Aboard Slave Ship, 1787; Image Reference E007, as shown on www.slaveryimages.org, compiled by Jerome Handler and Michael Tuite, and sponsored by the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities and the University of Virginia Library.

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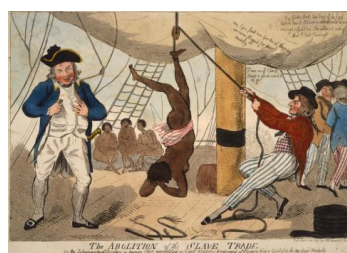
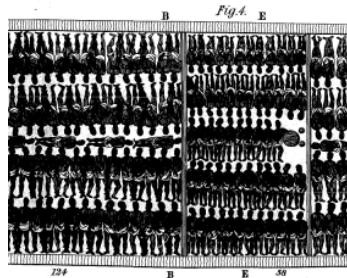
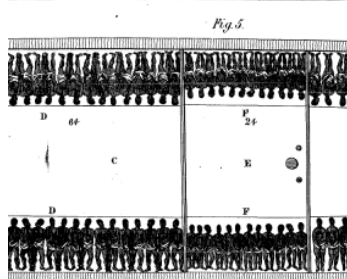
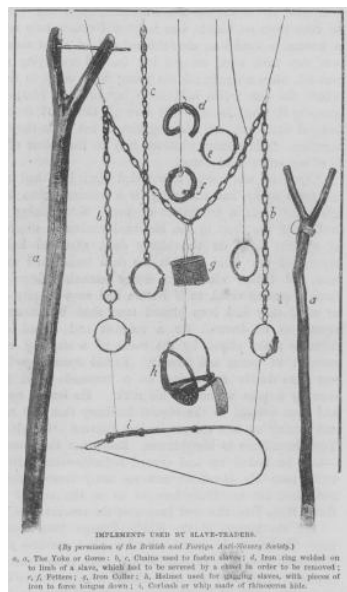
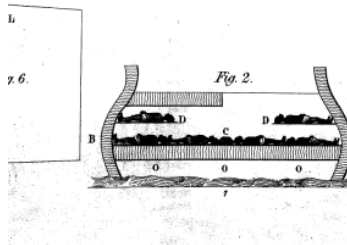
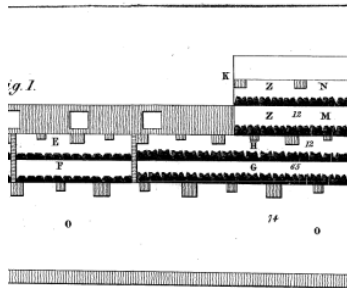
View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Revolt-on-a-Slave-Ship-1787>



Destination of the Slave Trade

Image online, courtesy the [negroartist.com](http://www.negroartist.com) website.

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Layout of the Slave Ship Brookes - Below Decks

Images and quoted passage, from Chapter 24, Clarkson, et al, *The History of the Rise, Progress and Accomplishment of the Abolition of the African Slave-Trade, by the British Parliament* (1839).

Online, courtesy Project Gutenberg.

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View this asset at:

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Implements Used by Slave-Traders

From Arthur Thomas Quiller-Couch, ed., *The Story of the Sea* (London, 1895-96), vol. 2, p. 445.

Courtesy of The Mariners' Museum, Newport News, Virginia.

Digitized image, courtesy the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities and the University of Virginia Library.

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Inhuman Housing of Slaves Aboard Slave Ships

Images and quoted passage, from Chapter 24, Clarkson, et al, *The History of the Rise, Progress and Accomplishment of the Abolition of the African Slave-Trade, by the British Parliament* (1839).

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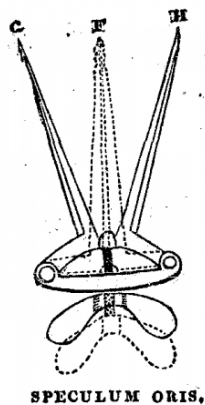
"Inhumanity of Dealers in Human Flesh"

Library of Congress, image LC-USZ62-6204. Originally published in London, April 10, 1792.

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View this asset at:

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Torture Device Used to Feed Slaves Against Their Will

Online, courtesy Project Gutenberg.

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Barricade Aboard a Slave Ship

Image, Library of Congress.

Watercolor, by an unknown artist, of a 1772-73 slave-barricade aboard ship. The work is maintained at the Musée du Château des ducs de Bretagne, Nantes, France.

Published in (among other works) *Before Freedom Came: African-American Life in the Antebellum South*, E.D.C. Campbell and KS. Rice, eds., (Univ. Press of Virginia, 1991), plate 6, p. xv.

Quotation from *The Diligent: A Voyage Through the Worlds of the Slave Trade*, by Robert Harms (New York: Basic Books, 2002), at page 251.

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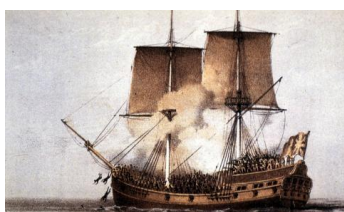
Cramped Conditions On Board Slave Ship

Image online, courtesy Library of Congress.

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MIDDLE PASSAGE REALITY

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Amazing Grace - Horrors of the Middle Passage

From *Amistad* (1997), written by David Franzoni, directed by Steven Spielberg and released by Dreamworks. Copyright, all rights reserved, Dreamworks. Clip used here, as fair use, for educational purposes.

The film features Djimon Hounsou (Cinque), Morgan Freeman (Theodore Joadson), Anthony Hopkins (John Quincy Adams) and Matthew McConaughey (Baldwin). Cinematography by Janusz Kaminski.

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