

0. MORE TRAGEDIES - 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



Even during the last-half of the 19th century, Africans were kidnapped as slaves. This image, depicting "A Slaver's Canoe," is an example of events which took place in the Congo. It is from a work by E.J. Glave, *The Slave-Trade in the Congo Basin. By one of Stanley's pioneer officers. Illustrated after sketches from life by the author* (*The Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine*, 1889-1890), vol. 39, pp. 824-838. The image (Reference C010) is online via [Slavery Images.org](http://SlaveryImages.org), compiled by Jerome Handler and Michael Tuite; sponsored by the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities and the University of Virginia Library. Click on the image for a better view.

After Parliament abolished slave-trading, strict penalties were imposed for violators. Another chapter of slavers mistreating Africans was about to begin.

Capturing, transporting and selling of enslaved Africans was illegal, after 1807, but slavery itself continued in the British colonies and was thriving in the American South. Put differently, there was still a market for African slaves.

The Royal Navy created a squadron to patrol the seas, searching for violators of the law. They were charged with searching, and detaining, ships with now-illegal slaves (including children) on board. It is estimated that 150,000 Africans were set free from these efforts.

Attempting to "put teeth into the law," Parliament established a stiff fine - £100 - for every illegal African found on a slave ship. Naval officers were empowered to assess the fines, on the spot.

Did any shipowners try to avoid the fines (or import fees on sick slaves) by harming their "cargo?" A newly-released diary of a naval officer, who served aboard HMS *Owen Glendower* between 1823-1824, answers that question. What follows hereafter is not for the faint of heart.

A despairing Midshipman, named C. Henry Binstead, finds ship after ship filled with illegal slaves. When he boards the vessels, he sees they are overcrowded and disease-ridden. Many of Binstead's men are becoming sick and die of yellow fever and malaria.

One day, Binstead sees an unusual number of sharks. He has discovered the horrid aftermath of a slaver's method to avoid paying the £100-per-slave fine:

Many large whales and sharks about us, the latter is owing to the number of poor fellows that have lately been thrown overboard. The ship is now truly miserable, many of our own crew very sick and the decks crowded with black slaves who are dying in all directions and apprehensive - their cases of fever are contagious.

Thirty days before, Binstead witnessed first-hand how afraid Africans became when they believed slavers were

after them. Patrolling the Congo River, looking for illegally captured people, Binstead came upon a convoy of canoes. Those onboard did not realize Binstead's true intentions. His diary contains these words:

Observed many large canoes, one of which I went in chase of. On my coming up with her, the whole crew jumped overboard and I fear they met a watery grave. These poor wretches were fearful we were going to make slaves of them.

William Wilberforce, meanwhile, began to support the efforts to free the slaves, not just stop their capture. In 1823, he wrote his *Appeal on Behalf of The Negro Slaves*. He would live ten more years, with failing eyes and health. Days after he learned that a bill abolishing slavery would likely become law in Britain, he died - on the 29th of July, 1833.

Wilberforce - like a later anti-slaver from Scotland, Dr. David Livingstone - is buried at Westminster Abbey. So is his friend John Newton, the man who wrote the now-famous hymn *Amazing Grace*.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/MORE-TRAGEDIES-Amazing-Grace>

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Questions 2 Ponder

How Did Slavers Avoid Penalties When Slave-Trading Was Abolished?

After Parliament abolished slave-trading, demand for slaves remained high in the "New World." With slavery still legal, slave-traders tried to satisfy the demand for slaves by illegally continuing their slave-trading ways.

The British government dispatched Royal Navy ships to patrol the Atlantic in an effort to rescue illegally captured people. Historical records show that around 150,000 Africans were freed as a result of the patrols.

Violators of the new law were subject to fines of £100-per-slave, and naval officers were authorized to collect the funds on the spot. To avoid such stiff penalties, slavers would throw their "cargo" overboard, resulting in the deliberate murder of illegally captured people.

Assess the actions of the slave traders who avoided penalties by throwing their "cargo" overboard. Should the law have contained a provision charging such individuals with murder?

What do you think motivated slavers to treat their illegally captured Africans in such horrific ways?

Does economic gain or loss influence people to make dreadful decisions? Explain your answer.

Is Death Ever Better than Capture?

Patrolling the Congo River, looking for illegally captured people, a Royal Navy Midshipman named C. Henry Binstead came upon a convoy of canoes. The Africans onboard did not realize Binstead's true intentions. Worried they would be captured, then enslaved, by the white men, the Africans jumped overboard and drowned in the river.

How desperate would those Africans have to be to willingly risk their own lives to avoid a life of slavery? Explain your answer.

What would cause anyone to risk death to avoid capture?

Media Stream



African Children Rescued From a Slave Ship

From: George L. Sullivan, *Dhow chasing in Zanzibar waters and on the eastern coast of Africa* (London, 1873), facing p. 180.

The original of this photo, taken by Sullivan (the author of *Dhow Chasing*) in 1869, is maintained by the Public Record Office in London (FO 84/1310).

Image, courtesy slaveryimages.org, sponsored by the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities and the University of Virginia Library.

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<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/African-Children-Rescued-From-a-Slave-Ship>



GROUP OF 322 LIBERATED AFRICANS ON THE DECK OF THE "DAPHNE."
(From a Photograph by the Author.) (Page 171.)

322 Liberated Slaves Aboard the Daphne

From: George L. Sullivan, *Dhow chasing in Zanzibar waters and on the eastern coast of Africa* (London, 1873), facing p. 171.

The original photo, on which this engraving is based, was taken by Sullivan (the author of *Dhow Chasing*) in 1869. It is maintained by the Public Record Office/The National Archives, London (FO 84/1310).

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Sick Slaves are Thrown Overboard Their Ship

Library of Congress, image LC-USZ62-30833.

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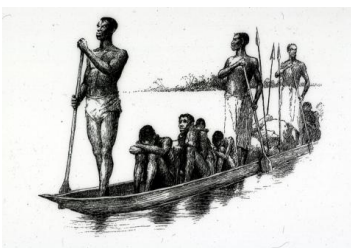


C. Henry Binstead

Image online, courtesy National Museum of the Royal Navy.

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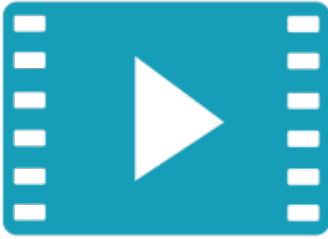


Dr. David Livingstone - Abolitionist from Scotland

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"Dr. Livingstone, I Presume?"

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Shark Attack - How a Great White Surprises its Prey

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It was originally broadcast, in the UK, beginning on the 5th of March, 2006. The entire series, which is filled with unbelievable photography, took about a decade to complete.

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