Citation:

Candido, Mariana P., OlatunjiOjo, Mohammed BashirSalau and Robert H.Gudmestad. "Slave Trade." *Encyclopedia of African American History, 1619-1895: From the Colonial Period to the Age of Frederick Douglass*, edited by PaulFinkelman. *Oxford African American Studies Center*, http://www.oxfordaasc.com.gate.lib.buffalo.edu/article/opr/t0004 /e0513 (accessed Mon May 18 20:30:25 EDT 2009).

Slave Trade

By: Candido, Mariana P., Gudmestad, Robert H., Gudmestad, Robert H., Salau, Mohammed Bashir, Ojo, Olatunji

[*This entry contains five subentries dealing with the Atlantic slave trade from the sixteenth century to legislature prohibiting American participation in the early nineteenth century. Each article discusses a chronological segment of the duration of slave trade: the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; the eighteenth century to the American Revolution; the American Revolution to 1808; the prohibition of slave trade in the United States; and the illegal African slave trade that persisted in the nineteenth century*.] Slave Trade in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries

From the beginning of the Iberian exploitation of the Americas, Africans represented the main source of labor, despite the existence of a large Amerindian population. For political, economic, and, especially, ideological reasons, the Spanish and Portuguese monarchies preferred to enslave Africans rather than Native Americans.

A slave dealer and his customer in Africa. Engraving in Maurice Besson's *The Scourge of the Indies: Buccaneers, Corsairs, and Filibusters*, New York, 1929.

Library of Congress.

During the first decades of the sixteenth century some representatives of the Spanish Crown and the Catholic Church were distressed by the decimation of the Amerindian population. Several factors led to the rapid decline of the local population, among them, slavery and the destruction of indigenous economic and political organizations. Indigenous populations also contracted illnesses brought in by Europeans and died in large numbers owing to their lack of immunity. The Dominican priest Bartolomé de las Casas was one of the leading voices against the enslavement of Native Americans. The support that Las Casas offered for the importation of African slaves influenced Pope Paul III, who in 1537 condemned the enslavement of Amerindians.

Under pressure, the Spanish Crown abolished the use of indigenous peoples as slaves in 1542. This was the push that slave traders in Africa needed to increase the exportation of Africans. At that time slavery was an institution known to Africans, although it was not as familiar as it became in subsequent centuries. Still, it was common enough that in the fifteenth century, when the Portuguese tried to trade goods with Africans in West Africa, they were offered slaves. Very quickly, the Portuguese noticed that slaves could be used as currency with African merchants. This was the beginning of major importation of Africans to Portugal as household and agricultural workers. Unlike the Spanish, however, the Portuguese did not import slaves into their American colony until 1538.

Within a few years of the arrival of Christopher Columbus in the Americas in 1498, the Spanish Crown was importing African slaves to work on sugar plantations in its American colonies. The first recorded use of African slaves in Spanish America was in 1502. A series of laws was established to control the slave trade between Africa and the Spanish colonies in the Americas. These laws not only established a House of Commerce, which controlled the trade, but also favored the importation of Africans over the use of Amerindians as slaves. Between 1502 and 1650 most of the slaves imported into the Americas went to Spanish colonies. Differing from the Portuguese, British, and French, who increased their importation in the eighteenth century, the Spanish imported the core of their African slaves into mainland Spanish America in the early period of colonization. Africans were used on agricultural plantations, particularly those raising sugar, but also in mining operations. In 1650, after the Spanish had discovered silver mines in the viceroyalties of New Spain and La Plata, it is estimated that there were 35,000 African slaves in modern Mexico and 100,000 in Peru.

In the sixteenth century, stimulated by the profits of sugar exports to Europe, the Portuguese Crown imported sugarcane from Madeira and São Tomé islands to establish sugar plantations along the Brazilian coast. Amerindian and African laborers were used side by side in Brazil. However, the constant conflict between the Portuguese authorities and the indigenous population and the condemnation of enslavement of Native Americans stimulated the importation of African slaves. The Portuguese Crown, in an effort to drain the Portuguese prisons, also attempted to deport prisoners and outlaws to Brazil, but the idea that Europeans should not be enslaved was already strong by the mid-sixteenth century.

By 1600 half of the slave population in Brazil was African born, and this number increased in the following decades. The slave trade seemed to be very profitable for the Portuguese Crown, such that by 1650 Portuguese America had superseded the Spanish territories as the major importer of African slaves. The increasing wealth of the Portuguese monarchy, through the profits of the slave trade between Africa and the Americas and sugar production, drew the attention of the British, Dutch, and French elites to the opportunities that the Americas could offer.

Entry of Dutch, British, and French into the Slave Trade

In the seventeenth century more European states joined the slave trade. Despite Spanish and Portuguese control over the trade between Africa and the Americas, private and state representative merchants of other European monarchies enrolled in the lucrative trade. The Dutch were present in different regions of the Americas, from New Amsterdam to Guyana, passing through the island of Curaçao in the Caribbean. After the Dutch took control of Olinda and Recife, in northeastern Brazil, in 1630, they obtained control over sugar production in the Americas, but they did not control the supply of slaves.

The solution was to conquer, in 1637, El Mina fort along the Gold Coast, which was under Portuguese control. At that time El Mina was one of the most important slaving ports in West Africa. A few years later, in 1641, the Dutch also seized other Portuguese holdings in Africa, such as the ports of Luanda and Benguela, and the island of São Tomé. Dutch imperial pretensions were complete with the conquest of São Luis do Maranhão, in northeastern Brazil. For twenty years the Dutch controlled the slave trade between Africa and the Americas. They occupied the space left by the Portuguese Crown, which was divided by internal political problems. Since unification with the Spanish Crown in the 1580s, the Portuguese monarchy had been in decline. It recovered only when Portugal regained its independence in 1640. Soon after that, in 1648, Portuguese and Luso-Brazilian troops conquered Luanda, and in 1654 the northeast of Brazil was under Portuguese control again.

In the last years of the seventeenth century gold was found in Minas Gerais, Brazil. This discovery led to an increase in the volume of African slaves imported to work in mines. After a few decades away from the slave trade business, Portuguese and Brazilian brokers were back at the African coast. The importation of slaves grew to supply the nascent mining demand in the interior and the expanding sugarcane production along the coast.

The British and the French were not far behind. In the 1630s sugar production was introduced into the British colony of Barbados, as an adventure of private merchants looking for quick profits. Even without state support, a group of settlers
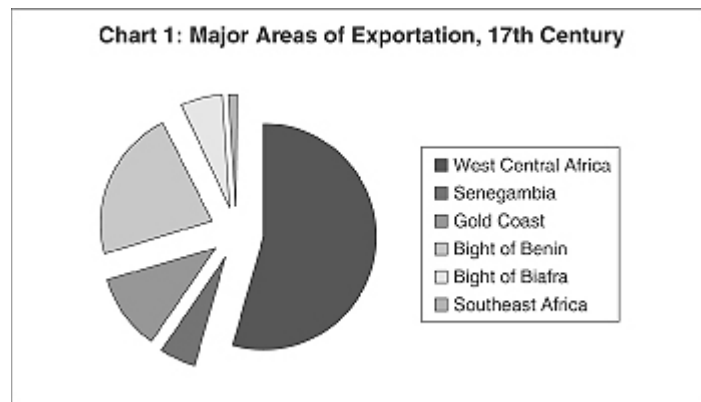
found economic support among British merchants interested in the importation of agricultural goods, especially tobacco from Virginia and sugar from Barbados. The main problem was the labor supply in the colonies. At first, free laborers, especially immigrants who were escaping religious persecution, were used in North American territories. Soon, however, the profits of the slave trade were found to be very attractive, and British plantation owners were willing to organize and finance expeditions to the African coast.

In the Caribbean the importation of African slaves started in the 1640s, but in Virginia and Maryland, African slave labor became predominant only toward the end of the seventeenth century. Noticing the potential profits in the slave trade business, the British Crown created the Royal African Company in 1672, which held a monopoly over the slave trade. By 1689 independent traders were able to break the monopoly and bring more slaves to the British colonies than the Royal African Company could supply. In the last two decades of the seventeenth century the trade in African slaves exploded. It is estimated that twenty thousand slaves disembarked in the North American colonies in this period. As in the other American colonies, male slaves were preferred over females and children. From the slave owners' perspective, females and children were not as profitable as male slaves.

The French participation in the slave trade did not start until 1660. Dutch merchants imported the African slaves used in the French Caribbean colonies. In 1664, however, the Compagnie française des Indes occidentales (French West India Company) was created as a way to monopolize the supply of slaves into French territories. Even though the company existed for only ten years (1664–1674), it nevertheless achieved its main goal: to increase the volume of slave importation. Still, most of the slaves imported by the French farmers were bought from Dutch or British traders. It is estimated that, overall, 124,000 Africans disembarked in French colonies in the last quarter of the seventeenth century.

### Demography: How Many Africans Were Sent to the Americas?

The seventeenth century witnessed an explosion in the number of Africans imported into the Americas. Africans were coming in larger numbers, from different places and widely distributed in the Americas. Whereas in the sixteenth century, about 90 percent of all Africans sent to the Americas came from West Central Africa, in the seventeenth century this figure fell to 54 percent of total exports. The remaining slaves came from the Bights of Benin and Biafra, the Gold Coast, Senegambia, and Mozambique. The increase in the numbers of Africans exported and of slaving ports was directly linked to a rise in the number of slave traders and the growing fragmentation of the national carriers. Portuguese merchants were still the majority of the traders, but British and Dutch vessels were also crucial in the transportation of people across the Atlantic.

Chart 1: Major Areas of Exportation, 17th Century

- West Central Africa
- Senegambia
- Gold Coast
- Bight of Benin
- Bight of Biafra
- Southeast Africa

Major areas of exportation, 17th century

Chart 2: European Participation in the Slave Trade, 17th Century

- Portugal
- British
- Netherlands
- France
- Denmark

European participation in the slave trade, 17th century
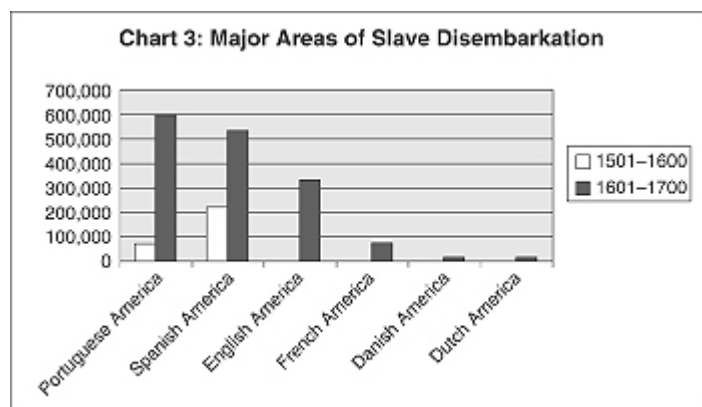
Major areas of slave disembarkation

The estimated volume of the slave importation is one of the issues most discussed among scholars. Although there is no consensus about the total volume of Africans exported to the Americas, specialists agree that the exportation of Africans across the Sahara and the Indian Ocean also contributed to population loss in Africa. Scholars have presented different numbers for the total volume of the Atlantic slave trade. Since Philip Curtin's publication of *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census*, several scholars have joined the numbers game, confirming or modifying Curtin's figures. However, most of the studies and the consequent discussion are centered on the slave trade of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. For the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, researchers agree that the volume of slave trade was small compared with that in the following centuries. According to these studies, the number of African slaves who disembarked in the Americas varied between 125,000 and 340,350 in the sixteenth century, while the number rose to about 1.5 million Africans in the seventeenth century.

While there is little evidence to help track down the destination of Africans who ended up in North Africa or Europe, it is possible to estimate that in the sixteenth century approximately 75 percent of the Africans who crossed the Atlantic as slaves went to territories under Spanish control and that the remaining 25 percent went to Brazil. In the seventeenth century these figures changed with the importation of African slaves to work in regions under Dutch, French, and British control and the rise of Portuguese America as the largest importer of slaves in the New World.

It is possible to estimate that Portuguese vessels transported most of the slaves during the seventeenth century. Portuguese traders had heavily concentrated their business in West Central Africa in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and British traders operated mainly in West Africa. In the 1660s most British embarkation took place at the Bight of Biafra. Between 1680 and 1700, however, the Bight of Benin became the leading region in the British slave trade; still, a significant number of Africans were shipped through ports in the Gold Coast and in West Central Africa, especially Loango. Most of the slaves who embarked in Africa left from West Central Africa. This concentration of people from the same background certainly had effects on the way Africans interacted in the Americas.

American ports were not necessarily the end of the journey. For most slaves who arrived in Rio de Janeiro or Bahia, landing implied another march, perhaps mirroring a march they had made to reach the African ports. They could stay at the port towns or they could end up in, for example, Minas Gerais, a mining region. When slaves were sold elsewhere, they could be transported to places as far as two hundred miles from the port towns. As in the case of slaves imported to work in the silver mine of Potosí, it was necessary to take Africans to the Caribbean coast of South America and then transport them over the Panama isthmus to the Pacific, where they were shipped again, this time to Lima. From Lima the slaves were forced to walk to Potosí. This long journey from the Caribbean coast up to Potosí could take five months, longer than the average crossing of the Atlantic. For these slaves, the Middle Passage began from their different points of enslavement in Africa and ended up far away in the American heartland. In these long, hard journeys, solidarities were built, relationships were formed, languages were developed, and, most of all, a sense of shared aims was shaped.

Cultural Effects of the Slave Trade upon Africans

The effect of the Middle Passage on the life of slaves has attracted the attention of many scholars and is widely debated in the literature. In the 1970s Sidney Mintz and Richard Price published their study *The Birth of African American Culture: An*

Anthropological Perspective. Contrary to the idea that Africans were passive agents of their history, they argued that Africans played an active role on both sides of the Atlantic. Africans resisted, reacted, and also interacted among themselves under the conditions of enslavement. According to Mintz and Price, Africans did not constitute a homogeneous group; in fact, they came from such different backgrounds that it was difficult to identify a single African culture. In this interpretation, Africans represented heterogeneous groups, and it was almost impossible for them to deal with this diversity in the Americas. In this way, any sense of ethnic identity that Africans had in Africa was erased during the Middle Passage. For Mintz and Price, Africans were no longer Kongo, Benguela, Hausa, or Bambara. To survive under slavery, Africans transformed their previous ethnic identities into a Creole identity.

This position has been strongly challenged by research. In *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World*, John Thornton took issue with the idea that Africans did not keep their cultural traits in the Americas. Although he acknowledged that Africans came to the Americas from different backgrounds, he demonstrated that manifestations of African cultures could be found in almost every place on the American continent, mainly because Africans came from specific regions, mostly the Bight of Benin and Angola.

Regardless of the differences in the literature, it is possible to notice that the African contribution went beyond economical aspects in the Americas. Despite the horror of the Middle Passage, Africans managed to bring their sociocultural references and rebuild African cultures. These cultural manifestations were strategies to maintain links with Africa as well as ways to resist the dominant culture. Manifestations of resistance can be seen in the creolization of European languages, which became largely influenced by the grammar and vocabulary of different African languages. This is the case for Creole patois spoken in the Caribbean, the adaptation of spoken Spanish in the Americas, and the influence of Kimbundu on Brazilian Portuguese.

Resistance can also be seen in religious practices, such as the Africanization of Christian cults—as had previously happened in the Kongo Kingdom. African religions were reborn in the Americas, in some cases enriched by the contact with Africans from different regions. Africans accommodated their religions and beliefs to fit into socially allowed religious practices. This did not mean that they abandoned their beliefs; instead, in some cases, Africans maintained their faith in private while they adopted Christian rituals in public, as a facade. The maintenance of faith in Islam, despite official conversion to Christianity, or religious practices, such as Vodun (voodoo), Santeria, and Candomblé, can be seen as proofs of the preservation of African cultures. The African contribution is also expressed in the cuisine of the Americas, in national dishes, such as the Brazilian ground-corn dish *angu*, which is similar to the African *fungi* or *fufu*, all served as an accompaniment to stews or other sauce dishes. Music also demonstrates African contribution, as in the case of jazz, milonga, and samba or in dances such as calypso.

Although Africans were heterogeneous, they came from specific regions, sharing a common worldview, language, cuisine, and religious background. Since the ships usually loaded slaves in the same port, they would be packed with people who probably had lived their lives in close proximity. Slave solidarity, more than disparity, would have started to develop even in the African ports, having a chance to grow stronger during the long and painful Middle Passage. Ethnicity played a major role in the cultural manifestations of slaves in the Americas as well as in uprisings among runaway slaves. Solidarities were built based on the same oppressed conditions but also on similar backgrounds, especially in those areas with constant African importation. Ethnicity, in the end, became central to slave lives before they reached the Americas. Through naming ceremonies, burial practices, wedding preferences, and other cultural manifestations, Africans expressed their ethnic heritage.

See also Brazil; Caribbean; Catholic Church and African Americans; Demographics; Food; Language; Native Americans and African Americans; Religion; and South America.

Bibliography

Berlin, Ira. *Generations of Captivity: A History of African-American Slaves*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2003.

Curtin, Philip. *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census*. Madison: Wisconsin University Press, 1969.

Eltis, David. *The Rise of African Slavery in the Americas*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Heywood, Linda M., ed. *Central Africans and Cultural Transformation in the American Diaspora*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Lovejoy, Paul E. *Transformations in Slavery: A History of Slavery in Africa*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University

Press, 2000.

Manning, Patrick. Migrations of Africans to the Americas: The Impact on Africans, Africa, and the New World. In *The New World History: A Teacher's Companion*, edited by Ross E. Dunn. Boston: St. Martin's Press, 2000.

Mintz, Sidney W., and Richard Price. *The Birth of African American Culture: An Anthropological Perspective*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.

Rawley, James. *The Transatlantic Slave Trade: A History*. New York: Norton, 1981.

Thornton, John. *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400–1800*. 2nd ed. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Mariana P. Candido

Slave Trade in the Eighteenth Century to the American Revolution

The adoption of the plantation agricultural system in the United States in the last quarter of the seventeenth century created an unprecedented demand for labor. In this sense one can understand the explosion of the Atlantic slave trade, which grew steadily until the outbreak of the American Revolution in 1776. In America the abundance of land relative to labor, especially in the South, encouraged widespread use of slave labor. After the Revolutionary War the nature of the slave trade was determined by economic, not moral factors, including production methods for the crop or activity for which the labor was required, the price of labor, labor products, and the cost of alternative forms of labor. Set against these factors were the relative costs of bringing slaves from Africa and indentured labor from Europe. These factors and the nature of the economy determined the heavier reliance on slave labor in the southern colonies than in the northern and central American states, which depended less on agriculture.

Agriculture in the Americas

The big push for slavery in the United States accompanied the commencement of shipbuilding, logging, and lumbering as well as rice, cotton, and indigo production in some southern states in the early eighteenth century. For example, rice production in South Carolina led to a huge demand for slaves from rice-growing districts of Africa. According to Gwendolyn Hall, the export of slaves from West Africa to Louisiana commenced around 1709, and between 1719 and 1743 some 5,951 slaves were landed. Hall identifies sixteen vessels that brought these slaves: six came from Whydah (1719–1721, 1728) with 1,748 slaves, one from Angola (1721) with 294 slaves, and the remaining nine from Senegambia (1720–1731, 1743) with 3,909 slaves.

In addition to rice, planters in the Chesapeake and Carolina Lowcountry cultivated imported tobacco from Bahia, Brazil. The decision to produce tobacco was influenced by the tobacco-slave connection with West Africa, especially the Bight of Benin: as West Africa increased its demand for tobacco in exchange for slaves, American planters traded tobacco to obtain slaves for their plantations.

Outside the United States, the development of the sugar culture in the West Indies created a greater dependence on the slave trade and the use of slave labor. In the British Caribbean, by 1700 Jamaica had some forty-five thousand slaves; by the middle of the eighteenth century the British West Indies, especially Jamaica, Trinidad, and Barbados, had become the great center of plantation agriculture and sugar production. Slaves from the Ibo ethnic group accounted for about 80 percent of imported slaves. Within a short period the French, who developed sugar plantations in Haiti (Saint Domingue) and Martinique, challenged British domination of the industry. This development was demonstrated by the rapid increase in the number of slaves in the French West Indies. In 1700 Martinique and Haiti had slave populations of sixteen thousand and twenty thousand, respectively; by the middle of the eighteenth century the number of slaves in Haiti had risen to over 230,000. This phenomenal increase in the slave population was borne out in the quantity of sugar produced: by 1770 Haiti was producing 107,000 tons of sugar, nearly as much as the output from all British holdings. Production from the French Antilles brought the sugar output of French Caribbean possessions in 1770 to 151,000 tons.

The eighteenth century also witnessed a great expansion of the Atlantic slave trade to Brazil, especially after the opening of the port of Minas Gerais in the beginning of the century and the development of plantation agriculture in the Amazonian region (Par† and Maranhão) after 1750. Imports of Africans averaged about twenty thousand per year in the eighteenth century; the number increased considerably into the 1830s.

As in the Caribbean, about 40 percent of the slaves imported into Brazil were involved in sugar production, while in Spanish

America the share was between 30 and 50 percent. Mining, which was second only to sugar in demand for labor, claimed about 20 percent of Brazilian slaves. The balance of the blacks brought to the New World were employed in the production of such diverse crops as coffee, cocoa, tobacco, indigo, hemp, cotton, and rice. Of the relatively small percentage of Africans engaged in urban pursuits, most were servants or manual laborers, although some became artisans. By the mid-eighteenth century most urban slaves were Creoles—slaves born in the New World rather than recent imports.

The Dutch were a poor fourth (after the French, British, and Portuguese) in the international sugar trade in 1770, with an output of fifteen thousand tons, nearly all of which was produced in Dutch Guyana, on the north-central coast of South America in the location of the modern nations of Guyana and Suriname. Denmark produced a total of eleven thousand tons of sugar, nearly all on the island of Saint Croix. By 1770 Spain had been squeezed out of the international sugar trade, and sugar produced in Spanish colonies could no longer be marketed beyond the colonies.

Because of the nature of the slave regime in Brazil and the Caribbean, the two regions experienced a high mortality rate among African slaves, and the average slave life span was less than ten years. Because the slave population could not adequately reproduce itself, planters in Brazil, the Caribbean, and South America depended upon the regular importation of African slaves, such that African-born slaves dominated the population throughout the eighteenth century. In the United States, on the other hand, food production was more important to the economy than sugar—and also less labor intensive. Slaves worked less, largely on food-crop plantations, and they were fed better than their South American counterparts. Thus, throughout the era of the Atlantic slave trade only about 400,000 Africans were imported to the United States, yet by the mid-nineteenth century the slave population had reached approximately 4 million. As of the mid-eighteenth century, the United States relied to an increasing degree on American-born slaves.

The divergence in the character of the slave systems of North and South America was replicated in the concentration of African populations in specific regions. The numerous agricultural estates in the southern colonies absorbed the largest numbers of American slaves. By the 1670s Maryland and Virginia were home to several thousand black slaves, mostly purchased from English plantations in the West Indies. As the supply of white servants dwindled, England joined the slave trade, buying blacks directly from Africa. During the last twenty years of the seventeenth century, shipments of slaves into the United States came from the West Indies and other parts of Central America.

At the turn of the century increased demand for labor initiated America's direct involvement in the importation of slaves from Africa. Consequently, the Chesapeake region grew steadily, and slaves began to outnumber white servants. Most slaves lived south of the Mason-Dixon Line; in the 1750s about 210,400, or 86.9 percent, of the 242,100 slaves in North America lived in Chesapeake and the Lower South colonies. By 1700 Virginia was importing an estimated one thousand Africans a year and Maryland only three hundred; in contrast to the North, the South was increasingly becoming a slave-dependent society. In New England and the middle colonies in the eighteenth century, the black populations accounted for 3 percent and 8 percent, respectively, of the total populations. The black population made up 28 percent of the population in the Upper South and 46 percent in the Lower South in the 1740s (Table 1).

TABLE 1. *AFRICAN SLAVES IMPORTED INTO AMERICA, 1500–1700*

Period	Curtin	Lovejoy	Rawley	Manning
1500–1600	226,100	293,400	340,350	125,000
1600–1700	1,313,000	1,494,500	1,588,330	1,499,000

Source: Philip Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969; Paul Lovejoy, "The Volume of the Atlantic Slave Trade: A Review of the Literature," *Journal of African History*, 30 (3), 1989, pp. 365–394; James Rawley, *The Transatlantic Slave Trade: A History*. New York: Norton, 1981; Patrick Manning, "Migrations of Africans to the Americas: The Impact on Africans, Africa and the New World," *The History Teacher*, XXVI (1993), pp. 279–296.

With the help of cheap slave labor, some early Chesapeake tobacco planters with roots in Britain's lower classes vastly enlarged their holdings, built elegant Georgian mansions in the Tidewater districts, and became landed gentry. Leaders of this new class came to see themselves as independent businessmen rather than dutiful colonists and subjects of imperial British authority.

African Origins

Historically the slave trade in Africa was concentrated around a few major ports and regions. The nineteenth century witnessed an explosion in the number of Africans imported into the Americas; they were coming in larger numbers from different places and being more widely distributed.

Through the eighteenth century the export slave trade from Africa was heavily concentrated around the Gold Coast; the Bights of Benin and Biafra; and, above all, West Central Africa. Taken together, those regions accounted for almost 90 percent of the trade in slaves: West Central Africa made up 37 percent; the Bight of Benin, 22.7 percent; the Gold Coast, 17 percent; and the Bight of Biafra, 12.9 percent. Elsewhere, the Senegambia region accounted for 5.8 percent of the trade, the Upper Guinea coast made up 3 percent, and the region of modern-day Liberia and western Côte d'Ivoire provided 2.9 percent.

AFRICAN SLAVES AS PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL POPULATION

Year	Caribbean %		United States Colonies %	
	British	French	South	North
1700–1710	80	70	25	5
1710–1720	80	80	30	5
1720–1730	75	85	28	5
1730–1740	85	85	35	5
1740–1750	87	85	40	5
1750–1760	90	85	37	5
1760–1770	91	90	40	5
1770–1780	93	87	35	5

Source: Calculated from Robert W. Fogel and Stanley L. Engerman, *Time on the Cross: The Economics of American Negro Slavery* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1974), p. 21.

West Central Africa, comprising the region of modern-day Angola, the Congo, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, supplied the majority of slaves exported to the Americas during the eighteenth century. From about 1700 to 1780 the region exported more than 1.6 million slaves, or almost two-fifths of all exports. Table 2 shows that West Central Africa supplied the largest number of slaves from 1730 through 1780. The annual average number of slaves exported rose from 8,000 per year during the first decade of the eighteenth century to 10,000 in the second, 15,000 in the third, 23,000 from 1731 to 1760, and over 30,000 from 1761 to 1780.

In Africa the major explanations for the surge in slave supply were the rise in demand for slaves in the American colonies, the high profit accrued from slave trading for both the Africans and the Euro-American traders, and the increasing level of political violence in Africa, which in turn was fueled by slave raids and the expansion of state frontiers. The price of slaves in the Americas varied considerably from region to region. During the eighteenth century prices in Brazil for a slave in prime condition ranged from about 20 pounds sterling in 1700 to 40 pounds between 1715 and 1740, 15 pounds in 1760, and about 20 pounds again in 1780. Slave prices did not fluctuate as rapidly in the West Indies, averaging about 20 pounds until 1740 and then rising gradually to 40 pounds in 1780.

On the African side, prices changed more rapidly—more often moving upward and thereby facilitating a regular supply, as African traders had greater motivation to obtain slaves to sell. The cost of goods purchased in Europe to buy slaves in Africa remained fairly steady at 3 to 4 pounds sterling between the 1660s and the early 1690s, whereupon the price doubled within a few years. The price leveled off at 10 to 13 pounds from about 1695 until the 1730s, when it rose again to about 18 to 19 pounds, before falling to a lower level in the 1740s. For the rest of the century, the prime cost of slaves rose again, ranging from 13 to 18 pounds. In the Bight of Benin for example, ample supply resulted from the expansion of the Kingdom of Dahomey and the Oyo-Dahomey wars of the eighteenth century. Similar development took place in the Senegambia, the Windward Coast, and the Gold Coast regions, where Islamic expansion and the rise of Akan states resulted in the production of slaves. Moreover, political violence associated with the collapse of Kongolese states and the expansion of Ovimbundu district in West Central Africa turned the region into Africa's leading slaving zone, resulting in the supply of about 40 percent of total African slave exports to the Americas.

European Participation in the Slave Trade

The increases in the numbers of Africans exported and of slaving ports involved in the trade were directly linked to a rise in the number of slave traders, increased demand for slaves, and greater fragmentation of national carriers. Beginning in the seventeenth century the Dutch, British, and French began to outpace the Spanish and Portuguese merchants who had previously controlled a larger share of the shipping of African slaves to the Americas. Overall, however, the English dominated the trade. Throughout the century they carried 2,468,000 slaves, or 40.5 percent of all African exports. Traders sailed from Liverpool, London, and Bristol in England and from Newport, Rhode Island—the one major North American port.

Of those slaves, only about 15 percent entered the United States, most often the southern colonies; the bulk of them were taken to the West Indies. Portuguese, French, and Dutch merchants carried 1,888,000 (31 percent), 1,104,000 (18.1 percent), and 349,000 (5.7 percent) slaves, respectively. Traders from North America transported 206,000 (3.4 percent), the Danes brought 66,000 (1 percent), and the Swedish and Bradenburg traders conveyed 10,000 (0.2 percent).

Brazilian ports were the points of entry for some 4 million slaves, or about 40 percent of total imports into the New World during the Atlantic slave trade era. Of those slaves, more than 1 million were imported through the ports of Salvador, Rio de Janeiro, Recife, and São Luís during the eighteenth century.

The regional distribution of African slave ports depended on the activities of individual trading nations, such that particular carriers dominated trade in specific African regions. For instance, during the eighteenth century, of the million slaves exported from the Bight of Biafra, about 95 percent were carried on British vessels. Similarly, the Portuguese dominated activities in the Bight of Benin and West Central Africa, while the French ranked second in most regions. The expansion of French Caribbean sugar colonies persuaded French planters and traders to extend their trade networks from West Africa into Central Africa, and by the 1720s a substantial number of slaves on French Caribbean plantations were from Angola and the Congo.

Relocation to the Americas

Disease and malnutrition killed about one-third of black immigrants to the colonies during their first years, and a scarcity of women kept the rate of black reproduction low. Still, by the 1720s and 1730s the Chesapeake's African population was growing dramatically from both natural reproduction and forced immigration. By 1750 the tobacco colonies were home to an estimated 165,000 blacks, nearly all slaves and making up 37 percent of the total population.

REGIONAL ORIGINS OF AFRICAN SLAVES IN THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE

					Bight of				
Year	Sene-Gambia	Upper Guinea	Windward Coast	Gold Coast	Benin	Biafra	West-Central	Southeast Africa	Africa (Total)
1701–1710	7,600	700	2,100	69,100	152,000	10,900	79,200	300	321,900
1711–1720	17,100	3,800	300	76,300	173,400	22,000	96,900	12,200	402,000
1721–1730	26,900	2,200	3,500	77,400	178,300	38,300	153,400	6,900	486,900
1731–1740	41,500	3,800	4,600	73,000	111,100	34,100	244,800	-	512,900
1741–1750	16,700	9,500	8,000	78,300	93,400	99,900	232,100	-	537900
1751–1760	47,600	28,400	30,900	97,200	89,200	98,000	230,500	700	622,500
1761–1770	51,200	63,600	49,300	104,400	101,600	152,100	313,100	1,300	836,600
1771–1780	50,600	20,400	30,000	103,300	113,200	119,000	296,800	3,800	737,100
1781–1790	259,200	132,400	128,700	759,000	1,012,200	574,300	1,647,600	25,200	4,457,800

Source: David Eltis, David Richardson, Stephen Behrendt and Herbert Klein, *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade: A Database on CD-ROM* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

It has been noted that slaves left from a limited number of ports in Africa and were then taken to particular locations in the Americas; it is therefore possible to use the regional activities of slave traders, the cultural configurations in Africa, and the demography of importing regions in America to trace the evolution of particular African American cultures. The establishment of such cultures depended on the percentages of the dominant populations and cultures during specific periods.

Slave "factories," or compounds, maintained by European traders on the Gulf of Guinea. Engraving from *A New General Collection of Voyages and Travels; Consisting of the Most Esteemed Relations, Which Have Been Hitherto Published in Any Language; Comprehending Everything Remarkable in Its Kind, in Europe, Asia, Africa, and America*, London, printed for T. Astley, 1745–1747. The work was compiled by John Green but is known as the Astley collection.

Library of Congress.

In determining the persistence, or lack thereof, of African cultures, historians took into consideration the sex ratios, disease environments, and rates of mortality and reproduction among enslaved Africans. In other words, the creation of African American cultures depended on the abilities of the African population to sustain itself and on the concentrations of Africans from specific cultural zones. From this perspective, two historians, Philip D. Curtin and John K. Thornton, argue against theories of randomization or total Americanization, which suggest that Africans originated from a variety of mixed cultures, such that what occurred in the Americas was not the retention of the African past but the creation of a new culture.

Owing to high mortality rates in the white population, few whites lived in lowland Carolina for long periods. Consequently, South Carolina and Louisiana soon became colonies with black majorities, where African and tobacco and rice culture successfully persisted. Thus the visibility of Senegambian culture—especially the Mandingo and Gullah cultures—in the rice-production regions of America is understandable. These cultures also remained more African because the production of an African American population was slow; hence the importation of Africans continued until about 1808. This development contrasted radically with that of the Maryland, Virginia, and Chesapeake region, where a more balanced sex ratio and lower mortality rate ensured not only the rapid emergence of an American-born slave population but also an early stoppage to the importation of slaves from Africa.

In the Caribbean and Brazil the backbreaking nature of work in the sugar and mining industries, as well as the profusion of a wide variety of diseases, resulted in high mortality rates among Africans. Consequently, slave importation continued well into the abolition period. Despite these factors, a high demographic concentration and the peculiar nature of certain cultures enhanced their abilities to survive. For instance, Akan culture developed strong roots in Jamaica, while Fon-Gbe customs of the Bight of Benin became dominant in Haiti and parts of south-central Brazil. The perpetuation of African cultures was demonstrated in "national" dances or what can be referred to as "country fashion" (that is, the fashion or custom of a particular nation or society). The "nations" that were revived in the diaspora, according to Robin Law, "were not mere reproductions of old practices but a transformation and redefinition of Africa identities within the context of American realities." The ethnicities of Africans in the American diaspora were redefined and the people brought together as "nations" through social, recreational, and religious life—particularly through music and dance. On plantations in the Caribbean, slaves reenacted African cultures through their own particular leisure, entertainment, and mystical and magical practices. They also reinvented Africa through practices such as burying the dead with victuals, pipes, tobacco, and other objects.

Toward the perpetuation of slave-supported production, the parliaments of the various American colonies passed laws that made the status of slavehood hereditary. From 1780 to 1810 virtually every English and French colony enacted laws that defined slaves' status as transferable property, such that their owners were subject to rules regarding liability and taxation and the slaves themselves were prevented from, or punished for, exercising human capacities. In essence, people classified as Negroes, mulattoes, and Indians became perpetual slaves with few rights and were confined to the plantation and industrial economies of the white population. By 1776 each of the thirteen American colonies had explicit laws regarding slavery, although the practice itself was significantly more pervasive in southern states.

In the rigidly segregated world being created in colonial America, slaves could attain few of the privileges with respect to education, money, or potential freedom that could be found in other slaveholding societies. The government's obligation to protect the master's dominant role continued to deepen; racism evolved from informal and customary to legal and binding. The Virginia Assembly was especially prolific in its legal construction of slavery, producing in 1705 a slave code that combined all slave laws passed in the colony since the 1660s.

In solidifying the racial barrier, Virginia lawmakers strayed from English common law by saying that children would adopt the "slave" or "free" status of their mothers, not their fathers—who might be white masters. Interracial sex and marriage warranted ever harsher punishments—including fines, imprisonment, and enforced servitude—as slave numbers grew in the colony. After 1691 freed black slaves were banished from Virginia.

Beyond the notorious declaration by the colonial Virginia Assembly in 1669 that if a black slave died at the hands of a master who used "extremity of correction" to overcome the slave's "obstinacy," it was not murder, several other Virginia laws

increasingly debased the lives of Africans, enslaved or free. At one time newly baptized slaves had the right to sue for their freedom and often won it; that right was curtailed when the assembly declared that adopting Christianity did not merit freedom. Other new laws prevented slaves from establishing their own families, possessing property, carrying weapons, assembling in groups, and leaving their plantations without direct approval from their owners. Those who violated these laws—most pointedly, runaway slaves—were subject to capital punishment: they could be hunted and killed and their owners compensated from the public treasury.

Neither slave nor free black could strike a white person, vote, hold office, or testify in court against a white person. Slaves charged with crimes in Virginia were tried in special nonjury courts created in 1692. The purpose of the courts was not to guarantee due process but to set an example speedily. The Virginia Commonwealth University professor Philip J. Schwarz wrote, "Those slaves who attacked white people or property usually acted with a purpose and not just on impulse. Many killings, poisonings, thefts, uses of arson, and attempts to rebel were efforts to oppose the means of maintaining slavery." The courts resorted to horrendous punishments to reassert white authority; offending slaves were hung, burned at the stake, dismembered, castrated, and branded in addition to the usual whippings. White fear of black rebellion was a constant undercurrent; this fear increased after the Stono Rebellion of 1739, when a band of armed slaves murdered more than twenty whites in South Carolina.

Despite these decrees, a patriarchal ideology emerged, under which slave owners became patrons to their slaves. This system enabled slave owners to more humanely demonstrate their interest in the welfare of their estates. Thus, hardworking slaves would be compensated for their industry, while lazy ones would be punished.

Moving toward Revolution

By 1770 about 2.5 million slaves were working in North America. The wealth and power that slavery made possible would in large part fuel the colonies' drive for independence from Britain. Before the Revolutionary War, the Chesapeake's great planters embraced the republican and natural-rights thinking that circulated in the colonies' pamphlet literature. "Aristocrats could more safely preach equality in a slave society than in a free one," Edmund S. Morgan wrote in *American Slavery, American Freedom*. The landless mob could not threaten the vision of an agrarian republic, he said, because in the Chesapeake "they had achieved a society in which most of the poor were enslaved."

Farther north, pacifist Quakers contended that blacks should be included in the debate about the rights of man. The Quaker John Woolman wrote in 1754,

"Suppose then, that our Ancestors and we had been exposed to constant Servitude. And being wholly at the Command of others, [we] had generally been treated as a contemptible, ignorant Part of Mankind: Should we, in that Case, be less abject than they [blacks] now are?"

(Woolman, pp. 338–339)

New England's Protestant clergy also urged congregations to adopt new ways of thinking about blacks. "If we could only divest ourselves of these strong prejudices, which have insensibly fixed on our minds," the Congregationalist minister Samuel Hopkins preached in 1776, "and consider them as, by nature, and by right, on a level with our brethren and children, and those of our neighbors."

The American Revolution posed a serious challenge to slavery in America. Because both sides used slave soldiers, in 1775 the governor of Virginia, the Earl of Dunmore, offered to free Loyalist slaves who fought on the British side. The promise of freedom persuaded many slaves to join combatants on both sides, the number rising to twenty thousand at the peak of military mobilization; over two-thirds of those slaves fought for the British.

The Revolutionary War also awakened antislavery contingents; the spirit of liberty that moved white Americans to independence had affected their thinking about blacks. Many slaves were freed through the ransoming or benevolence of their owners, while a good many others successfully escaped to set up Maroon communities. Some states also made moves toward the abolition of slavery: Vermont entered the union as a free state in 1777, and Massachusetts and Pennsylvania passed laws toward the emancipation of their own slaves. Even in the Chesapeake region, home to at least half the blacks in the United States, some whites advocated the abolition of slavery.

See also Abolitionism; African Diaspora; American Revolution; Black Codes and Slave Codes, Colonial; Black Loyalists; Brazil; Caribbean; Cemeteries and Burials; Civil Rights; Crime and Punishment; Dance; Demographics; Diseases and Epidemics; Economic Life; Europe; Free African Americans to 1828; Fugitive Slaves; Gradual Emancipation; Gullahs;

Indentured Servitude; Jamaica; Laws and Legislation; Maritime Trades; Marriage, Mixed; Maroons; Music; Race, Theories of; Religion; Segregation; Slavery: Lower South; Slavery: Mid-Atlantic; Slavery: Mississippi Valley; Slavery: Northeast; Slavery: Upper South; South America; Stono Rebellion; and Voting Rights.

Bibliography

Curtin, Philip D. *The Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex: Essays in Atlantic History.* 2nd ed. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Davis, David B. *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1966.

Eltis, David, Stephen D. Behrendt, David Richardson, and Herbert S. Klein, comp. *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade: A Database on CD-ROM.* Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Eltis, David, and David Richardson, eds. *Routes to Slavery: Direction, Ethnicity and Mortality in the Transatlantic Slave Trade.* London: Frank Cass, 1997.

Fogel, Robert W., and Stanley L. Engerman. *Time on the Cross: The Economics of American Negro Slavery.* Boston: Little, Brown, 1974.

Gomez, Michael A. *Exchanging Our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998.

Hall, Gwendolyn M. *Africans in Colonial Louisiana: The Development of Afro-Creole Culture in the Eighteenth Century.* Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992.

Heywood, Linda M., ed. *Central Africans and Cultural Transformations in the American Diaspora.* Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Inikori, Joseph E., and Stanley Engerman, eds. *The Atlantic Slave Trade: Effects on Economies, Societies, and Peoples in Africa, the Americas, and Europe.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1992.

Kay, Marvin L. M., and Lorin L. Cary. *Slavery in North Carolina, 1748–1775.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995.

Klein, Herbert S. *The Middle Passage: Comparative Studies in the Atlantic Slave Trade.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978.

Klein, Martin. *Historical Dictionary of Slavery and Abolition.* Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2002.

Knight, Franklin, and Peggy Liss, eds. *Atlantic Port Cities: Economy, Culture, and Society in the Atlantic World, 1650–1850.* Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991.

Law, Robin, and Silke Strickrodt, eds. *Ports of the Slave Trade (Bights of Benin and Biafra).* Stirling, U.K.: Centre of Commonwealth Studies, University of Stirling, 1999.

Mintz, Sydney, and Richard Price. *The Birth of African-American Culture: An Anthropological Perspective.* Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.

Morgan, Edmund Sears. *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia.* New York: Norton, 2003.

Morgan, Kenneth. *Bristol and the Atlantic Trade in the Eighteenth Century.* Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Morgan, Kenneth. *Slavery and Servitude in Colonial North America: A Short History.* New York: New York University Press, 2000.

Morgan, Philip D. *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Low Country.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998.

Patterson, Orlando. *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982.

Rawley, James A. *The Transatlantic Slave Trade: A History.* New York: Norton, 1981.

Schwarz, Philip J. *Slave Laws in Virginia.* Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996.

Thornton John, K. *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400–1800.* 2d ed. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Woolman, John. Some Considerations on the Keeping of Negroes, 1754. In *The Journal and Essays of John Woolman*, edited by Amelia Mott Gummere. New York: Macmillan, 1922.

Olatunji Ojo

Slave Trade from the American Revolution to 1808

The era of the American Revolution and the years immediately after the war represent a critical period in the development of the trading and holding of slaves in America. During this time slavery in North America broadened while fear, economic interest, and the antislavery movement (which began largely during the American Revolution) were finally successful in pressing Congress to abolish the slave trade with Africa in 1808.

British parliamentary legislation to regulate colonial trade and thereby raise money to help administer its territorial possessions was the primary cause of the American Revolution. As soon as they openly defied British authority, the colonies began receiving secret aid from France (which was influenced largely by its plans to reassert its primacy in Europe). In 1778 France and the United States not only went into military alliance but also signed the Treaty of Amity and Commerce, which, among other things, provided for an exchange of consuls and the enhancement of trade. Although other international disputes and agreements played roles in the history of the United States during the Revolutionary and immediate post-Revolutionary periods, the far-reaching agreement with France in April 1803 that resulted in the Louisiana Purchase seems to have been the most important of such diplomatic processes in terms of American slavery and the slave trade before 1808. At the time of the purchase close to thirty thousand slaves were in Louisiana, mainly concentrated in the vicinity of New Orleans. By 1810 the slave population had evidently expanded. A significant proportion of this increase was drawn from other states, especially South Carolina. Because South Carolina's reopening of the Atlantic slave trade accounted for the slaves that were in turn sold to Louisiana between 1803 and 1810, it would seem that the importation of slaves to the latter region from other states indirectly helped to keep the slave trade open, at least for a few more years. Moreover, the Louisiana Purchase was one of the factors that enhanced the expansion of the North American slave system during the post-Revolutionary period. Equally important was the remarkable level of reproduction among the locally born slaves. The U.S. slave system was unique in that it was the only one in which the slave population reproduced itself to replacement levels and beyond. Slavery at the Time of the Revolution By 1775 slaves were common throughout the thirteen colonies. Their proportion of the local population ranged from 5 percent in New England and Pennsylvania to 10 percent in New York and New Jersey to 33 percent in the Chesapeake region, North Carolina, and Georgia. In South Carolina slaves actually formed a majority of the population.

Just as the distribution of slaves varied among the thirteen colonies, the slave systems that existed in the colonies were also diversified. In the North, plantation slavery was virtually nonexistent. A significant number of northern slaves lived in urban centers such as New York and Boston, where many worked as house servants, performing duties like cooking and cleaning. The majority of the slaves in the North, however, worked on small farms, usually in the countryside. These rural slaves did not work in gangs but in proximity to whites and were mainly engaged in cultivating grain and tending livestock.

By contrast, in the Lowcountry of South Carolina and Georgia, relatively few slaves lived and worked with the slave masters in the cities; most lived in large units and worked in gangs on plantations that predominantly produced rice and indigo. Supervision on these plantations was relatively weak because overseers and black drivers, not the planters themselves, often directed the daily operations. Also, slaves had significant independence to produce items for their own use, provided they completed their daily duties on the plantations.

A third major slave system evolved in the Chesapeake colonies of Maryland and Virginia, where most slaves worked on plantations. Although slaves in these colonies worked to produce corn and other grains, the principal labor was cultivating tobacco. On smaller plantations the slave owners supervised the entire production process. On larger units black drivers and foremen featured significantly in supervision, although the masters ultimately maintained centralized control. Slaves were less autonomous in the Chesapeake colonies, but their masters' attitudes were apparently less exploitative than those of the slave owners in the Lowcountry.

Although the slave systems in North America during and immediately after the American Revolution varied, the institution of slavery was generally supported by an elaborate and severe legal code based on race. By the late eighteenth century most, if not all, North American colonies had laws that regulated the condition of black slaves, thereby setting them off from white

settlers. These laws varied from colony to colony, and many underwent several modifications before the abolition of the slave trade and, ultimately, of slavery. In general, however, these acts established that slaves—and the children of slave women—were enslaved for life; limited the rights of slaves and even of free blacks (they could not vote, testify in courts against whites, or marry whites); prohibited slaves from carrying arms or leaving home without written permission; discouraged masters from freeing slaves by a variety of provisions, including requiring legislative approval for each act of manumission and requiring manumitted slaves to leave their home colony; and mandated severe corporal punishment for those who dared to challenge white authority.

CHART OF THE WORLD, ov. MERCATOR'S PROJECTION: ILLUSTRATIVE of the IMPOLICY of SLAVERY.
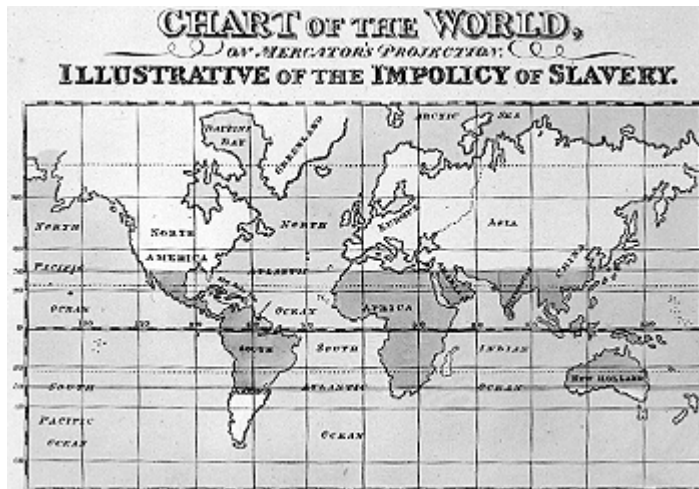
The entrenchment of the legal code that supported slavery significantly influenced the importation of African slaves into North America during this period. By the late eighteenth century the direct importation of slaves from Africa, which had commenced as a fairly regular enterprise a century earlier, was a big business. About 650,000 Africans were transported across the Atlantic to what became the United States throughout the slave trade era. Of this number (which constituted only about 6 percent of all the slaves brought from Africa to the New World) as many Africans were brought into the United States during the thirty years between 1780 and 1810 as during the previous 160 years of the trade. Most American slaves came from the coastal regions of Africa dubbed the Guinea Coast and consisting of Senegambia, Sierra Leone, the Gold Coast, the Bight of Benin, and the Bight of Biafra. A much smaller number—although perhaps as many as 40 percent of those brought to South Carolina—came mainly from the West Central African regions of Congo and Angola. Patterns in the External and Internal Slave Trade Irrespective of their source region, all African slaves experienced frightful transit to the New World. Typically, the African agents who supplied Europeans with slaves brought their consignment in shackles from the interior to the coast, where the captives were confined in stockades or dungeons before being sold to the European traders. The slaves then embarked on the transatlantic voyage, which many of them did not survive. Already physically and emotionally weakened by their ordeal on land, they were subjected to further terrible conditions aboard the slave ships. Men were usually kept in chains, and women were vulnerable to sexual predation on the part of the ship's crew. Epidemics were common. Partly influenced by such deplorable conditions, many Africans rebelled during these voyages. It is not surprising, therefore, that even during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when mortality rates had declined because of better ships, shorter passage time, and more attention to the health of slaves, 15 percent of enslaved Africans died on the voyage to the New World.

Although the Africans who eventually made it to North America never forgot their experiences during what is termed the Middle Passage, the voyage itself was not a major step in their deculturation. The subsequent situation and behavior of those slaves who survived the passage and made it to North America from the American Revolution onward attest to this fact.

Slaves who made it to North America disembarked at Charleston, South Carolina; Boston; Newport, Rhode Island; New York; Philadelphia; and other ports. However, between 1775 and 1808, more than one-half of the imported slaves landed in the Carolinas, especially at Charleston, where about forty thousand Africans were disembarked between 1804 and 1807—a burst of activity heavily influenced by the expectation that the slave trade would be abolished in 1808.

Most of the Africans imported through Charleston and other North American ports during and immediately after the American Revolution were subsequently distributed inland, mainly through internal agencies. However, because of slave owners' preferences and several other factors, the distribution of these Africans varied in different parts of North America. By 1808, Angolans and Senegambians predominated in South Carolina and Louisiana. They were less common in the Chesapeake

area, where people from the Gold Coast and Bight of Biafra predominated. People from Sierra Leone constituted a significant proportion of arrivals in South Carolina but were virtually absent in the Chesapeake area. People from the Slave Coast were numerous in Louisiana but not in either South Carolina or the Chesapeake.

Irrespective of these distribution patterns, Africans fought to retain their languages and cultures, especially in areas where they were overwhelmingly preponderant and lived in unusual isolation from whites. For instance, slaves in the Lowcountry who lived under such conditions danced, dressed, and ate in African fashion. In addition, the influence of African artistic traditions was evident in their diverse creative expressions, such as in textile designs, quilting patterns, and styles of woodcarving and basket weaving. These slaves also made use of charms, medicines, and love potions that derived from Africa. Muslim slaves continued both individually and collectively to invoke the name of Allah in daily prayers, using prayer mats and beads. Whether literate or limited to a few memorized suras of the Qur'an, these Africans observed the tenets of their religion and remained true to their faith. Islam would eventually recede but not without leaving a legacy. In any event, the evidence is clear that the religion was practiced throughout the American Revolution and the immediate period thereafter.

At the opposite extreme, the small size and dispersed nature of the slave population in most of the North—as well as in much of the southern backcountry—facilitated rapid absorption of Euro-American cultures by Africans. In these areas slaves quickly learned the rudiments of the English language, the Christian religion, and other aspects of the whites' culture.

Despite the existence of these contrasting regional patterns, and however much Africans fought to retain their languages and cultures, they were increasingly incorporated into a larger African American culture in which their own origin partly helped define the cultural norms and patterns of behavior. This culture derived from African American and European sources, and it was partly shared by the white elite who kept the Africans in bondage. It developed further as Africans had children of their own in America and new imports declined as a proportion of blacks in the colonies. To complicate cultural issues, especially the African elements already inherent in the African American culture, renewed African cultural influences were usually experienced during periods of increased African slave imports (such as that of 1804–1807).

It is significant that an internal trade in slaves became noticeable in North America even before the Atlantic slave trade was prohibited there. A number of factors, such as the security implications of importing more Africans in the face of the revolutionary stirrings among slaves throughout the Americas and the rise of cotton (which in turn stimulated the expansion of slavery, especially in South Carolina's backcountry), were instrumental not only in the domestication of the slave trade but also in its subsequent expansion.

Between 1775 and 1808 significant numbers of slaves were transplanted from one region of the United States to the other. This commerce gave rise to a new service industry. Previously, rural owners had generally disposed of their slaves by publishing notices in the county newspaper or simply by passing word of impending sales among neighbors, a process in which intermediaries were largely unneeded. By contrast, interstate or long-distance transactions increasingly became monopolized by established firms that had assembling headquarters, field agents to collect slaves, one or more vessels for coastwise traffic, and a selling agency at one of the centers of slave demand.

It would appear that a significant number of the slaves traded domestically were indolent, unruly, or under one suspicion or another. Planters in post-Revolutionary South Carolina, although noted for their voracious appetite for slaves, specifically resisted the importation of those kinds of slaves to their region. Also, in the South the dominant pattern was the disposal of slaves by farmers in the upper region to the plantations that increasingly dotted the Lower South. Ending the External Slave Trade The persistence of slave trading and slavery during and immediately after the American Revolution was inconsistent with prevailing Enlightenment ideas that emphasized the right of a people to claim liberty and oppose tyranny. This contradiction enhanced the development of antislavery ideas and movements. Although slavery was already a contentious issue before the outbreak of the Revolution, once colonists began to fight for their own freedom they became increasingly aware of the contradiction in doing so while denying freedom to blacks. Such awareness impelled a growing number of colonists to challenge the institution of slavery. In spite of the Revolutionary War, their initial efforts achieved little in improving the situation of slaves in the United States. Undeterred by initial failures, antislavery supporters ultimately pushed for legislative changes in the individual states and the Continental Congress. This strategy resulted in several notable legislative bills and the constitutional debates on slavery and the slave trade.

By 1798 most, if not all, states that then constituted the Republic had independently outlawed participation in the Atlantic slave trade, although South Carolina subsequently permitted the traffic again for a brief period from 1803. The decision to end involvement in the slave trade was, among economic and other reasons, generally the result of the intensified slave resistance experienced in most regions that ultimately became the Union. Although such opposition, both overt and covert,

long preceded the 1770s, the American Revolution significantly shaped slave resistance. The historic event, for instance, produced a small group of black leaders who believed in securing freedom through violent means. Following the conclusion of the American Revolution, those black leaders increasingly organized resistance. The most notable example of slave resistance led by an African American was the Gabriel conspiracy. During the 1790s revolutionary fervor among slaves intensified, mainly because of the slave uprising experienced at Saint Domingue (Haiti). The same event intensified American slaveholders' fears of insurrection by imported slaves. Although the fears of slave masters and the resistance of slaves influenced separate actions against slavery and the slave trade by various regions that ultimately became the United States, the constitutional debates that created the national government of the newly independent United States also took place partly under this tense background.

Slavery and the slave trade figured prominently in the constitutional debates that created the national government of the newly independent United States. The two major issues pertaining to slavery and the slave trade at the Constitutional Convention were how to count slaves for purposes of representation and taxation within the federal government and what to do about the future importation of slaves into the Union. On the first issue, southern states were determined to ensure their political strength in the House of Representatives for the foreseeable future; hence, they argued that their chattel property be recognized for purposes of national taxation and counted in determining the number of seats each state would have in the House of Representatives. On the other hand, while northern states were content to see slaves included as indices of southern wealth, they were loath to count them in apportioning representation. As a compromise between the interests of North and South, it was eventually agreed that each slave would count as three-fifths of a person.

On the question of the slave trade, following acceptance of the ratio governing representation, the northern representatives perceived an interest in stopping an influx of slaves into the South. However, slave dealers in South Carolina and some northern ports wished to protect their business and found some support from others who did not wish to entrust powers relating to slavery to the federal government. The convention eventually reached a compromise, according to which Congress was prohibited from banning the slave trade or placing a prohibitive tariff upon it for twenty years. Besides these major issues relating to slavery, the convention also crafted the constitutional provision that persons "held to service or labor" who absconded should be seized and returned to the party to whom such service or labor was due, regardless of the local laws of the state or territory in which the fugitives were apprehended. However, this particular constitutional clause was not debated as heavily as the others.

As 1808 approached, the issue of the slave trade once again arose in Congress. In December 1805 a bill calling for the prohibition of slave importation, to take effect in 1808, was introduced in the Senate; however, it was not until 1807 that Congress finally voted to end the trafficking of slaves, beginning the following year. Paradoxically, American slavery was to persist and grow long after the legal abolition of the slave trade.

See also Africa, Idea of; African Diaspora; Africanisms; American Revolution; Artisans; Arts and Crafts; Black Codes and Slave Codes, Colonial; Clothing and Textiles; Constitution, U.S.; Constitutional Convention, African Americans and; Crime and Punishment; Dance; Demographics; Diseases and Epidemics; Education; Emancipation; Folklore; Food; Free African Americans to 1828; Fugitive Slaves; Gabriel; Gabriel Conspiracy; Haitian Revolution; Identity; Integration; Language; Laws and Legislation; Literacy in the Colonial Period; Marriage, Mixed; Music; Muslims; Race, Theories of; Resistance; Riots and Rebellions; Sexuality; Slavery: Lower South; Slavery: Mid-Atlantic; Slavery: Northeast; Stereotypes of African Americans; Visual Arts; Voting Rights; Women; and Work.

Bibliography

Berlin, Ira. Time, Space, and the Evolution of Afro-American Society in British Mainland North America. American Historical Review 85.1 (1980): 44–78.

Blackburn, Robin. *The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery, 1776–1848*. London: Verso, 1990.

Frey, Sylvia R. Slavery and Anti-Slavery. In *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of the American Revolution*, edited by Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole, 379–392. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1991.

Gomez, Michael A. *Exchanging Our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998.

Klein, Herbert. *The Atlantic Slave Trade*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Kolchin, Peter. *American Slavery 1619–1877*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1993.

Morgan, Kenneth. *Slavery and Servitude in Colonial North America: A Short History*. New York: New York University Press, 2000.

Mullin, Michael. *American Negro Slavery: A Documentary History*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1976.

Thornton, John. African-American Origins. In *Encyclopedia of African-American Culture and History*, edited by Jack Salzman, David Lionel Smith, and Cornel West, vol. 1. New York: Macmillan Library Reference, 1996.

Mohammed Bashir Salau

American Prohibition of Slave Trade

The desire to outlaw or regulate the Atlantic slave trade to the thirteen colonies was first noticeable in the eighteenth century. A number of northern colonists, especially Quakers, sharply objected to slavery and saw the destruction of the slave trade as one strategy to hasten abolition. Many residents of the southern colonies had doubts about the slave trade for different reasons. A number of Virginia residents knew that the prices for their existing slaves would rise if the importation of slaves were banned, meaning they could raise substantial money in sales to masters in South Carolina and Georgia. Other planters fretted that there were already too many slaves in the colonies and feared insurrection. Most colonists, however, did not oppose the Atlantic slave trade, and colonial attempts to limit or outlaw the slave trade were in general completely ineffective.

The late eighteenth century proved to be a turning point. An increased belief in natural rights led many colonists to reject slavery in principle, while the Revolutionary War effectively shut down the trade for the time being. After the war northern states banned the importation of Africans, but southern states did not follow suit. Delegates to the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia then continued the debate. Southern delegates refused to join any union that did not protect slavery. In a series of compromises, conditions were created for the continued existence of slavery while limits were placed on its future; a clause enabled Congress to prohibit the international slave trade twenty years after ratification of the Constitution. Congress also had the ability to levy a sharp tax on all Africans imported into the United States, though it never did so.

Although southerners opposed a constitutional ban on the international slave trade, each southern state prohibited the trade or placed a steep tax on it. The laws had little effect, however; individual states had no navies to enforce their laws, and the federal government was loath to get involved. Smuggling and legal importation continued apace. In fact, more slaves entered the United States between 1787 and 1808 than during any other twenty years in the nation's history; southerners accelerated their importation of Africans because they feared a complete ban would soon be enacted.

Direct congressional action against the transatlantic trade began on 16 December 1805 when the Vermont senator Stephen R. Bradley introduced a bill to ban the trade after 1 January 1808. The bill went nowhere, but Bradley had succeeded in opening up the debate. A similar bill failed the next year. It would take support from the executive office to accomplish the task; as such President Thomas Jefferson used his influence to speed the legislative process. He sent a message to Congress urging lawmakers to act immediately so that the slave trade could be suppressed at the earliest possible moment. Bills then made their ways through both houses of Congress with general support. Slaveholders offered no effective resistance; they had come to realize that their slave population was now growing by natural increase and had also become hopeful of a rise in slave values.

Debate still took place concerning the specifics of the law. Congressmen broke along sectional lines during debate and voting, with a point of controversy involving what to do with Africans who were confiscated. The bill's final provision mandated that the federal government could confiscate any ships involved in smuggling but had to bring any captured slaves to the proper state authorities. State governments gladly received the slaves and sold them, a situation that gained revenue for the states and ensured the sustained importation of Africans. Punishment of smugglers was the second important and contentious issue; the legislation that eventually passed fined smugglers up to ten thousand dollars and mandated two to four years imprisonment. In 1820 Congress amended this portion of the law and made slave smuggling punishable by death. The final issue was the degree to which the federal government could regulate the domestic seaborne slave trade. Congress decided that no vessel under forty tons could engage in the coastal trade and mandated that those ships over forty tons, trading legally, bear manifests, or specific lists of the slaves aboard.

President Jefferson signed the bill banning the international slave trade, and it became law on 1 January 1808. Outlawing the trade, however, did not stop it. Smuggling remained a significant problem during the decade following enactment and remained an issue until the ultimate demise of American slavery in 1865. Meanwhile, reaction to the bill varied. Northern newspapers printed editorials that generally praised the law while differing on the particulars. Drawing most criticism was the provision allowing Africans to be sold within the states. Southern newspapers were generally quiet, although the *Charleston*

Courier blasted Jefferson for meddling in state affairs.

Abolitionist broadside of 1835–1836, condemning slavery in the District of Columbia. Top, left to right: "Land of the Free," a reading of the Declaration of Independence; a plan of Washington with a suppliant slave and a fleeing slave; and "Home of the Oppressed," slaves being led past the capitol. Middle: scenes of jails in Alexandria and Washington. Bottom, left to right: chained slaves at a sale house; a ship loading slaves in Alexandria; and a slave establishment in Alexandria.

Library of Congress.

African Americans reacted quite differently, of course, being almost unanimously in favor of the trade ban. Absalom Jones, a former slave who was the first pastor of Saint Thomas African Episcopal Church in Philadelphia, heartily endorsed the new legislation. Jones and other African American ministers began delivering annual thanksgiving sermons on New Year's Day, the day the new law took effect. Ministers typically compared the trials of the African diaspora to the sufferings of the Israelites in Egypt and noted the progress, however small, that had been made toward freedom. These annual messages not only commemorated the end of the African trade but were also a means to solidify the African American community.

The outlawing of the transatlantic slave trade was of great importance to the United States. The historian William W. Freehling has argued that it was one of the most important pieces of congressional legislation. Closing the international slave trade shifted the contours of slave life in the American South. Developing states like Louisiana and Mississippi faced labor shortages that could not be quenched by importing Africans. Thus whites in these states turned to Tennessee, Virginia, Maryland, and other states for slaves. Meanwhile, the border states became less committed to slavery than those in the Deep South. More important, a thriving interstate slave trade—the "Second Middle Passage"—transported hundreds of thousands of slaves away from their families and into the unfamiliar territory of the cotton fields or rice plantations of the Black Belt. The prohibition of the Atlantic slave trade greatly diminished suffering for Africans but only increased it for countless slaves in the United States.

See also Abolitionism; African Diaspora; Constitution, U.S.; Constitutional Convention, African Americans and; Jefferson, Thomas, on African Americans and Slavery; Jones, Absalom; Laws and Legislation; Slavery: Lower South; Slavery: Mississippi Valley; Slavery: Upper South; and Slavery: West.

Bibliography

Davis, David Brion. *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770–1823*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1975.

Freehling, William W. *The Road to Disunion: Secessionists at Bay, 1776–1854*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.

Mason, Matthew E. Slavery Overshadowed: Congress Debates Prohibiting the Atlantic Slave Trade to the United States, 1806–1807. Journal of the Early Republic 20 (Spring 2000): 59–81.

Robinson, Donald L. *Slavery in the Structure of American Politics, 1765–1820*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1970.

Robert H. Gudmestad

African Slave Trade

Congress prohibited the international slave trade after 1 January 1808, but the smuggling of African slaves continued until the Civil War. Historians estimate that as many as fifty thousand slaves were illegally smuggled into the South between 1808 and 1860. This small group had virtually no influence on the culture or demography of a slave population that grew from 1 million in 1800 to 4 million in 1860. The international slave trade remained a potent symbol, however, of the fight against bondage.

When the United States outlawed the African slave trade, it did little to enforce the ban. Large numbers of African slaves entered South Carolina, Georgia, and Louisiana until 1820. Several factors were responsible for the decline of smuggling, least of which was the U.S. Navy. American involvement in the War of 1812 disrupted commerce of all types and hurt the illegal traffic. Confiscated slaves were not returned to Africa but turned over to state governments, which usually sold them at auction. The domestic slave trade began moving untold numbers of American slaves from the Upper South to the developing states of Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama, Arkansas, and Texas. Whites in the Old Southwest could then buy American slaves just as easily—and cheaply—as African slaves. A self-sustaining and mobile American slave population was the most important reason for the sharp decline in smuggling.

The American government also belatedly worked to end the trade. In 1820 the slave trade was legally classified as piracy, so offenders could be executed, although none were until the Civil War. The British navy increased its efforts to enforce the ban, and the British lobbied for more vigorous international efforts to halt the traffic. Great Britain suggested reciprocal search agreements between American and British ships along the African coast. Secretary of State John Quincy Adams refused to agree. Adams, although an active opponent of slavery, distrusted British intentions and believed the idea to be a ploy to renew impressment of American sailors. The United States relented in the 1842 Webster-Ashburton Treaty, part of which established Anglo-American naval patrols near Africa. The United States also pledged to keep ships, each with a total of eighty guns, patrolling the waters off West Africa, the center of the illegal trade. Congress created the African Squadron, which typically averaged four vessels on patrol in the Atlantic.

These actions were an opportunity to shut down the illegal slave trade. It was an opportunity wasted, however. Congress was slow to fund the African Squadron, and three or four ships were simply too few to cover Africa's west coast. The U.S. government undercut the treaty's power by refusing to allow English vessels to inspect American ships. Smugglers carried an American flag and raised it if challenged by an English vessel. Moreover, the African Squadron was slow, outgunned, and based far from the primary smuggling routes. After several suspected captains filed wrongful arrest suits against the U.S. government, the navy inhibited its efforts even further. Thereafter, an American ship had to actually capture slaves on board a smuggler; the presence of manacles or manifests was insufficient proof. These hindrances notwithstanding, the U.S. Navy captured thirty-eight ships between 1837 and 1862.

"The Africans of the Slave Bark *Wildfire*— the Slave Deck of the bark *Wildfire*, Brought into Key West on April 30, 1860," having been captured by an American steamer; wood engraving after a daguerreotype, from *Harper's Weekly* of 2 June 1860. The *Wildfire* carried 510 captives from a region near the Congo River. Here, men are shown on the lower deck; the women are on an upper deck, where the space seems to be too low for them to stand up. The author of the article in *Harper's* said that all the Africans were "in a state of entire nudity, in a sitting or squatting posture, the most of them having their knees elevated so as to form a resting place for their heads and arms." Six hundred captives had originally been loaded onboard, of whom ninety had died during the voyage. That was a low number of deaths by the standards of slave ships, but the *Wildfire*, which could hold 1,000 slaves, had been filled to less than capacity—a practice known as "loose packing"—and the Africans had been well-fed. The captives were subsequently freed.

Library of Congress.

In the mid-1850s the U.S. government suddenly increased its efforts to suppress the African slave trade. President James Buchanan pressed Congress to vote in favor of a larger appropriation for the African Squadron. The legislators responded, with funding increasing from $8,000 in 1857 to $75,000 in 1859. Secretary of the Navy Isaac Toucey poured the money into the African Squadron, expanding it from three ships to eight in 1859. Toucey chose an energetic and competent officer, William Inman, to head the squadron. Under Inman the navy captured fourteen slavers, ten more than had his predecessor. During the Civil War the United States agreed to reciprocal searches with England. The war, the eventual prohibition of slavery, and that final agreement with the British effectively shut off the illegal trade.

The continued importation of Africans perhaps kept southerners attuned to the prospect of reopening the legal trade. During the 1850s southern radicals proposed repealing the trade's ban. Proponents of restoring the trade saw it as a way to solve a number of perceived problems. More Africans in America would reduce the price of labor, thus allowing more individuals to enter the slaveholding class. Residents in the states of the Upper South, like Virginia and Tennessee, who were becoming less dependent on slavery could purchase more slaves, thus halting an erosion of the "peculiar institution." More slaves would also increase southern representation in Congress, thanks to the three-fifths clause in the U.S. Constitution. James Adams, the governor of South Carolina, sponsored state legislation to reopen the slave trade to his state, the national trade ban notwithstanding. Both houses of the legislature defeated the bill. Delegates to the Southern Commercial Convention in Vicksburg, Mississippi, in 1859 endorsed reopening the trade.

While support in the South for renewing the African slave trade was fitful, proposals to reopen it went nowhere. Radical southerners who supported the idea were marginalized. Most southerners still opposed the African slave trade. They did not want to raise the delicate issue for fear of further widening sectional divisions. Others realized that lower slave prices could have negative effects and depreciate important assets. Some southerners believed that a sudden importation of Africans

would imperil free white farms. Even when southerners formed their own government, reopening the Atlantic slave trade remained unpopular. The Confederate Congress voted to retain the ban, and the issue evaporated during the course of the war.

It is difficult to generalize as to which Americans participated in the smuggling of Africans. Northerners earned much money from the illegal traffic, with the Rhode Island city of Bristol serving as a center for outfitting illegal slavers in the first few decades of the nineteenth century. Southerners probably gained more. Ships found haven in southern ports and eluded customs officials in Florida and Texas, and slaveholders outfitted smugglers. Frederick Douglass wrote of the brutal irony of caulking three ships at the Baltimore, Maryland, shipyards that turned out to be illegal slaving vessels. Later, during his voyage to England, Douglass denounced the smuggling of Africans, as did most other American abolitionists.

See also Adams, John Quincy; Antislavery Movement; Baltimore, Maryland, Slavery in; Buchanan, James; Caulker's Trade; Civil War; Constitution, U.S.; Demographics; Douglass, Frederick; Foreign Policy; Laws and Legislation, Antebellum; Military; Proslavery Thought; Slave Trade, Domestic; Slavery; and Slavery and the U.S. Constitution.

Bibliography

Du Bois, W. E. B. *The Suppression of the African Slave-Trade to the United States of America, 1638–1870* (1896). New York: Schocken, 1969.

Duignan, Peter, and Clarence Clendenen. *The United States and the African Slave Trade, 1619–1862*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1963.

Rawley, James A. Captain Nathaniel Gordon, the Only American Executed for Violating the Slave Trade Laws. Civil War History 39 (September 1993): 216–224.

Rawley, James A. *The Transatlantic Slave Trade: A History.* New York: Norton, 1981.

Takaki, Ronald T. *A Pro-slavery Crusade: The Agitation to Reopen the African Slave Trade.* New York: Free Press, 1971.

Robert H. Gudmestad