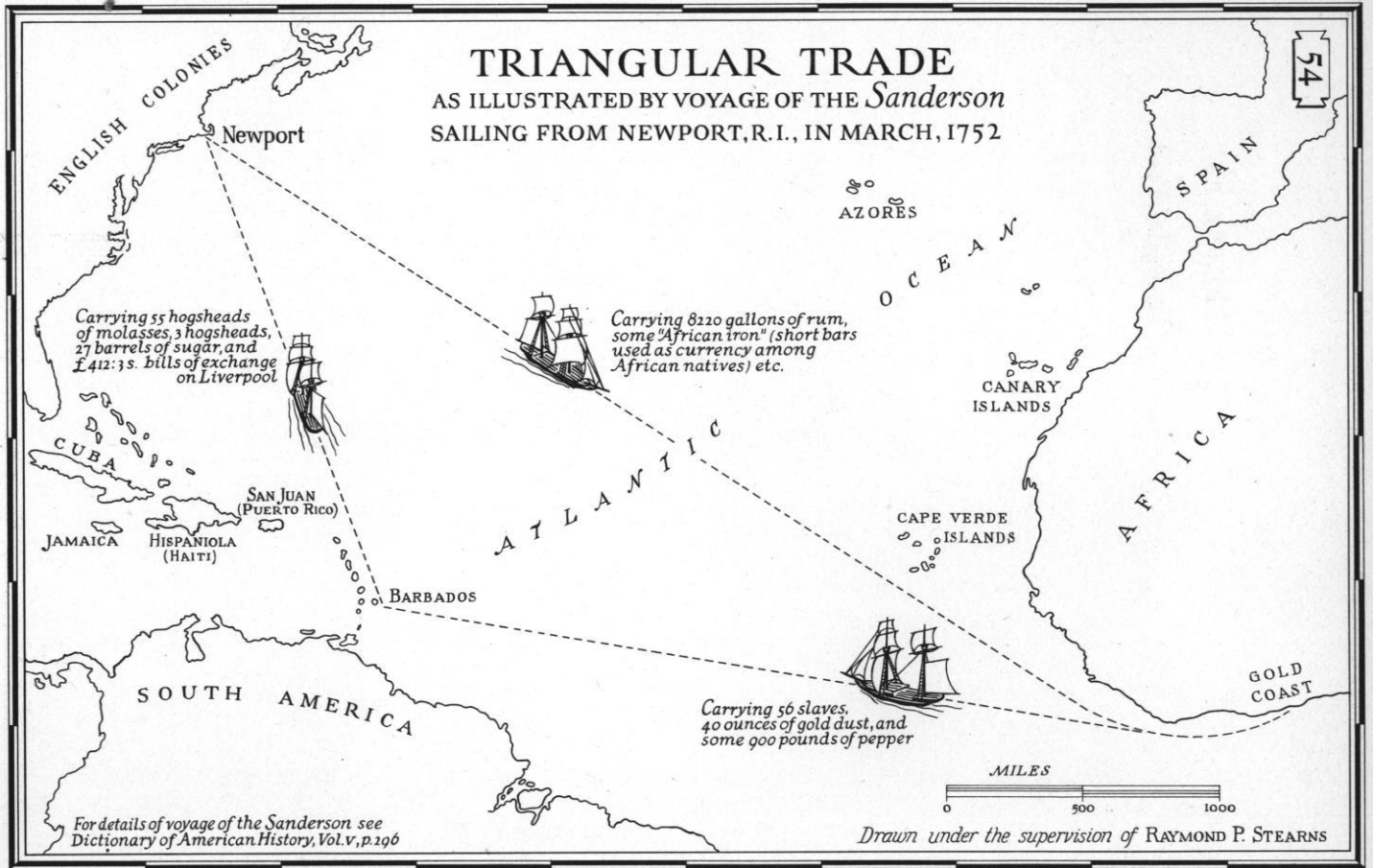
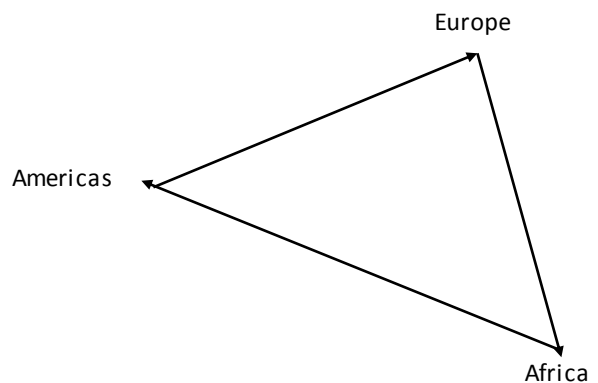


New Trade Patterns Emerge



The Atlantic System

1. From where did most slaves in the trade come from?
2. Why did the triangular trade develop?
3. How did the plantation system foster the slave trade?
4. What were the conditions like for slaves?
5. What were the effects of the slave trade in both Africa and America?



*On the diagram above, please label the middle passage

The Middle Passage

(Source: <http://www.recoveredhistories.org/storiesmiddle.php#activity>)

"The stench of the hold...was so intolerably loathsome that it was dangerous to remain there for any time...but now that the whole ship's cargo were confined together, it became absolutely pestilential. The closeness of the place and the heat of the climate, added to the number in the ship which was so crowded that each had scarcely room to turn himself, almost suffocated us"

Oludah Equiano

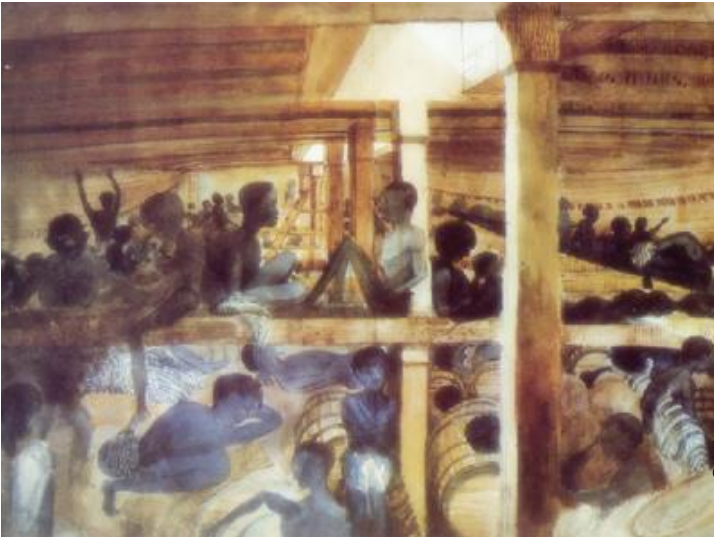
Background

The Middle Passage did not begin with the transatlantic voyage, but with the capture and sale of Africans, and ended with their forced 'adjustment' to life in the Americas. It is one of history's most horrific chapters, showing the human capacity for both cruelty and insensitivity and strength and survival. It is difficult to calculate the numbers of Africans that were transported; estimates have ranged from five million to 30 million. Further millions died during capture and on the journey across the Atlantic. History has seen few social disruptions on such a scale.



Africans being forced below deck before transportation to the Caribbean and Americas.
© Anti-Slavery International

The voyage itself took between 6 and 8 weeks. The enslaved Africans were chained together by the hand and the foot, and packed into the smallest places where there was barely enough room to lie on one's side. It was here that they ate, slept, urinated, defecated, gave birth, went insane and died. They had no idea where they were going, or what was going to happen to them. Through all this misery and suffering, new African identities were created, forming a basis for a new transnational culture. Within these ships, Africans from different countries, regions, cultures and with different languages learned to communicate with each other; many conspired to overthrow their captors together.



View of the Deck of the Slave Ship Alabanoz by Lieutenant Francis Meynell, 1846
© The Atlantic Slave Trade and Slave Life in the Americas: A Visual Record

Test Your Knowledge

The following passages describe the conditions of enslaved Africans onboard slave ships during the Middle Passage, a journey from the west coast of Africa across the Atlantic Ocean. Match the quote with the correct author.

Was it said by a ship captain, abolitionist, Doctor, Sailor, Former Slave

“The treatment of the seamen was cruel from the very beginning to the end of the voyage. Ropes and handspikes were in common use; and were often kicked and beaten with the fist for only imaginary faults...there was not one [voyage] in which a seaman was well used.”

“This wretched situation was again aggravated by the galling of the chains, now become insupportable; and the filth of the necessary tubs, into which the children often fell, and were almost suffocated. The shrieks of the women, and the groans of the dying, rendered the whole a scene of horror almost inconceivable.”

“[Slaves] had sufficient room, sufficient air, and sufficient provisions. When upon deck, they made merry and amused themselves with dancing. As to mortality... it was trifling. In short, the voyage from Africa to the West Indies was one of the happiest periods of a Negro’s life.”

"The captain of an English ship had enticed several of the natives on board, and finding a favourable opportunity, sailed away with them. His vessel however was driven back to the coast from whence it had set sail, and was obliged to cast anchor on the very spot where this act of treachery had been committed. At this time two other English vessels were lying in the same river. The natives, ever since the transaction, were determined to retaliate...they accordingly boarded the three vessels, and having made themselves masters of them, they killed most of their crews."

Task: You are an abolitionist and want to stop the slave trade. Create a poster that will persuade people to back you. It should have a persuasive slogan and key information that supports your position. Do not make it too wordy but it still needs to be informative.