

VOICES FROM THE TRANSATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE



Power Point accompaniment for the lesson Voices of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, available in the Database of K-12 Resources: k12database.unc.edu

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Trans-Saharan Slave Trade

- Between the 10th – 14th centuries, African captives were sold in Islamic markets around the area of present-day Sudan.
- Many of the captives were female, sold for servants or concubines.

- Other captives were shipped north across the deserts of northwest Africa to the Mediterranean coast (to Morocco) where they were purchased and enslaved in Spain, Portugal, and other countries.
- By the mid-1400's, Portuguese ship captains were trading enslaved people along the west coast of Africa for working on sugar plantations.



Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade

- In 1492, Columbus landed in the “New World.” This new link between continents opened the door for the beginning of the **Trans-Atlantic** slave trade.
- Spanish adventurers and conquistadors arrived in the Americas throughout the following years, enslaving indigenous people to search for gold and silver.
- These people, native to the land, were weakened by disease, malnutrition, and Spanish cruelty.
- As the indigenous population decreased, the Spanish government began to enslave African people.
- **Around 1520, the first enslaved Africans arrived in the Americas off of Portuguese ships.**

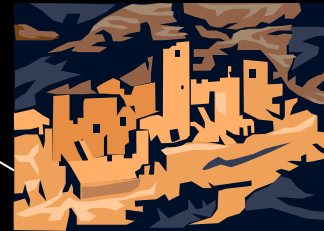
Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade



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Triangle Trade Route

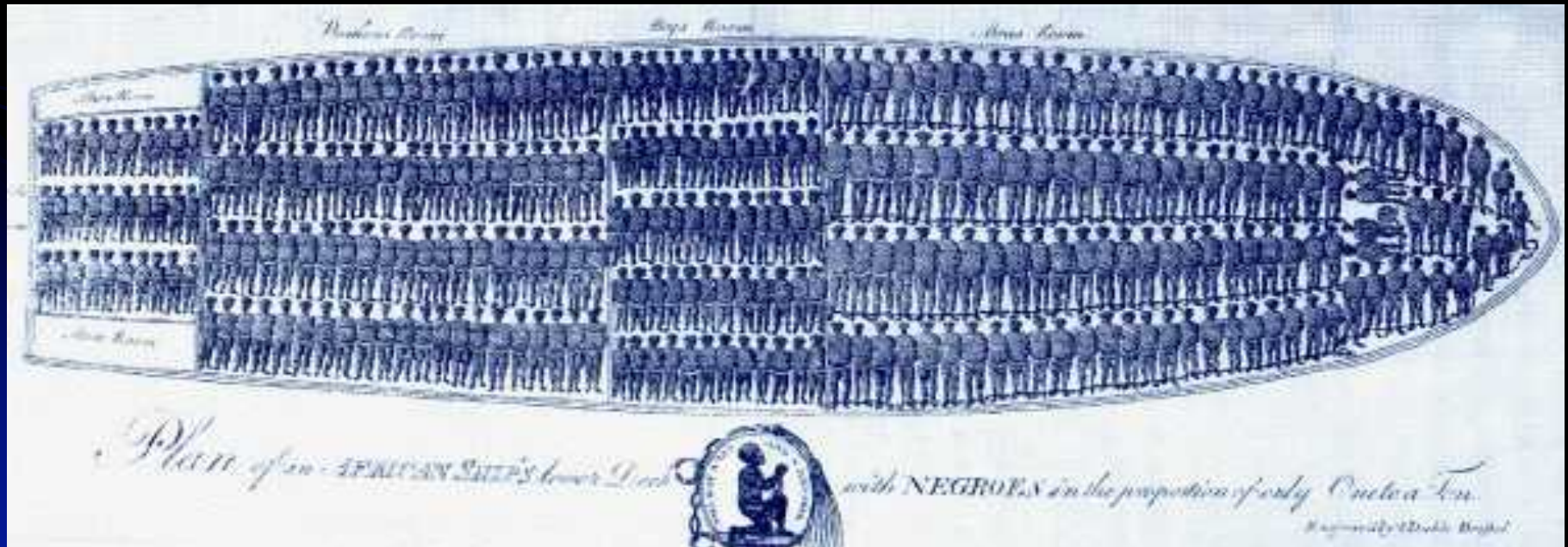
THE MIDDLE PASSAGE



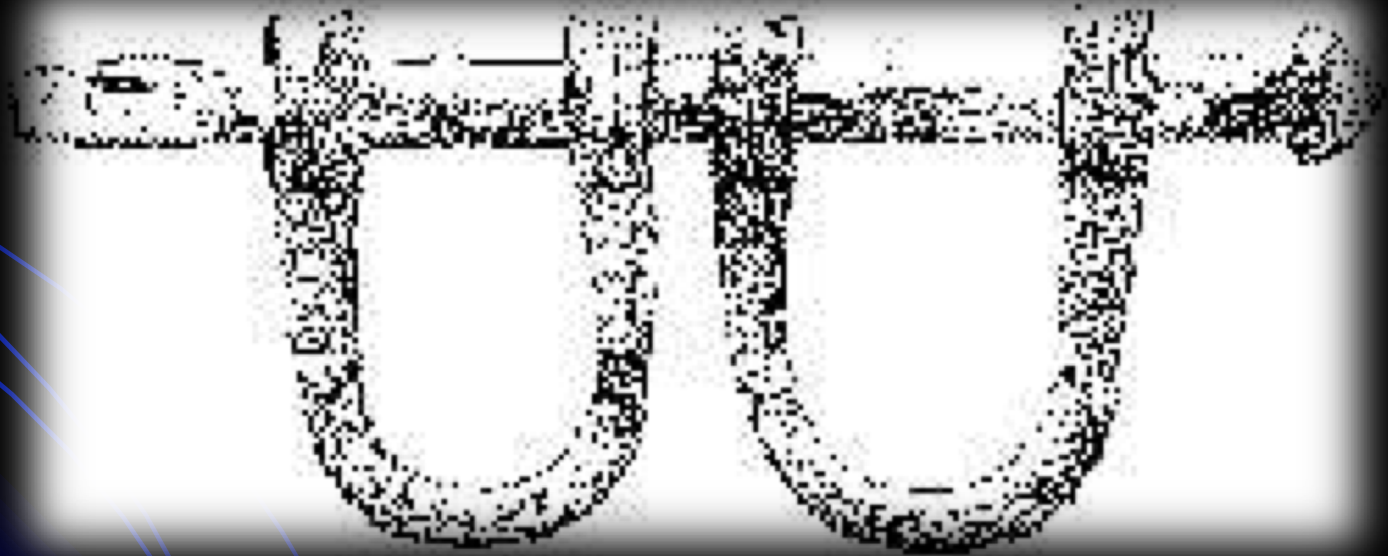


What do you think life aboard a slave ship
would have been like?

- People were packed into ships on numerous wooden platforms between decks. These decks were generally around 4x6, with little head room.
- The captured suffered from scrapes, bruises, and infections from lying on these bare, unsanitary planks.



- Once enslaved, the men and women were typically confined by leg irons while on the ship.
- They were often tortured with whip beating and iron collars.



- Conditions below deck were crowded and unsanitary. The wooden holding areas were covered with excrement, blood, and filth. Only tubs were provided for people to relieve themselves.
- Due to these poor conditions, many of those captured suffered and died from diseases such as dysentery, dehydration, smallpox, and gastrointestinal diseases.
- Many committed suicide by jumping overboard or refusing to eat. Iron poles were sometimes used to force feed those enslaved.

15%-20% of enslaved people usually died on the journey to the Americas, a trip generally taking several miserable months.







Imagine:

What is he thinking?

...hoping?

...wishing?

...remembering?

...seeing?

...feeling?

Journals from the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade

“Finding the promise and possibility within [the history of slavery] requires us to consider the lives of the enslaved on their own terms. Trapped in an unimaginable hell, enslaved people forged unbreakable bonds with one another. Indeed, no one knew better the meaning and importance of family and community than the enslaved. They fought back too, in the field and in the house, pushing back against enslavers in ways that ranged from feigned ignorance to flight and armed rebellion. There is no greater hope to be found in American history than in African Americans’ resistance to slavery.”

~Dr. Hasan Kwame Jeffries