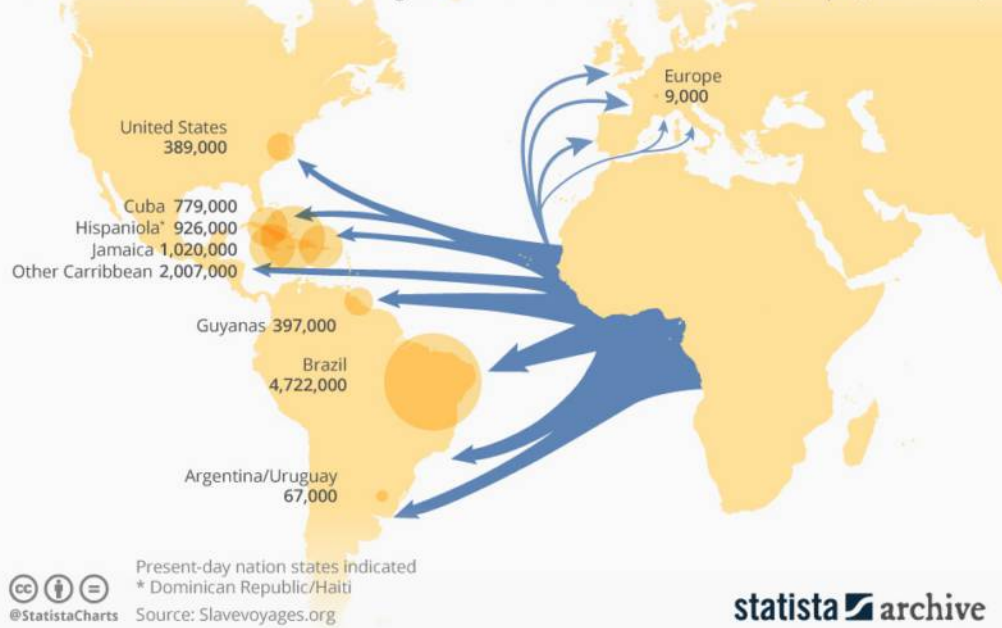
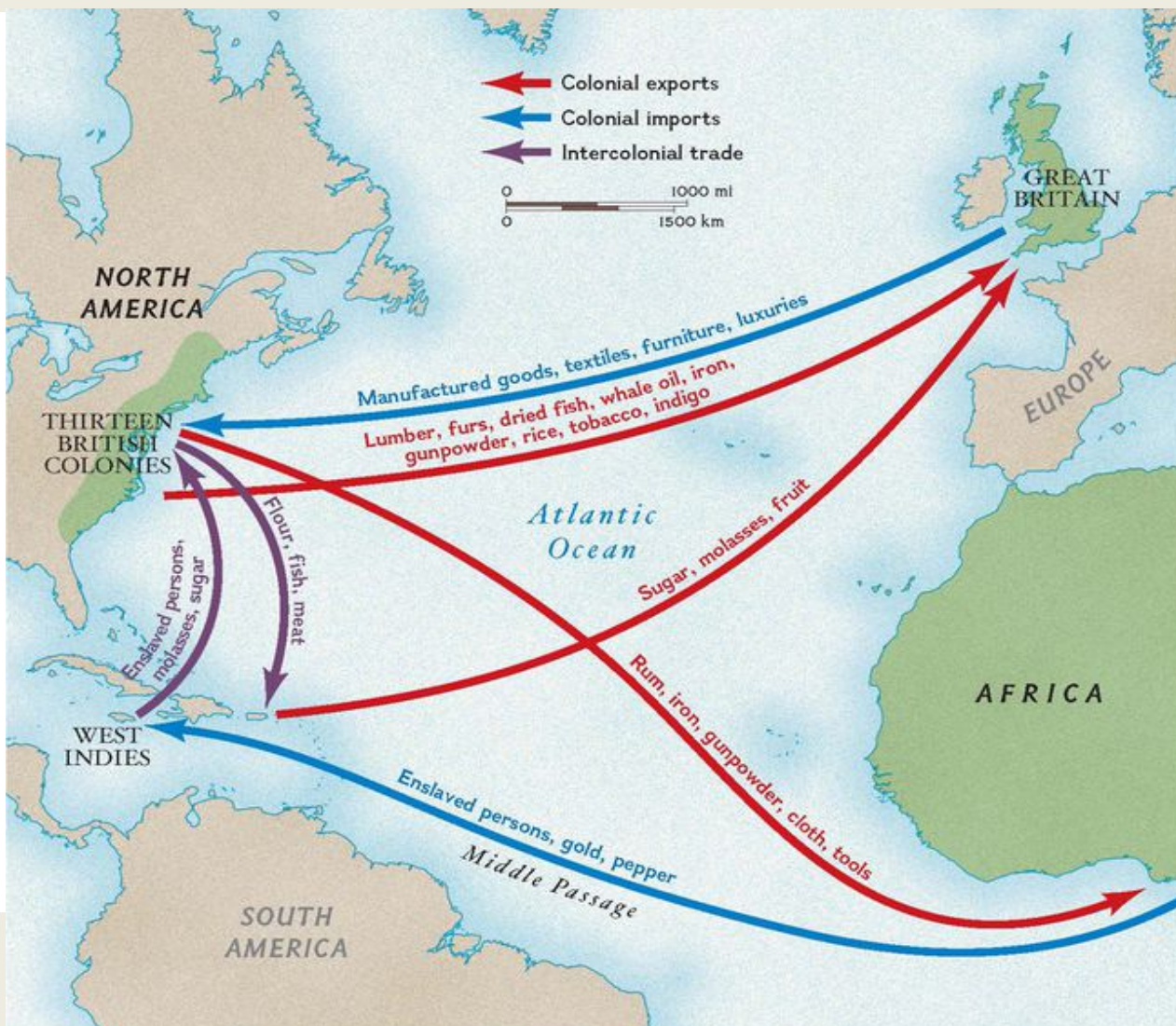


The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Uprooted Millions

Number of enslaved Africans arriving on the American continent and in Europe (1501-1866)



Beginning in 1492, with the 1st voyage of Columbus, Europeans began to establish colonies in the Americas. How did New World colonization lead the Atlantic slave trade?



How did New World colonization lead to the Atlantic Slave trade?

#1 Sugar & the Columbian Exchange

"I do not know if coffee and sugar are necessary to the happiness of Europe, but I know well that these two vegetables are a source of misery to the inhabitants of two continents of the world. We are dispeopling America in order to have a land to grow them; we are dispeopling Africa in order to have a nation to cultivate them."

A Voyage to the Isle of France by: Bernardin De Saint Pierre 1773

Sugar was in great demand in Europe, but there was very little room in which to grow it. On Columbus' second voyage to the Caribbean he brought sugar cane to the island of Hispaniola. This movement of plants, animals and diseases between the Eastern and Western Hemispheres is known as the Columbian Exchange. Many historians see sugar as the greatest gift of the Columbian exchange.



In the early stages of Spanish colonialism Native Americans were used as laborers in the fields this was referred to as an *encomienda*. Disease however wiped out vast numbers of natives. It is because of this that European colonialists turned to Africa in search of cheap labor.

Answer the following questions in complete sentences.

- 1) Based on the picture why would the Europeans use slaves to make sugar?
- 2) Based on the quote what is meant by “dispeopling Africa”?
- 3) How did the Columbian Exchange and the importation of sugar lead to African slavery?

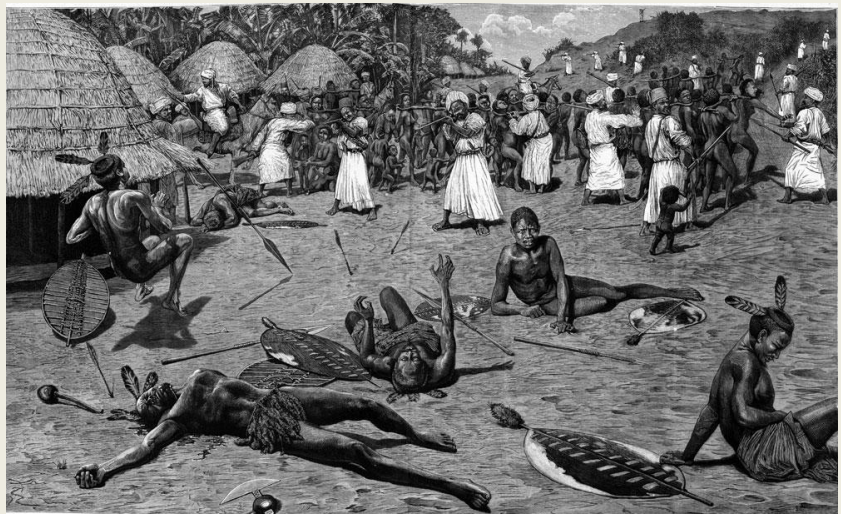
How did New World colonization lead to the Atlantic Slave trade?

#2 The Capture of Slaves

Olaudah Equiano also known as **Gustavus Vassa**, was one of the most prominent Africans involved in the British movement of the abolition of the slave trade. His autobiography depicted the horrors of slavery and helped influence British lawmakers to abolish the slave trade through the Slave Trade Act of 1807. Despite his enslavement as a young man, he purchased his freedom and worked as an author, merchant and explorer.

Excerpt from *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African*

“One day, when all our people were gone out to their works as usual, and only I and my dear sister were left to mind the house, two men and a woman got over our walls and in a moment seized us both, and, without giving us time to cry out, or make resistance, they stopped our mouths, and ran off with us into the nearest wood. Here they tied our hands, and continued to carry us as far as they could, till night came on, when we reached a small house where the robbers halted for refreshment, and spent the night. We were then unbound, but were unable to take any food; and, being quite overpowered by fatigue and grief, our only relief was some sleep, which allayed our misfortune for a short time. ... the only comfort we had was in being in one another's arms all that



night, and bathing each other with our tears. But alas! we were soon deprived of even the small comfort of weeping together. The next day proved a day of greater sorrow than I had yet experienced; for my sister and I were then separated, while we lay clasped in each other's arms. It was in vain that we besought them not to part us; she was torn from me, and immediately carried away, while I was left in a state of distraction not to be described. I cried and grieved continually; and for several days.”

Answer the following questions in complete sentences.

- 1) Who was Olaudah Equiano?
- 2) How did Olaudah Equiano become a slave?

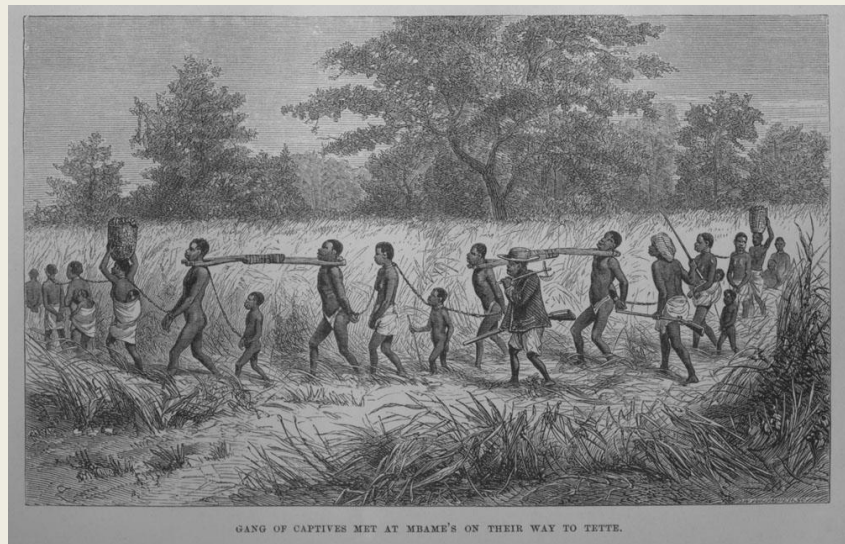
3) Based on his autobiography what do you think would be the worst part of being captured?

How did New World colonization lead to the Atlantic Slave trade?

#3 Mercantilism leads to Africans enslaving Africans

While European slave traders controlled the shipment of slaves from Africa to the Americas via the Middle Passage, African Kingdoms along the Atlantic coast provided slaves to the Europeans. For centuries before the opening of the Middle Passage, slavery was common in Africa. Warring tribes would enslave prisoners of war. When Europeans approached kingdoms on the coast this practice took on a new fervor.

Africans were captured by an enemy tribe, and then exchanged for European



goods. Mercantilism encouraged both European and African kingdoms to seek a positive balance of trade. In the case of the Atlantic Slave trade, slaves were traded for weapons and later on rum. With time this would lead to the establishment of the so called "Triangle Trade". Slaves would be taken to the Caribbean to work the sugar plantations. That sugar would be converted into rum. The rum would then be traded for

even more slaves. The system acted to perpetuate or fuel it's self.

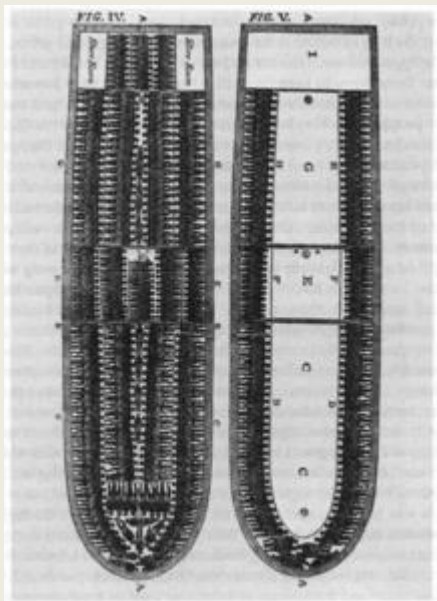
Answer the following questions in complete sentences.

- 1) Why would Africans be willing to enslave Africans?**
- 2) Why would mercantilism cause slavery to increase?**
- 3) Explain how the triangle trade fueled slavery.**

How did New World colonization lead to the Atlantic Slave trade?

#4 The Middle Passage

The Middle Passage refers to the voyage from Africa to the Americas. The length of the trip varied from one to six months depending on weather conditions. The journey became more efficient over the centuries; while an average transatlantic journey of the early 16th century lasted several months, by the 19th century the crossing often required fewer than six weeks.



The typical slave ships contained several hundred slaves with about thirty crew members. The male captives were normally chained together in pairs to save space; right leg to the next man's left leg. Slaves were fed one meal a day with water, but if food was scarce, slaveholders would get priority over the slaves. Sometimes captives were allowed to move around during the day, but many ships kept the shackles on throughout the arduous journey.

It is estimated that about 15% of slaves would not survive the Middle Passage. The conditions were harsh and the cramped quarters allowed disease to move rapidly.

“After being about 15 days out to sea a heavy squall struck the ship. The poor slaves below, altogether unprepared for such an occurrence, were mostly thrown to the side, where they lay heaped on the top of each other; their fetters rendered many of them helpless, and before they could be arranged in their proper places, and relieved from their pressure on each other, it was found that 15 of them were smothered or crushed to death. The captain seemed considerably vexed; but the only grievance to him was the sudden loss of some five or six thousand dollars.”

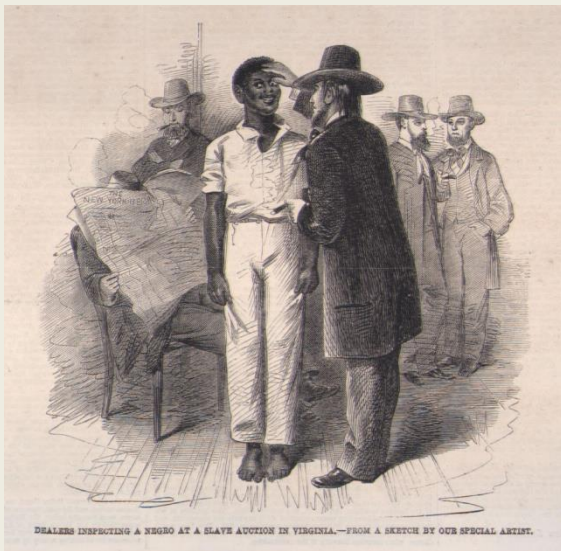
From the *Life and adventures of Zamba*

Answer the following questions in complete sentences.

- 1) What was the Middle Passage?
- 2) Why would slave be kept in cramped quarters and fed little?
- 3) According to the excerpt by Zamba why was the Captain of the ship upset about the death of slaves?

How did New World colonization lead to the Atlantic Slave trade?

#5 The Auction Block



At the auction its self potential buyers were given the opportunity to examine the slaves beforehand. The slaves were poked and prodded before the action began. Young healthy slaves were worth more than older or sickly slaves. The buyer who placed the highest bid became the new owner. The auction block separated families sending men, women and children in different directions.

Slaves were sold at auction on their arrival to the Americas. Advertisements were posted before the slave ship even arrived. Slaves were kept in pens; there they were washed and covered with grease to look healthier. They were also branded so they could be identified as slaves.

TO BE SOLD, on board the
 Ship *Bance-Island*, on tuesday the 6th
 of *May* next, at *Ashley-Ferry*; a choice
 cargo of about 250 fine healthy

NEGROES,

just arrived from the
 Windward & Rice Coast.

—The utmost care has
 already been taken, and

shall be continued, to keep them free from
 the least danger of being infected with the
SMALL-POX, no boat having been on
 board, and all other communication with
 people from *Charles-Town* prevented.

Austin, Laurens, & Appleby.

N. B. Full one Half of the above Negroes have had the
SMALL-POX in their own Country..

Answer the following questions in complete sentences.

- 1) Why would the poster claim that the slaves were well cared for and disease free?
- 2) Why were slaves examined before auction by potential buyers?
- 3) What effect did the auction block have on slave families?