

COWPER & NEWTON MUSEUM

The Transatlantic Slave Trade

Learning Resources

The Middle Passage: Insurrection & Resistance



Image: Library Company of Philadelphia

This resource pack includes and quotes directly from 18th / early 19th century historical sources and contains language and details about the attitudes and violence towards people who were enslaved and trafficked from Africa during that time.



COWPER & NEWTON MUSEUM



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‘My Own Safety’

‘What I did I did ignorantly; considering it as the line of life which Divine Providence had allotted me, and having no concern in the point of conscience, but to treat the slaves, while under my care, with as much humanity as a regard to my own safety would admit’.

‘Accordingly, as we dare not trust them, we receive them on board, from the first as enemies; and, before their numbers exceed, perhaps, ten or fifteen, that are all put in irons; in most ships, two and two together. And frequently, they are not thus confined, as they might most conveniently stand or move, the right hand and foot of the one to the left of the other, but across; that is hand and foot of each on the same side, whether right or left, are fettered together: so that they cannot move either hand and foot, but with great caution, and perfect consent. Thus they must sit, walk and lie, for many months (sometimes for nine or ten), without mitigation or relief, unless they are sick’.

‘In the night, they are confined below; in the daytime (if the weather be fine) they are on the deck; as as they are brought by pairs, a chain is put through a ring upon their irons, and this likewise locked down to the ring-bolts, which are fastened, at certain intervals, upon the deck’.

‘The patriots, who formed and animated the plan, if they can be found out, must be treated as villains, and punished to intimidate the rest.’

Thoughts Upon the African Slave Trade, John Newton, 1788



“Monday 8th October: marked off the slaves’ rooms, and the carpenter began to build the bulkheads. Gunner making cartridges, etc. for the carriage and swivel guns”.

John Newton, Captain of *Duke of Argyle*.
8th October 1750

Image: Cowper & Newton Museum

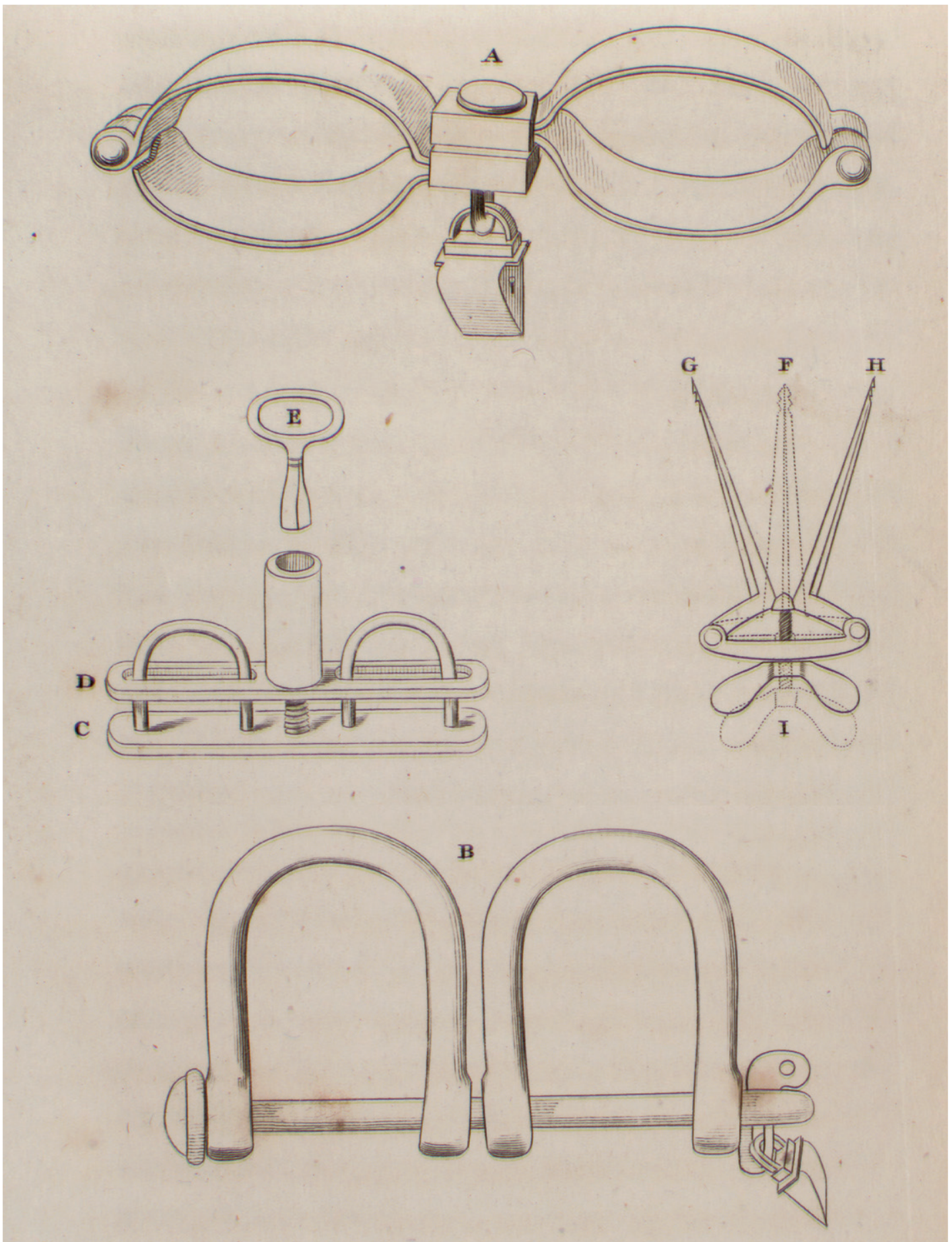


Image: Purchased by Thomas Clarkson in Liverpool. A. Handcuffs for enslaved men (right wrist of one person was padlocked to left wrist of another); B, leg shackles for men C,D,E, the thumbscrew used for punishing slaves; F,G,H, speculum oris or mouth opener," which was used by surgeons aboard slave ships for force feeding.

From Thomas Clarkson, *The History of the Rise, Progress, and Accomplishment of the Abolition of the African Slave-Trade by the British parliament* (London, 1808),

www.slaveryimages.org

'Insurrection'

'Usually, about two-thirds of a cargo of Slaves are males. When a hundred and fifty or two hundred stout men, torn from their native land, (...) it is not to be expected that they will, tamely, resign themselves to this situation. It is always taken for granted, that they will attempt to gain their liberty, if possible'.

Thoughts Upon the African Slave Trade, John Newton, 1788

'The risk of insurrections is to be added. These, I believe, are always meditated; for the men slaves are not easily reconciled to their confinement and treatment; and , if attempted, they are seldom suppressed without considerable loss; and sometimes they succeed, to the destruction of the whole ship's company at once.'

Thoughts Upon the African Slave Trade, John Newton, 1788

'The slaves on board a certain ship rose in a mass to liberate themselves; and having advanced far in the pursuit of their object, it became necessary to repel them by force. Some of them yielded; some of them were killed in the scuffle; but many of them actually jumped into the sea and were drowned; ...'

The History of the Abolition of the African Slave-Trade, vol. 1, Thomas Clarkson, 1808

'...; their attempts to rise in defence of their own freedom, and, when this was impracticable, to destroy themselves by the refusal of sustenance, by jumping overboard into the sea, and in other ways; the effect also of their situation upon their minds, by producing insanity and various diseases; and the cruel manner of disposing of them in the West Indies, and of separating relatives and friends.'

The History of the Abolition of the African Slave-Trade, vol. 1, Thomas Clarkson, 1808

'... death was more preferable than life, and a plan was concerted amongst us, that we might burn and blow up the ship, and to perish all together in the flames.'

Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil and Wicked Traffic of the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species, Quobna. Ottobah Cugoana, 1787

'Insurrections are frequently the consequence; which are seldom suppressed without much bloodshed. Sometimes these are successful, and the whole ship's company is cut off. They are likewise always ready to seize every opportunity for committing some act of desperation to free themselves from their miserable state; and notwithstanding the restraints under which they are laid, they often succeed.'

An Account of the Slave-Trade on the Coast of Africa, Alexander Falconbridge, 1788



REPRESENTATION of an INSURRECTION
on board

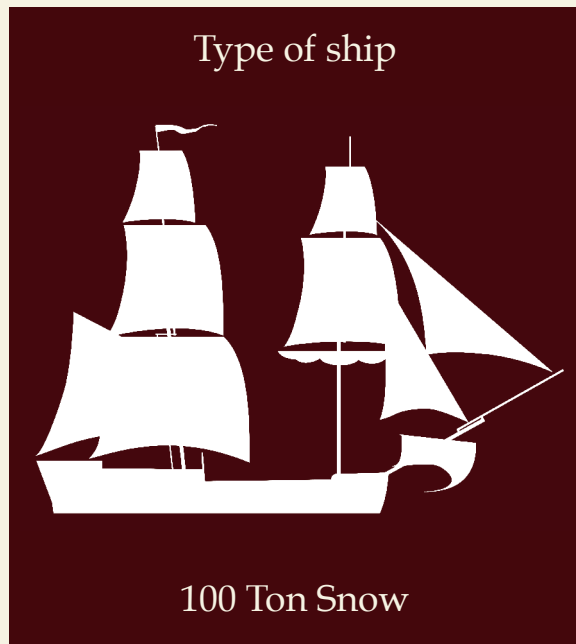
A SLAVE^d SHIP.

*Shewing how the crew fire upon the unhappy Slaves from behind the
BARRICADO, erected on board all Slave ships, as a security whenever
such commotions may happen.*



*See the privy council's report part I. Art: SLAVES.
Minutes of evidence before the House of Commons.
Wadstrom's Essay on Colonization §. 471.*

The Duke of Argyle slave ship



Owners: Joseph Manesty, Robert Hutchinson, Andrew Lesley

Captain: John Newton

Built: Liverpool 1729

Voyage: August 1750 - October 1751

Crew: 30 **Cannons:** 10

Intended number of enslaved: 250

Enslaved people from: Winward Coast, Banana Islands and Sherbro in Africa

End journey: Antigua, Caribbean

156 enslaved men, women and children transported.

10 deaths onboard.

Registered as about 100 tons. However, in his letter to Rev'd David Jennings, Newton described the ship as 140 tons. The under reporting by the owners may have been a means of reducing the amount of tax duty they would need to pay.

Entries from John Newton's journal for the *Duke of Argyle*

1750

8th October	marked off the slaves' rooms, and the carpenter began to build the bulkheads. Gunner making cartridges, etc. for the carriage and swivel guns.
10th October	Cleaned and loaded the small arms.
24th October	... got the guns up and run them out, ..
19th November	The carpenter has finished the barricado
26th November	People employed, as have been several days past, in making waroning [? unknown] for netting upon the awning.
3rd December	Carpenter employed in building the bulkheads in the women's room, gunner cleaning the small arms, and boatswain making a netting for the awning.

- 5th December Carpenter completed the women's room and fixed the bars on the gratings.
- 7th December This day fixed 4 swivel blunderbusses in the baricado, which with the 2 carriage guns we put thro' at the Bananoes [islands], make a formidable appearance upon the main deck, and will, I hope, be sufficient to intimidate the slaves from any thoughts of insurrection ...
- 18th December Having now 12 men slaves on board, began this day with chains and sentrys. Discharged, cleaned and reloaded the small arms.

1751

- 30th April Lowered the barricado about a foot and new spiked it.
- 6th May The people found 2 knives and a bag of small stones in the men's room.
- 26th May In the evening, by the favour of Providence, discovered a conspiracy among the men slaves to rise upon us, but a few hours before it was to be executed. A young man, No_, who has been the whole voyage out of irons, first on account of a large ulcer, and since for seeming good behaviour, gave them a large marlin spike down the gratings, but was happily seen by one of the people. They had it in possession about an hour before I made search for it, in which time they made such good dispatch (being an instrument that made no noise) that this morning I found near 20 of them had broke their irons. Are at work securing them.
- 27th May in the afternoon secured all the men's irons gain and punished 6 of the ring-leaders of the insurrection.
- 28th May Secured the after bulkhead of the men's room, for they had started almost every stantient. Their plot was exceedingly well led, and had they been left alone an hour longer, must have occasioned us a good deal of trouble and damage. I have reason to be thankfull they did not make attempts upon the coast when we had often 7 or 8 of our best men out of the ship at a time and the rest busy. They still look very gloomy and sullen and have doubtless mischief in their heads if they could find an opportunity to vent it. But I hope (by the Divine Assistance) we were fully able to overawe them now ...
- 16th June In the afternoon we were alarmed with the report that some of the men slaves had found means to poyson the water in the scuttle casks upon deck, but upon en-quiry found that they had only conveyed some of their country fetishes, as they call them, or talismans into one of them, which they had the credulity to suppose must inevitably kill all who drank of it. But if it please God thay make no worse attempts than to charm us to death, they will not much harm us, but it shews their intentions are not wanting ...

Journal of a Slave Trader (John Newton 1750-1754) Edited, with an introduction, by Bernard Martin and Mark Spurrell, 1962, original journal: National Maritime Museum, London;
Plantation Register: Liverpool Records Office; www.slavevoyages.org

Ship fitted out for the Slave Trade



1. Men's room
2. Women's room
3. Platforms
4. Barricado
5. Swivel Blunderbusses
6. Four-pounder cannons
7. Women's Toilet
8. Travelling chains
9. Netting - to prevent the enslaved from jumping overboard
10. Awning (made from old sails)
11. Furnace (stove for cooking)
12. Stateroom / Shop

DW.

of Twenty Feet

FIG. VII.

Having now the crew free upon the unhappy Slave from behind the BARRICADE, waited on board all Slave Ships as a security measure and conversations may happen.

FIG. 11.

FIG. III.

FIG. VI.

FIG. 5.

FIG. IV.



*In the price yourself report part 2. At 12.000
Minutes of wisdom before the House of Commons
Kathleen Gray on Wednesday 1. 45.*

Crew of the Duke of Argyle

John Newton	Master
John Bridson	1st Mate, deceased 20th January
Samuel Marshall	2nd do. [ditto, same as above]
John Hamilton	3rd do.
Robert Arthur	Surgeon, deceased 17th August
Andrew Corrigall	Carpenter, deceased 11th January
John Hallin	Boatswain
John Carren	Cooper
James Johnson	Gunner, discharged 18th July
Joseph Fellows	Steward
Mark Couture	Cook
Matthew Curfey	Taylor
Thomas Creed	Fore the mast - put on board the Surprise, 25th November
William Barber	do. Discharged 15th July
Thomas True	do. Put on board the Surprise. 25th November
John Corkhill	do.
Thomas Brown	do. Discharged 15th July
Owen Cavana do.	Put on board the Surprise, 25th November
William Lees do.	Put on board the Surprise, 22nd November
James Pitts do.	Discharged 7th August
Edward Cathom do.	Discharged 3rd August
David Thompson do.	Discharged 7th August
John Thomas	do.
Thomas Peirce	Ordinary
Edward Lawson	do. Deceased 18th December
Gideon Meacham	do. Deceased 7th June
James Gallagher	Fidler do.
Thomas Bridson	Ship's Apprentice, deceased 29th March 1751
James Morgan	do.
Robert Cropper	do.

Entered from on board the Surprise, 25th November

William Lapworth Discharged 3rd August

William Puckett Deceased 7th January

John Seringer

John Hymus

Newton exchanged crew who had caused him trouble onto *HMS Surprise*. Some crew members were also discharged in Antigua.

Journal of a Slave Trader (John Newton 1750-1754)' Edited, with an introduction, by Bernard Martin and Mark Spurrell, 1962. Original journal: National Maritime Museum

Number 28 @ 30

Whilst the names of the crew of the *Duke of Argyle* are known, the names of the enslaved men, women and children were not recorded.

9th Dec 1750

..the yaul (...) got on board at noon and brought a man slave and 2 boy slaves, No 28 @ 30.

14th December

Bought 2 girls of [Mr Tucker] 1 of 3 feet, and the other 3 feet 4 inches, which make number 32.

17th December

At noon the yaul came on board with Mr Cumberbatch, James Calker and John Tucker; brought off 4 slaves, 3 of which 2 men and a girl (...) the 4th they brought me being a man.

26th December

Paid Sury for his boy, No 37,...

28th December

..No. 38-43.

5th January 1751

... slaves number 44 @46

9th January

This day buried a fine woman slave, No. 11 having been ailing for sometime, ...

Journal of a Slave Trader (John Newton 1750-1754) Edited, with an introduction, by Bernard Martin and Mark Spurrell, 1962. Original journal: National Maritime Museum



Section from a map of: 'Guinea Proper, Not Including the Whole of Africa, but Only that Part Known to the Geographers as Lower Ethiopia, Nuremberg: Homannianorum Heredum, 1743.
Geography and Map Division, Library of Congress

Auction of slave ship goods

This advertisement for an auction was placed by Joseph Manesty who was a merchant in Liverpool.

Manesty is recorded as owner or part owner of 23 slaving ships which trafficked people from Africa, including the three voyages of the *Duke of Argyle* and the *African* for which John Newton was captain.

The goods to be sold included:

- General ship items
- Specialist trade tools and instruments
- Armaments
- Trading goods
- Implements to constrain and control the enslaved.

with good Encouragement.

To be S O L D by Auction,
At the Merchants Coffee-house, on Monday next,
at six o'Clock in the Evening,

ONE Iron Furnace and Copper—27 Cases with Bottles—83
 Pair of Shackles—11 Neck-Collars—22 Hand-Cuffs for the
 travelling Chain—4 Long Chains for the Slaves—54 Rings—2 tra-
 velling Chains—1 Corn Mill—7 four Pound Basons—6 two Pound
 Basons—3 Brass Pans—28 Kegs of Gunpowder—12 Cartouches
 Boxes—1 Iron Ladle—1 small Basket of Flints—A Parcel of
 Cooper's Tools—11 Truss Hoops—1 Brass Mortar—2 Sauce Pans,
 —1 Copper Funnel—1 Copper Pump—1 Spear Foot and Spear—
 6 Cutlasses—169 Iron Bars—4 Bundles of Iron Hoops—4 Boxes
 of Pipes—1 Copper Pot—14 Muskets—6 Blunderbusses—11 Pistols
 —2 Scourers—202 Cutlasses—30 Buckaniers—10 Trading Guns
 —1 Medicine Chest and Medicines—1 Box of Surgeons Instruments,
 contains, 12 Razors—1 Amputation Saw—1 Amputation Knife—1
 Catalin—5 Incision Knives—1 Case with 7 Lancets—3 Syringes and
 4 Pipes—1 Sett Trepaning Instruments—1 Sett of Scarificators—1
 Lamp—2 Allevators—2 Crostred Sissor—1 Cathreter Perforatores
 —1 Trochar—1 Tooth Drawer with two Fangs—1 Forceps—1
 Small Spatula—1 Screw Forceps—1 Hone—1 Strap—1 Brush—
 1 Case for Pocket Instruments—2 Spatulas—2 Cupping Glassess.

J. Manesty / ROBERT WILLIAMSON, Broker.

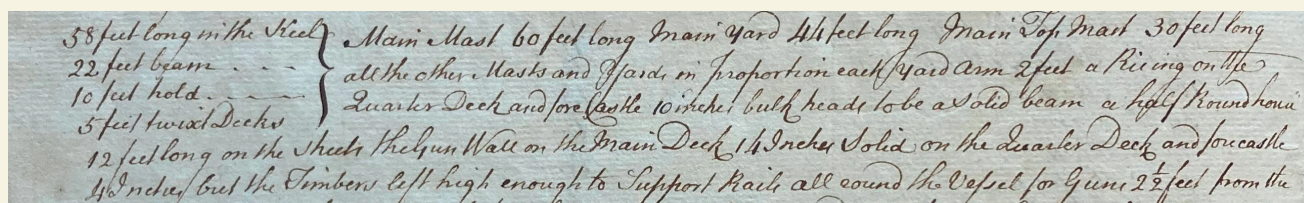
To be S O L D,

13 August 1756, Williamson's Liverpool Advertiser, Liverpool Record Office'

Commissioning a slave ship

In 1745, Joseph Manesty ordered 2 slave ships for 'the African Trade' to be built at Rhode Island, which was then part of the British colony in America. In his letter to John Bannister, who was to carry out the commission, Manesty gave detailed instructions and specifications for the build.

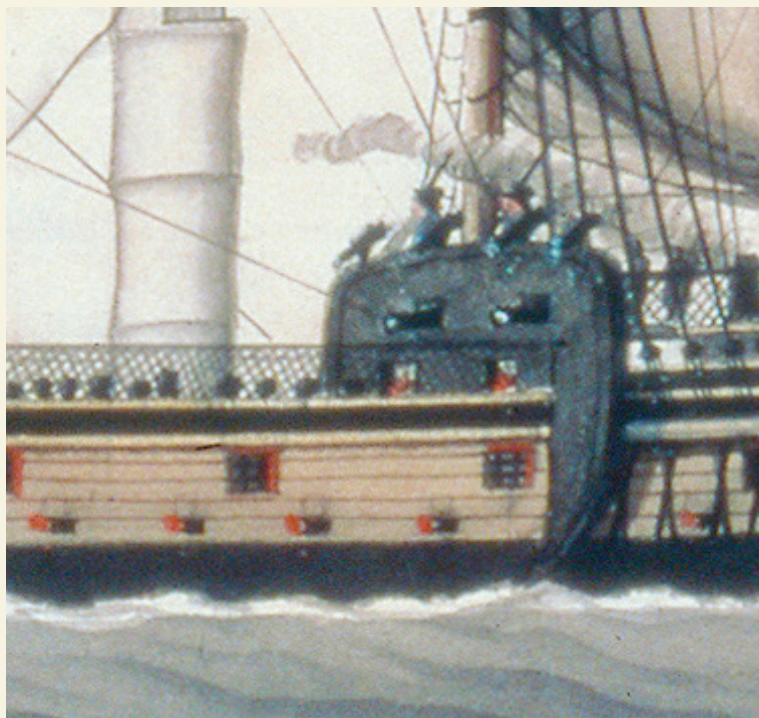
'58 ft long in the Keel	}	‘.. bulk heads to be a Solid beam a half Round house 12 feet long on the sheets, the Gun Wall on the Main Deck 14 Inches Solid, on the Quarter Deck and fore-castle 4 Inches, but the Timbers left high enough to Support Rails all round the Vessel for Guns 1 1/2 feet from the Gunnell, ... ‘
22 feet beam		
10 feet hold		
5 feet twist Decks		



58 feet long in the Keel } Main Mast 60 feet long Main Yard 44 feet long Main Top Mast 30 feet long
 22 feet beam } all the other Masts and Yards in proportion each Yard Arm 2 feet a Piece on the
 10 feet hold } Quarter Deck and fore-castle 10 inches bulk heads to be a Solid beam a half Round house
 5 feet twist Decks } 12 feet long on the sheets the Gun Wall on the Main Deck 14 Inches Solid on the Quarter Deck and fore-castle
 14 Inches but the Timbers left high enough to Support Rails all round the Vessel for Guns 1 1/2 feet from the

John Bannister Letter Book, Vol. 66, Newport Historical Society. This is a copy of Manesty's letter written within John Bannister's business books.

Armaments on the Barricado



Weapons aimed at the enslaved on deck from the barricado

- 4-pounder cannons
- Blunderbuss on swivel mount

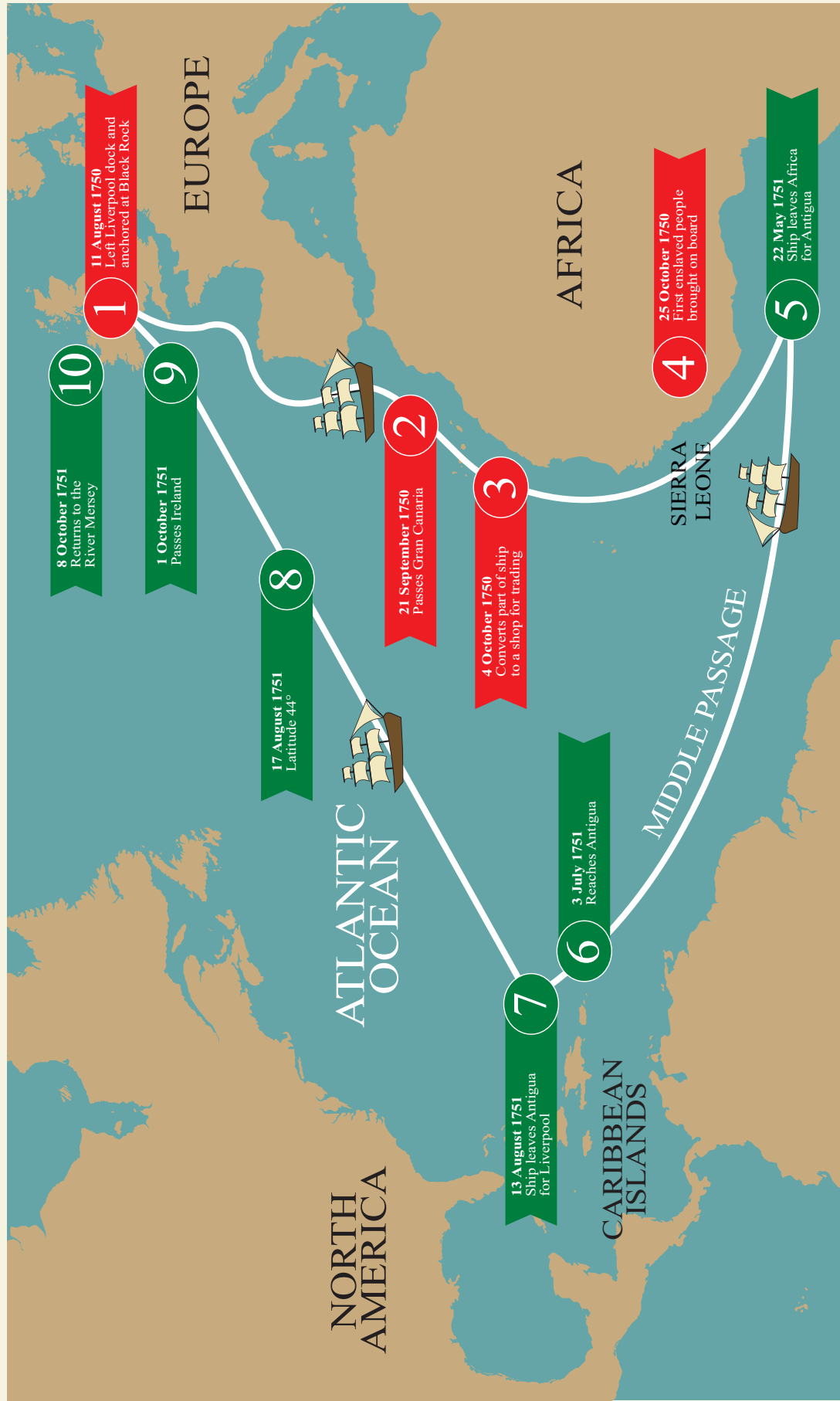
' ... a four pounder loaded with langridge and musket balls was pointed through the barricado, and fired among them - '

Thomas Clarkson

Slave ship, Fredensborg II, 1788,
www.slaveryimages.org

Journey of the Duke of Argyle (11.8.1750 - 8.10.1751*)

* Julian calendar dates



Detailed map of the ship's trading voyages in Africa





Map insert from 'An Authentic Narrative of Some Remarkable and Interesting Particulars in the Life of John Newton', John Newton, 1764

Resources

Plantation Register for the *Duke of Argyle*, Merseyside Maritime Museum

Information for the *Duke of Argyle* www.slavevoyages.org

The French slave ship, *Marie-Séraphique*, was also a snow. The Slave Voyages website contains a 3D video reconstruction by the Emory University Center for Digital Scholarship

The Substance of the Evidence of Sundry Persons on the Slave-trade,
Thomas Clarkson, 1789

Journal of a Slave Trader (John Newton 1750-1754) Edited, with an introduction,
by Bernard Martin and Mark Spurrell, 1962

Digital images of Newton's *Journal* for the *Duke of Argyle* on the [National Maritime Museum](http://www.nationalmaritimeuseum.org)

Documents illustrative of the history of the slave trade to America, Volume 3,
Elizabeth Donnan, 1932.

John Bannister Letter Book, Vol. 66, Newport Historical Society

The History of the Rise, Progress, and Accomplishment of the Abolition of the African Slave-Trade by the British parliament (London, 1808), vol. 1, Thomas Clarkson

Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil and Wicked Traffic of the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species, Quobna Ottobah Cugoana, 1787

Thoughts Upon the African Slave Trade, John Newton, 1788. Written in support of the campaign to abolish the slave trade.

Report of the Lords of the Committee of Council appointed for the consideration of all matters relating to trade and foreign plantations : submitting to His Majesty's consideration the evidence and information they have collected in consequence of His Majesty's order in council dated the 11th of February 1788, concerning the present state of the trade to Africa, and particularly the trade in slaves, and concerning the effects and consequences of this trade, as well in Africa and the West Indies, as to the general commerce of this kingdom, 1789

The Transatlantic Slave Trade

Worksheets

'For the African Trade'

Merchants invested in the African Slave Trade because it could be highly profitable. Ships trafficking enslaved men, women and children were financed by wealthy individuals or by groups (consortiums) of merchants.

These slave ships were a business venture for the merchant, a place of work for the crew and an inhumane prison for those people who had been purchased as a commodity.

To ensure maximum profit, the merchants built, equipped and crewed ships for the slave trade in order to minimise the chance that those enslaved would rebel and escape. Some ships also had a doctor to keep the enslaved alive so they could be sold at the end of the journey.

The crew of a slave ship

?

What evidence do the following 2 sources give about the crew of a slave ship?

1: 1789 report to a Government committee which includes evidence from the Bristol Trustees for the Relief and Support of Sick and Disabled Seaman

The Number of Seamen employed in the African Trade is not proportioned to the Tonnage of the Vessels, the Number of Men belonging to the Ships being regulated by the Number of Africans intended to be purchased, and by the Nature of the Trade at that Part of the Coast where the Purchases are to be made. Vessels intended for the Windward Coast of Africa take more Seamen than Vessels of the same Burthen that go for an equal Number of Africans to other Parts of the Coast, by at least a Sixth Part. On the Windward Coast the Trade is carried on by Boats manned from the respective Ships, and that Mode of trading occasions Vessels employed therein to have more Men than other Vessels that trade to other Places on the Coast. The African and West Indian Ships are manned very differently. Those in the latter Trade have generally One Man or Boy to every 15 Tons; One Half of their Crews are experienced Seamen, and the other Half Apprentices; this is the Manner in which those constantly employed in that Trade are in general navigated. African Ships are generally manned with seasoned or experienced Seamen to the Amount of One Half of the Crew, including Officers; Three Eighths inexperienced Sailors, One Sixteenth new or green Men, and One Sixteenth Apprentices and Boys not indentured but engaged to serve during the Voyage. Those that have only been employed in inland Navigation, or in the Rivers, in small Vessels and Boats, contiguous to this Port, or that have made but One Voyage to some Foreign Port, are considered as inexperienced Seamen. A Vessel of the Burthen of 300 Tons, employed in the West Indian Trade, is navigated by about Twenty Men and Boys; Vessels of Half that Burthen, employed on the Windward Coast of Africa, have about Thirty Men and Boys each, of the several Descriptions before stated.

Report of the Lords of the Committee of Council Appointed for the Consideration of all Matters Relating to Trade and Foreign Plantations Submitting to His Majesty's Consideration the Evidence And Information They Have Collected In Consequence of His Majesty's Order In Council, Dated the 11th of February 1788, Concerning the Present State of the Trade to Africa, And Particularly the Trade In Slaves; And Concerning the Effects And Consequences of This Trade, As Well In Africa And the West Indies, As to the General Commerce of This Kingdom: Part 1

2: Crew of the *Duke of Argyle*

John Newton	Master
John Bridson	1st Mate, deceased 20th January
Samuel Marshall	2nd do. [ditto, same as above]
John Hamilton	3rd do.
Robert Arthur	Surgeon, deceased 17th August
Andrew Corrigall	Carpenter, deceased 11th January
John Hallin	Boatswain
John Carren	Cooper
James Johnson	Gunner, discharged 18th July
Joseph Fellows	Steward
Mark Couture	Cook
Matthew Curfey	Taylor
Thomas Creed	Fore the mast - put on board the <i>Surprize</i> , 25th November
William Barber	do. Discharged 15th July
Thomas True	do. Put on board the <i>Surprize</i> . 25th November
John Corkhill	do.
Thomas Brown	do. Discharged 15th July
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William Lees do.	Put on board the <i>Surprize</i> , 22nd November
James Pitts do.	Discharged 7th August
Edward Cathom do.	Discharged 3rd August
David Thompson do.	Discharged 7th August
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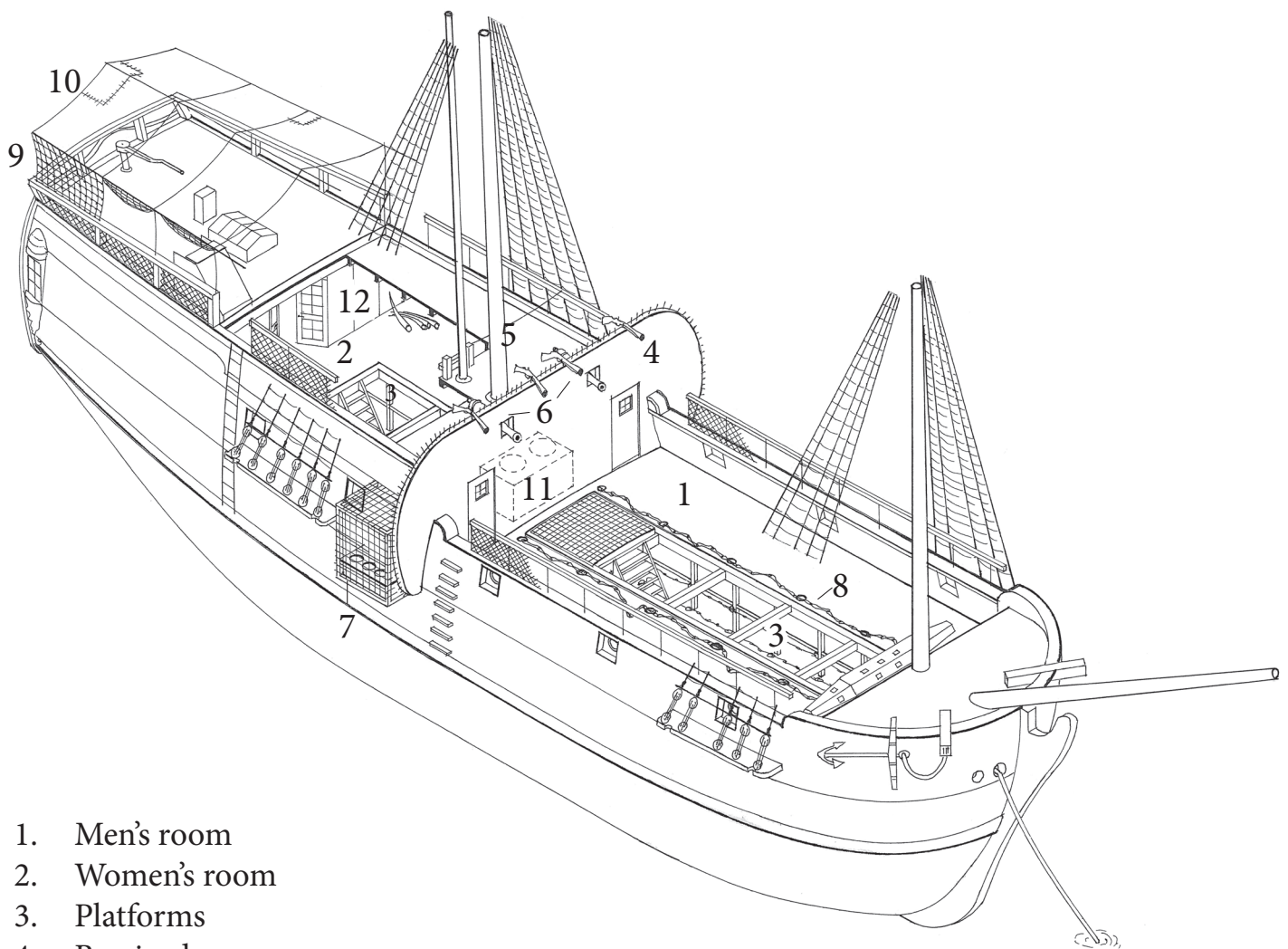
Newton exchanged crew who had caused him trouble onto *HMS Surprise*. Some crew members were also discharged in Antigua.

Journal of a Slave Trader (John Newton 1750-1754)' Edited, with an introduction, by Bernard Martin and Mark Spurrell, 1962. Original journal: National Maritime Museum

Ship Fitted and Organised for the Transatlantic Slave Trade

?

What evidence is there that this is a diagram of a slave ship?



1. Men's room
2. Women's room
3. Platforms
4. Barricado
5. Swivel Blunderbusses
6. Four-pounder cannons
7. Women's Toilet
8. Travelling chains
9. Netting - to prevent the enslaved from jumping overboard
10. Awning (made from old sails)
11. Furnace (stove for cooking)
12. Stateroom / Shop

Contemporary newspaper evidence

?

What evidence does this advertisement give about the Transatlantic Slave Trade?

with good Encouragement.

To be S O L D by Auction,
At the Merchants Goffee-house, on Monday next,
at six o'Clock in the Evening,

ONE Iron Furnace and Copper—27 Cases with Bottles—83
Pair of Shackles—11 Neck-Collars—22 Hand-Cuffs for the
travelling Chain—4 Long Chains for the Slaves—54 Rings—2 tra-
velling Chains—1 Corn Mill—7 four Pound Basons—6 two Pound
Basons—3 Brass Pans—28 Kegs of Gunpowder—12 Cartouches
Boxes—1 Iron Ladle—1 small Basket of Flints—A Parcel of
Cooper's Tools—11 Truss Hoops—1 Brass Mortar—2 Sauce Pans,
—1 Copper Funnel—1 Copper Pump—1 Spear Foot and Spear—
6 Cutlasses—169 Iron Bars—4 Bundles of Iron Hoops—4 Boxes
of Pipes—1 Copper Pot—14 Muskets—6 Blunderbusses—11 Pistols
—2 Scourers—202 Cutlasses—30 Buckaniers—10 Trading Guns
—1 Medicine Chest and Medicines—1 Box of Surgeons Instruments,
contains, 12 Rasors—1 Amputation Saw—1 Amputation Knife—1
Catalin—5 Incision Knives—1 Case with 7 Lancets—3 Syringes and
4 Pipes—1 Sett Trepaning Instruments—1 Sett of Scarificators—1
Lamp—2 Allevators—2 Crostred Sissor—1 Cathreter Perforatores
—1 Trochar—1 Tooth Drawer with two Fangs—1 Forceps—1
Small Spatula—1 Screw Forceps—1 Hone—1 Strap—1 Brush—
1 Case for Pocket Instruments—2 Spatulas—2 Cupping Glasses.

J. Manesty / **ROBERT WILLIAMSON, Broker.**

To be S O L D,

Advertisement placed on August 13th, 1756 by Joseph Manesty, a merchant in Liverpool.
Williamson's Liverpool Advertiser, 13 August 1756, Liverpool Record Office

Learning Resources: The Transatlantic Slave Trade, The Middle Passage, Insurrection & Resistance

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Additional research: Darren White

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www.cowperandnewtonmuseum.org.uk