

SHACKLES, COLLARS, AND CHAINS: EXPOSING THE TREATMENT OF ENSLAVED
BLACK WOMEN DURING THE MIDDLE PASSAGE AND AS PART OF THE
ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORD (1700-1886)

By

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines and argues that the shipboard narratives and material culture related to black enslaved women from 1700 through 1886 further illuminates gendered experiences. The study analyses the role of these African women through a maritime and archaeological lens, assessing the seventeenth-century slave ship artifact assemblages of *Henrietta Marie* and *Whydah* shipwrecks as case studies, in addition to historical illustrations of slave ships *Brookes* and *Vigilante*. Furthermore, it explores female enslavement and ways in which African enslaved women impacted the history of the Caribbean, with specific attention to the relationships between white men and black enslaved women, resulting in the formation of new ethnic identities and social structures associated with their mixed-heritage or “mulatto” children. Sources like artwork and ethno-historical accounts of mulatto children in areas of the Caribbean and the role of African enslaved women’s unique provides insights into social dynamics and cultural markers of modern populations.

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A Thesis

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By Kelsey Dwyer

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Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-----|
| Acknowledgements..... | iv |
| List of Figures..... | vi |
| Chapter 1: Introduction..... | 1 |
| Chapter 2: Methodology..... | 8 |
| <i>Historical Research</i> | 9 |
| Chapter 3: Historiography of Slave Ships, Enslaved Women, and the Slave Trade..... | 23 |
| <i>Archaeological Evidence of Gender</i> | 53 |
| Chapter 4: Restraints..... | 58 |
| Chapter 5: Case Studies..... | 75 |
| <i>Henrietta Marie (Slave Voyages ID 21285)</i> | 75 |
| <i>Whydah (Slave Voyages ID 252721)</i> | 83 |
| <i>Brookes (Slave Voyages ID 80666)</i> | 90 |
| <i>Vigilante (Slave Voyages ID 221)</i> | 96 |
| Chapter 6: Female Voices of the Voyage..... | 100 |
| Chapter 7: Conclusion..... | 114 |
| Bibliography..... | 122 |

List of Figures

| | |
|---|----|
| FIGURE 1. "A Female Negro Slave with a Weight chained to her Ankle" (John Gabriel Stedman 1796: 15). | 1 |
| FIGURE 2. Statistical depiction of the slave trade of years arrived vs. percent women and percent girls (created via slavevoyages.org). | 16 |
| FIGURE 3. Statistical depictions of the years arrived vs. percent women and percent men (created via slavevoyages.org). | 16 |
| FIGURE 4. Statistical depiction of years arrived vs. total embarked and total disembarked (created via slavevoyages.org). | 17 |
| FIGURE 5. Brookes-Statistical Analysis of year arrived vs. percent of the gendered population (created via slavevoyages.org). | 19 |
| FIGURE 6. Brookes--Storage of the British Slave Ship 'Brookes' under the Regulated Slave Trade Act of 1788 (Alfred 1790). | 20 |
| FIGURE 7. "Plan of the British Slave Ship Brookes, 1789" (Courtesy of Slavery Images: A Visual Record of the African Slave Trade and Slave Life in the Early African Diaspora, http://www.slaveryimages.org/s/slaveryimages/item/2061). | 21 |
| FIGURE 8. The capture of slaver 'Formidable' by HMS 'Buzzard', (rights provided by Royal Museum of Greenwich, https://collectionsrmg.co.uk/collection/objects/12117/html). | 27 |
| FIGURE 9. Common Vessel Types of the 18th Century, 2006, Line drawing in Frederick Chapman's <i>Architectura Novalis Mercatoria: the class of Eighteenth-century naval architecture</i> New York: Dover Publications, Inc. Plate LXII. (Auctioned by CharlesMillerLtd). | 29 |
| FIGURE 10. Statistical depiction of recreated diffusion of copper sheathing (Solar and Ronnback: 811). | 32 |
| FIGURE 11. Distribution of slaving voyages per ship (Solar and Ronnback: 813). | 32 |
| FIGURE 12. "Unidentified Image (Olaudah Equiano or Ottobah Cugoano)" (Courtesy of Slavery Images: A Visual Record of the African Slave Trade and Slave Life in the Early African Diaspora, http://www.slaveryimages.org/s/slaveryimages/item/2686). | 36 |
| FIGURE 13. Depiction of enslaved woman being punished aboard slaving vessel (Courtesy of Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, British Cartoon Collection, LC-USZ62-6204. Originally published in London, April 10, 1792.). | 37 |
| FIGURE 14. "Group of Negroes, as imported to be sold..." Stedman 1796: 200 (http://www.slaveryimages.org/s/slaveryimages/item/1902). | 59 |
| FIGURE 15. Sleeping Positions of Captive Africans on the French Slave Ship L'Aurore. Boudriot1984: 87 http://www.slaveryimages.org/s/slaveryimages/item/2552). | 61 |
| FIGURE 16. "Shackles Used on Slave Ship, 1845" <i>The Illustrated London News</i> 1875: 202, (Courtesy of Slavery Images: A Visual Record of the African Slave Trade and Slave Life in the Early African Diaspora, http://www.slaveryimages.org/s/slaveryimages/item/2723) | 66 |
| FIGURE 17. "Shackles, Manacles, and Padlocks Used in the Slave Trade, early 19th cent. "Faits relatifs a la traite des noirs (Courtesy of John Carter Brown Library at Brown University; Slavery Images: A Visual Record of the African Slave Trade and Slave Life in the Early African Diaspora, http://www.slaveryimages.org/s/slaveryimages/item/2007) | 67 |
| FIGURE 18. Depiction of African woman in iron helmet and collar (Arago 1839-1840:119), (Courtesy of Slavery Images: A Visual Record of the African Slave Trade and Slave Life in the Early African Diaspora, http://www.slaveryimages.org/s/slaveryimages/item/1299) | 69 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| FIGURE 19. Images of Metal Face Mask (Ewbank 1856:437), (Courtesy of Slavery Images: A Visual Record of the African Slave Trade and Slave Life in the Early African Diaspora, http://www.slaveryimages.org/s/slaveryimages/item/2592)..... | 71 |
| FIGURE 20 Iron Mask, Neck Collar, Leg Shackles, and Spurs, 18th century (Courtesy of Slavery Images: A Visual Record of the African Slave Trade and Slave Life in the Early African Diaspora, http://www.slaveryimages.org/s/slaveryimages/item/1298) | 71 |
| FIGURE 21. "Punishments for Runaways, Rio de Janiero, Brazil, 1850s" (Courtesy of Slavery Images: A Visual Record of the African Slave Trade and Slave Life in the Early African Diaspora, http://www.slaveryimages.org/s/slaveryimages/item/2890)..... | 72 |
| FIGURE 22. "Chains and Other Instruments Used by Slave Traders, 19th cent." (Courtesy of Slavery Images: A Visual Record of the African Slave Trade and Slave Life in the Early African Diaspora, http://www.slaveryimages.org/s/slaveryimages/item/2013)..... | 73 |
| FIGURE 23. Depiction of slave in collar. (Courtesy of Slavery Images: A Visual Record of the African Slave Trade and Slave Life in the Early African Diaspora; Harper's Weekly, Feb. 15, 1862 p. 108). | 74 |
| FIGURE 24. Henrietta Marie recreation (Courtesy of Slavery Images: A Visual Record of the African Slave Trade and Slave Life in the Early African Diaspora, http://www.slaveryimages.org/s/slaveryimages/item/2617)..... | 76 |
| FIGURE 25. Site Map of Henrietta Marie (Moore 2008: 22). | 78 |
| FIGURE 26. Shackles Recovered from Slave Ship Henrietta Marie (Courtesy of Slavery Images: A Visual Record of the African Slave Trade and Slave Life in Early African Diaspora, http://www.slaveryimages.org/s/slaveryimages/item/2614 | 79 |
| FIGURE 27. Shackles from Henrietta Marie (Courtesy of Slavery Images: A Visual Record of the African Slave Trade and Slave Life in the Early African Diaspora, http://www.slaveryimages.org/s/slaveryimages/item/2613 | 80 |
| FIGURE 28. Henrietta Marie (Courtesy of Slavery Images: A Visual Record of the African Slave Trade and Slave Life in the Early African Diaspora, http://www.slaveryimages.org/s/slaveryimages/item/2615)..... | 82 |
| FIGURE 29. Collection of slave shackles excavated from Whydah (Hamilton 1992: 10). | 85 |
| FIGURE 30. Leg iron excavation, Whydah (Hamilton 1992: 9)..... | 87 |
| FIGURE 31. "Plan of the British Slave Ship Brookes, 1789" (Wadstrom 1794: fold-out included in pocket attached to cover). | 91 |
| FIGURE 32. "Stowage of the British Ship Brookes under the Regulated Slave Trade Act of 1788" (Courtesy of Library of Congress Portfolio 282-43)). | 94 |
| FIGURE 33. Statistical representation of year arrived vs. Percent of gendered population for Vigilante (created via slavevoyages.org). | 97 |
| FIGURE 34. "French Slave Ship, Vigilante, 1823" (Courtesy of National Maritime Museum, London). | 97 |
| FIGURE 35. La Marie (Guillet 2009)..... | 99 |
| FIGURE 36. Depiction of women aboard La Marie (Guillet 2009)..... | 99 |
| FIGURE 37. Quaker Abolitionist depiction of "Am I Not a Woman and a Sister", Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women, 1837-1839 (Courtesy of National Maritime Museum)..... | 120 |

Chapter 1: Introduction

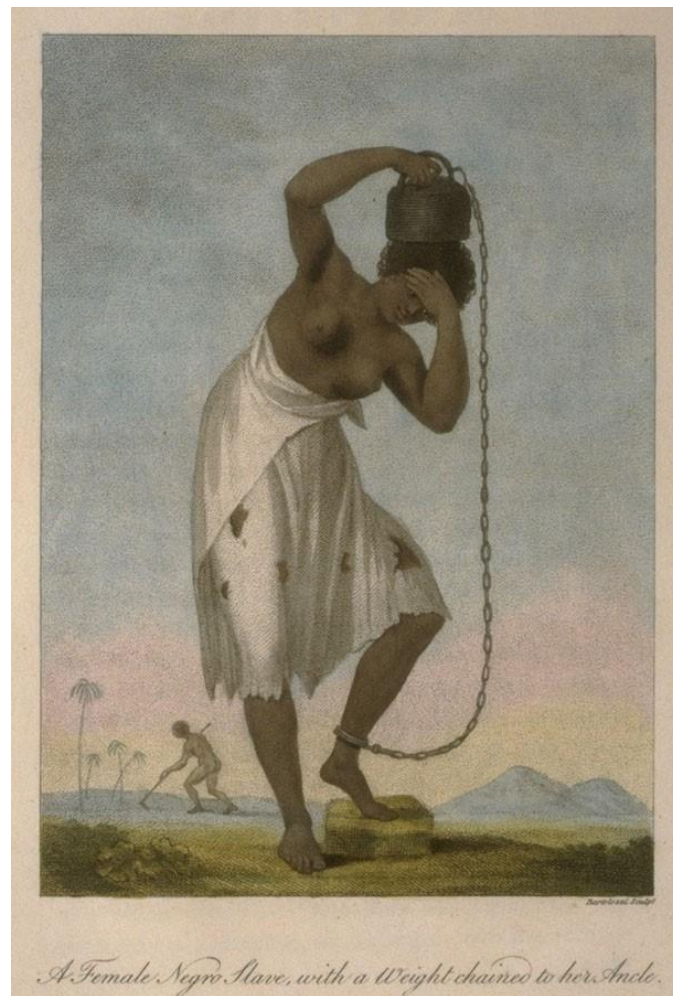


FIGURE 1. “A Female Negro Slave with a Weight chained to her Ankle” (John Gabriel Stedman 1796: 15).

Viewing the study of female slavery from several perspectives including nuances of captivity and exploitation lends both perspective and holistic understanding to the historic significance of the Atlantic Slave Trade. Through an anthropological and archaeological approach to the subject of slavery, there is a scholarly premise that human captivity which resulted in transmitting new technologies, ideologies, and social behaviors that often transformed the society that captured the slaves. The confinement of another human being demonstrates the

value of self in commercial exchange and exemplifies trading systems between distinct groups. Prehistorically, slavery was the product of one group overcoming another, resulting in the dichotomy of captives and prisoners, or masters and slaves. This act of dominance not only destroyed an opponent but also increased the overall strength and numbers of the victorious group, allowing them to thrive and survive for a more extended period. Within this exchange of human beings, there also exists an exchange of culture and a mixture of identities because of the relationship between enslavement and captivity. This thesis proposes to examine the relationship demonstrated through the dominance of one group over another, the archaeological artifacts of oppression, and the historical narrative of shifting identity of African enslaved women aboard maritime slaving vessels from 1700 to 1850 (Moore 1997; Hamilton 1992)

In Chapter 1, I examine the historical background to the slave trade, acknowledging the women who existed throughout. Establishing the transitioning identities of the African women of the slave trade lends perspective into the development of their oppression from the coasts of Africa, through the Middle Passage, and throughout the diaspora into the Western world. Chapter 2 highlights the methodologies used to create the research behind this thesis. Analysis of excavated material culture and the conducted case studies of *Henrietta Marie* (1700) and *Whydah* (1717) bring to the light the existence of these women through the maritime archaeological landscape of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. The Slave Voyages Database is analyzed in reference to these specific wrecks as well as other visual depictions of iconized slave ships. Using statistical analysis, visual graphs lend credence to the existence of African women and their impact in the western slave trade from 1700- 1850. In Chapter 3 the discussion shifts to the historiography of slaving vessels, their uniqueness in construction and impact by historical shifts. Identifiers of slaving vessels from an archaeological discovery are

generated including copper sheathing construction and dating, material culture assemblages, and, more specifically, gendered location of artifacts. Primary-sourced documents support the story depicted through the vessels' outlined constructions, describing the confined quarters of the slaving vessels, and then delving further into the specific treatment of women onboard during the Middle Passage. Archaeological evidence of gender exploitation is laid out specifically in Chapter 4 through the examination of shackle assemblages, objects of restraint and bondage, and the descriptive narratives of how these tangible items left psychological scars on the identities of African women of the slave trade. An analysis of sized slave shackles lends a hypothesis about the identity of African enslaved women onboard vessels and outlines potential processes for identification in future shipwrecks. Chapter 5 creates unique case study comparisons of some of the most commonly depicted slaving vessels. These specific vessels are each uniquely of high importance in the discussion of the slave trade, but rarely are discussed or analyzed through the specific lens of gender and material culture. By providing case study comparisons for *Henrietta Marie*, *Whydah*, *Brookes* and *Vigilante*, archaeological evidence of African enslaved women begins to consistently appear and support the narratives of the oppression and survival. Lastly, in Chapter 6 the voice of these African enslaved women is understood through the descriptions of their individual narratives. The identity of African enslaved women comes full circle as an analysis of second-generation children of Western slavery is observed through their written documentation and depictions. By understanding the identity of these women who endured so much and whose identity was forced to shift throughout the historical narrative, discussing the first-hand accounts as told by the women who endured the gendered oppression and exploitation is drastically important to understanding their collective involvement in the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. A discussion of identity as motherhood and the treatment of children

during the slave trade is discussed and highlights the impact of reproduction and multi-generations within the slave trade. The historic exchange of human cargo remains a shameful point throughout the historical narrative, but lending voice through archaeological evidence of the women who endured and created future generations of Africans living in Western societies is paramount in identifying the larger impact of African enslaved women in the development of society as we see it today.

While these exchange of human cargo during this time period accounts for a transfer of cultures and a mixture of peoples, there are also many misunderstandings that have resulted from the historical analysis of the origins of slavery. A general misconception exists that prehistoric, colonial, and modern slavery endured through a masculine lens, maintaining that slavery is a male action dominated and continued through exclusively the male gender. In other words, the term slave is directly synonymous with masculine sex and male slaves. The patriarchal societies attribute these assumptions in which male dominance thrived and often denoted emphasis on the role of the man within civilizations. Modern Christian imagery represented women as fragile, contrary to the idea of a female conducting rigorous labor and, thus, incompatible with Western beliefs concerning the nature of women (Meillassoux 1981: 17). This thesis's illustration of African slavery and the importance of women in African slave systems contradicts the notion of the fragility of women pre-dating the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. Contrary to historical assumption, most slaves throughout African history were women who consequently demanded a higher value within trading systems of Eastern, Central, and West Africa. While the overall number of these enslaved women varied regionally, the ratio of male to female African slaves depend on the historical time frame, uses of slave labor and external demands from other trading areas historically throughout Africa (Robertson and Klein 1983: 3-5).

The experience of enslaved women while in Africa was dominated by family structure and a societal role of motherhood. Women not only had the physical strength to work in the agricultural settings that varied in different regions of Africa but also could reproduce and raise their children as slaves. Seen in traditionalist African culture, motherhood is the primary fulfilment of female adulthood, and a woman's fertility was seen as her greatest gift in the sixteenth and seventeenth century (Bush 2010: 72). Slave traders worked to manipulate this perspective of African women to contradict the Western opinions of African women. The European perception of black women in Africa was that of a primitive, underdeveloped, and barbaric animal, classifying motherly actions as savage and uncivilized. African women carrying their young, opened-breast, was distinguished as ape-like activity by European, Anglo-Saxon society. This continued bestial comparison of African women by Westerners led Europeans to see African females as a potential for slave production profit rather than humanitarian mothers. This Western viewpoint, which held African enslaved women to a different standard than men, is credited to the high numbers of women kidnapped within African borders as well as those sold into the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. Women were used for profit rather than appreciated as working parts of the family dynamic (Bush 2010: 70). Local tribesmen carried out the enslavement of African women in exchange for gold, copper, kola nuts, and salt. The market of this human cargo led to an economic development within Africa that could only be maintained up to a certain valued point. With the introduction of European traders in the 1600s, the value of goods received from localized slavery drastically decreased as European traders began buying slaves for higher profit margins that could meet the local tribes' exchange processes (Lovejoy 1983: 12). This thesis will demonstrate how this influx of European traders and the introduction of organized international slave trading began to shift the gendered identity of African women

from an emphasis on motherhood to that of owned, traded, and exploited property. Using the gendered maritime artifacts left behind by African enslaved women in the Caribbean, this thesis provides a contextual connection between women and the African slave trade of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. This thesis offers a conversation of the role of African enslaved women within the historical and archaeological record, lending a more holistic gendered perspective to the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade.

Thus, the **primary research questions** for this thesis are:

- What maritime artifacts lend to the gender-specific experience of African enslaved women?
- What were the experiences of enslaved women during the Middle passage?

Secondary questions are:

- How might these values and social dynamics be reflected in artifact assemblages for slave shipwrecks?
- Did it vary according to the slaving vessel and trading nation?

The historical observation of the material culture of African enslaved women during slave voyages is most prevalent from 1700 to 1850, during the peak of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade; the archaeological findings from slave shipwrecks, as documented in *Henrietta Marie*, *Whydah*, *Brookes*, *Vigilante*. In this thesis, I will examine a holistic understanding to the representation of gender, the first-person experience of these women, and the lasting impact on the historical narrative of slavery through these slave shipwreck findings. A historical analysis of the impact of African enslaved women through the social structure, material culture, and modes of production and reproduction should result in a better understanding of the

development of African enslaved women's initial identity within the Caribbean. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, after European nations had initially established colonies, the continuation and thriving commerce of the slave trade allowed for slavery to become not only a labor force but also an overall industry. At the core of such an industry were women. This fact, as illustrated through the work of Barbara Bush, is based on the biological reality of women as means of production and reproduction. As previously stated, African enslaved women were held to a higher value because of their capabilities to the rear and produce future generations of slaves while on plantations. This natural production allotted for the plantation owners overall slave cost to be driven down through minimal purchasing of slaves at markets (Bush 2010: 85).

Noting, "the sole reason for the existence of black women in the Caribbean was their labour value" (Bush 1990: 33). This notion will form the foundation for the primary historical analysis of Caribbean slavery systems by viewing the economic role of slave women, forming a direct comparison of working techniques between African slave women and gendered traditions maintained in Africa and the tangible artifacts associated with these practices. African women were suited in the seventeenth century to work Caribbean plantations because of the "drudge" work they were acclimated to while in Africa. Women were utilized to cultivate fields, run sugar mills, and harvest throughout the plantation while men used craftsmanship and brute strength-based work (Bush 1990: 33). While no account of slave life is comparable to another, as routines varied from island to island, the overall experience of enslaved women in the Caribbean working the fields of plantations was that of a hard, labor-intensive, and exhausting work. A more substantial presence of African slave women within both terrestrial as well as maritime cultural landscapes by looking at the historical and physical remains, the archaeological remnants of both their bondage and labor force.

Chapter 2: Methodology

The methods used to study the role of African enslaved women in the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade centers on the analysis of material culture assemblages found divided into two distinct groups –theoretical and archaeological research. Academic research supplies historical documentation and understanding the development of this thesis and works to grasp a more holistic understanding of the varying identities of enslaved women by observing the voyages of the Middle Passage. While the total number of black enslaved women that survived the venture across the Atlantic will never be historically accounted for, the number of women logged within slave trade records demonstrate that an overall African enslaved female population existed and held a lasting impact on the Trans-Atlantic journey aboard these slaving vessels. This thesis will support the loss, search, and establishment of identity for African enslaved women while on the Middle Passage using theoretical approaches to the understanding of this demographic. Distributed throughout the Americas and the Caribbean, the enslaved women who survived the Middle Passage, a new identity was claimed as African enslaved women were sold off at auctions to plantations and workhouses within the Western world.

The Middle Passage of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade is a historically daunting and traumatic exchange of human slaves. The trading of this exploited property had lasting effects on the societal roles of the enslaved passengers, evolving their identity from one of the self to that of the objectified cargo. The dehumanizing nature of the Middle Passage should be observed through a historical lens and discussed with reverence while maintaining a consciousness of the humanitarian factor within slavery. While the conditions onboard slave vessels drastically affected all Africans who were victims of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, African women were

affected in unique and lasting ways through the transformation of their identity to adapt to the situation in which they were located.

Historical Research

This thesis uses historical research to demonstrate the objectification of women, sexual exploitation, and slave resistance upheld by African enslaved women on slaving vessels across the Middle Passage. The discussion of enslaved women remains particularly unique to the overall historical examination of the slave trade in that very few primary documents exist that lend testament to the gendered experience. Because of this, finding those primary documents was important in developing the identity of enslaved African women and understanding their gendered experience through a maritime lens. Primary sources such as the surgeon logs of *Ruby*, *James*, *Brookes*, and *Vigilante* discussed the specific treatment of African women aboard slaving vessels. Historically, surgeon logs lent opportunity for the documentation and treatment of human cargo during the Middle Passage. These logs not only served as a record of treatment for individuals, but also a continuously updated record on the suffering that these people endured in extreme circumstances. This data was found specifically by examining the referenced work of Eddie Donoghue to find the original primary sources discussed and to lend further support in the discussion of female exploitation aboard slaving vessels. Using British Parliamentary Papers, continued primary-sourced documents were cited with specific reference to the gendered experience of the slave trade. Through these Papers, post-emancipation doctrine emerged that highlights the telling of African women's stories of shifting identities and lending testament to the treatment they endured. References here specifically to maritime transference of human cargo was of particular importance in the support of this work. Lastly, the primary-sourced depiction of the slave trade needed to be supported by the African female voice herself;

conducting this research without giving credit to the individuals who embodied the survival identity of the time period would be unjust. Recognizing the experience of slavery from the perspective of an African child, depicting tales of his mother and the interactions she was accustomed to, compared with the historic telling of Mary Prince gave voice to the experience of these women. While many gendered first-person accounts of the slave trade still remain obscured from the earlier historic record of the slave trade, testaments through these collections of primary sources concrete the validity of the maritime gendered experience that brought so many women to the Western world against their will.

Women continued to be objectified by white men during the passage, indiscriminately of them being African or slaves. These ideas of objectification were strengthened through the gendered exploitation of enslaved women while travelling the Middle Passage. Gendered exploitation encompasses all acts of objectification against a person based on their gendered sex; for these women, this includes harassment, sexual violence, and rape. Historically, gendered exploitation was joint amongst slave groups because it exists as another form of dominance, authoritative control, and objectification. This objectification stems from sexual stereotyping, as argued by Eddie Donoghue, in which exploitation because of a person's biological sex.

Rape became commonplace onboard slave vessels travelling the Middle Passage because both slave traders and crew members commonly objectified black enslaved women. Captains, slave traders, and crewmembers often preyed upon African enslaved women during purchase from the barracoons, or slave carrels, in Africa. There, these targeted women were required to strip off all clothing and demonstrate their health through a series of exploitive and humiliating exercises. Women were often raped within the barracoons, concealed because of the high population of human bodies crowded within them (Donoghue 2002: 61-62). Once on board the

slave vessels, this lack of protection for African enslaved women was amplified due to the organization of human bodies within the hull of the cargo ship. Because of the positioning of females and children in the aft of the vessel and the men in the front, the separation between all Africans on board led to a further sense of isolation for passengers and a further loss of identity for African enslaved women. Through forced separation, amenorrhea disorders, and gendered exploitation, African enslaved women shaped their identities as they endured the Middle Passage of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade by compromising their sense of self, personal health, and even their human consent. The effect of black enslaved women on the more extensive slave trade maintains an ill-fated and objectified position (Donoghue 2002: xi).

An analysis of the material culture of African enslaved women remains an active component of cited research and illustrates archaeological research of gendered artifacts. Researchers have undertaken several projects on Caribbean slave projects and slave shipwrecks that can provide examples of engendered artifact components. The largest assemblage of artifacts to date is from *Henrietta Marie* (1701). By using the site reports for *Henrietta Marie* and comparing solely remnants of slave archaeology found there to plantation artifacts of working African women, the tangible maritime objects will be used to trace the movement of African enslaved women during the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. The maritime perspective of the argument is supportive of the fact that women played a vital role throughout the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. There are very few explicitly gendered remnants that have been thoroughly researched and documented for these African enslaved women. Because slaves were viewed as pieces of property in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, many lacked the basic amenities of education and the ability to write their strife as a part of the historical record. For enslaved women, the personal history of the Middle Passage exists primarily through

tangible bondage artifacts; the highest density of these gendered artifacts resides with *Henrietta Marie* shipwreck and mark an ominous life lived in bondage rather than that of the developed identity of African women. By observing these means of slavery through metal analysis, measurements, and collection comparisons, the identity of females will be seen and understood as they survived the middle passage and existed individually to that of men aboard vessels of the time. While the conversations surrounding *Henrietta Marie* remain political due to the methodology used to salvage the slave artifacts, this work focuses only on gendering the artifacts found within the site and comparing them to terrestrial findings within similar areas of the Caribbean. Whereas these women had no written or spoken voice, an analysis of the artifacts, despite their taboo status within the archaeological community, still holds the vital task of communicating the story of an African enslaved women's voyage, exploitation, and the continued struggle for identity.

Henrietta Marie was a slave-shipping vessel that operated from 1698 to 1701. Although records and shipping volumes are missing for the last measure of its voyage, from 29 September 1700 to April 1703, historical records show that the vessel travelled from Europe, through the Bight of Benin, and sold slaves throughout Jamaica and Barbados under the Royal African Company before wrecking on New Ground Reef off of the western coast of Florida in 1701 (Moore 1997: 4). On the vessel's first voyage, captained by William Deacon, *Henrietta Marie* brought 188 slaves into Barbados in July 1698 and sold the human cargo for nineteen pounds per slave. Due to a decrease in the popularity and prosperity of the sugar trade and dangerous hurricane seasons from 1698 to 1700, *Henrietta Marie* changed docking ports and began selling exclusively within Jamaica. To travel such great distances and successfully make a profit from the selling of African slaves, *Henrietta Marie* took a specific route that allowed the

ship to be both efficient and safe within the spectrum of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. Captain John Taylor wrote in his last testament about the clearance certificate for *Henrietta Marie* on her ultimate voyage before wrecking outside of the modern-day Florida Keys.

The eighty-foot long vessel voyaged along the coast of Africa to reach the Guinea Coast where it traded African captives at the port of New Calabar. From the Guinea Coast, *Henrietta Marie* made the long journey across the Atlantic Ocean to the West Indies. In 1701, *Henrietta Marie* sold 191 slaves in Port Royal, Jamaica and continued to load a new cargo of sugar, cotton, indigo, and ginger to take back to Europe. On 18 May 1701, the vessel began the final leg of the transatlantic journey by heading towards the Yucatan Channel on the western end of Cuba to take the preferred route to leave the Caribbean. The amount of time that slave vessels spent along the coast of Africa, docked at its coastal ports such as that in New Calabar, depended on many factors including the number of slaves being transported, the availability of said slaves, and having the proper equipment to make the long journey across the Atlantic (Moore 1997: 2). The artifact assemblage of *Henrietta Marie* includes various types of textiles, metal wares, spirits, firearms and ammunition, cowries, iron and copper bars, iron and copper bracelets or manillas and beads. Totaling in over seven thousand objects, thirty thousand glass beads, and forty tons of cargo, *Henrietta Marie* contains one of the most extensive collections of artifacts ever found on a shipwreck of its size and holds the most artifacts associated with a slave ship to date (Moore 1997: 3).

Artifacts distinguished by biological sex are viewed through more in-depth analysis within a gendered lens make up a collection of historical items attributed to African enslaved women. Items, based on their gendered usage and size, are categorized archaeologically into groups of men, women, and children. Historically, all slaves, whether women, men, or children,

were placed into sized manillas, or iron bracelets and chains, to restrain them during the Trans-Atlantic voyage of *Henrietta Marie*. The archaeological remnants of these shackles demonstrate a gendered distinction between women, men, and children. Shackles that were sized at twelve inches in length with a two-inch diameter can be attributed to women, while men used iron shackles sized at twelve inches in length with a three to four-inch diameter (Moore 1997: 23). This single example of gender stratification, along with others in the throughout this study, demonstrates that the slave trade held physical distinctions between men and women, allowing women to be placed in a separate category from men and exemplified as prominent members of the cargo. By observing the archaeological locations of the physical effects of the positioning of slaves, such as shackles and chains, the position of females was found to be at the aft of *Henrietta Marie*. No further support will be lent to the methodology used in the excavation and salvage of *Henrietta Marie* in the 1990s in this report; instead, *Henrietta Marie* exists as a material culture representation of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and illustrates the gendered focus on the human cargo, not treasure salvaging or unethical practices in the archaeological community. This thesis will use the vessel to exemplify the maritime landscape of the Caribbean slave trade as these enslaved women transitioned from an identity of human cargo to that of enslaved laborers in comparison to distributed museum collections of shackles and means of bondage.

The identity of the African enslaved woman has shifted throughout history. Through observation of the maritime material culture of enslaved women, a greater understanding of the role woman played in the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade can be gained. By tracing the role of enslaved women within Africa, across the Middle Passage, and the identity of women in the Caribbean, a more holistic understanding of African enslaved women as mothers, individuals,

and contributors, both archaeologically and historically, to society in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries can be gained.

In addition to utilizing primary documents, oral histories, and first-person depictions of the slave narrative, this thesis also encompassed a more extensive modern compilation of statistical analysis. By highlighting the statistical methodology behind the slave trade and its gendered narrative, the holistic representation of the passage is more clearly documented in order to grasp the gravity behind this historical time period. The Slave Voyages project exists as a commemorative memorial addressing questions, documentation, depiction, and visual representation of the largest slave trades in history. The project works to demonstrate cited documentation directly and lends a bridged voice between the mass statistical findings of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, while simultaneously invoking the humanitarian acknowledgement of those who endured human enslavement (slavevoyages.org).

While the compilation of the accessed data is not entirely complete, the Slave Voyages project creates direct organizational methods that are especially useful to the maritime construct researched here. The database includes 36,000 trans-Atlantic voyages, leading to a total estimation of 12.5 million captives who are tracked and documented beginning in their departure from varying African coasts.

It is important to acknowledge the distinctions made both historically, and thus referenced statistically, within this applicable data set. Throughout the development of Western slavery, categories of human cargo were separated based on distinct genders. These gender labels extended past just men and women; the inclusion of girls and boys and children create a complex historical depiction of categories of enslaved peoples. Accounts vary on the specific age range within these groupings; however, the majority solidify that girls represent ages 8 to 12. Boys

encompasses a similar representation in age (Bush 2010: 31; Donoghue 2002: 127). The collective description of “children” is also brought up throughout the usage of the Slave Voyages Database and generates a larger discussion into this important distinction amongst young enslaved peoples. For the circumstances of this study, children will refer to individuals under the preliminary age of 8 in both the male and female biological sex (Figure 2).

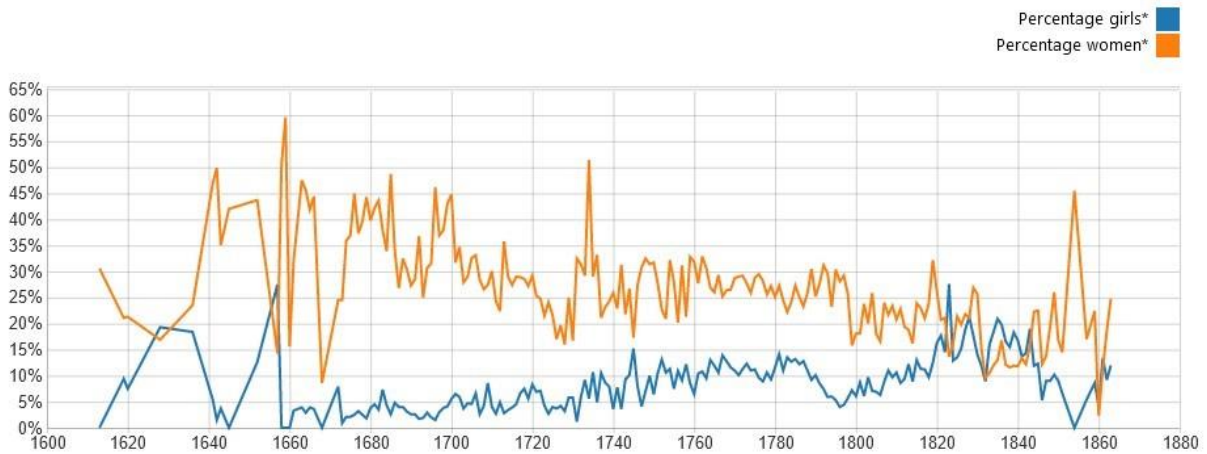


FIGURE 2. Statistical depiction of the slave trade of years arrived vs. percent women and percent girls (created via slavevoyages.org).

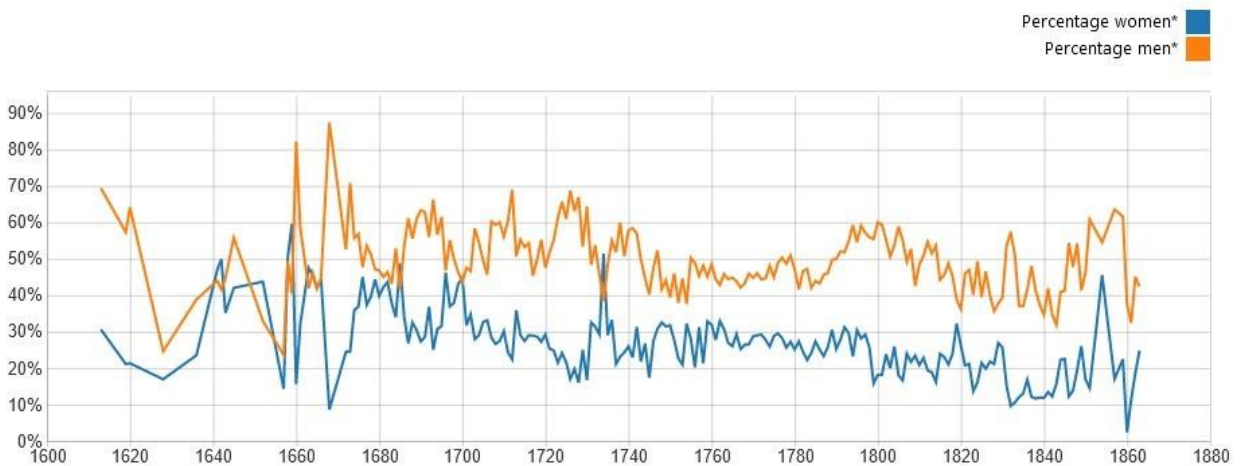


FIGURE 3. Statistical depictions of the years arrived vs. percent women and percent men (created via slavevoyages.org).

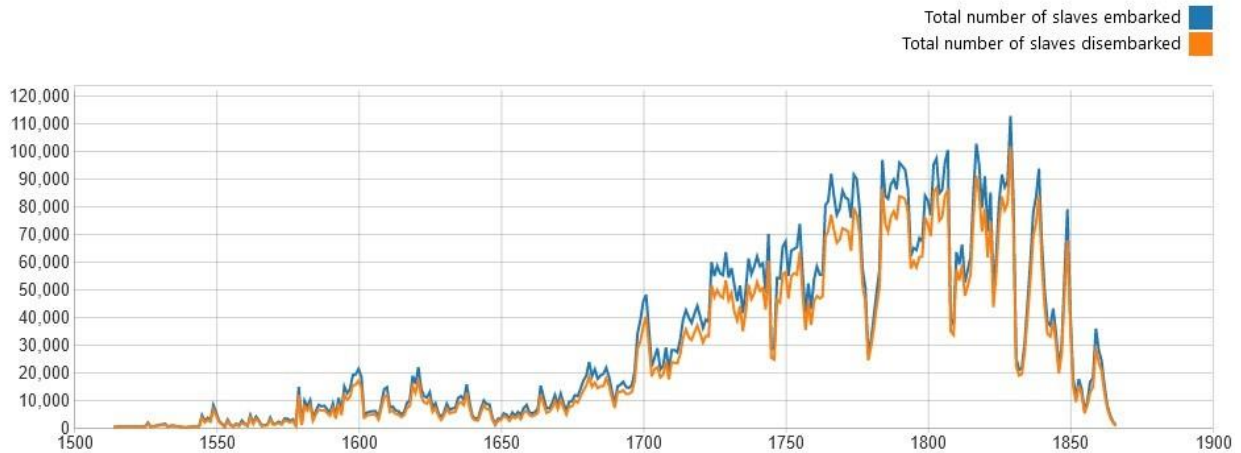


FIGURE 4. Statistical depiction of years arrived vs. total embarked and total disembarked (created via slavevoyages.org).

The documented support for these statistical findings, as will be discussed, comes from a wide range of published and archival information. The database acknowledges each referenced voyage with proper citation and updates the documented findings regularly by highlighting predominantly primary-sourced material. Because of the nature of this historical time period, the documentation supporting the findings comes from an international setting, adapting hurdles such as language differences, leadership changes, and historical perception of the narration. Many of the sources highlighted attempt to deliver the first-person narrative of the enslaved people; however, a majority are reflective of white enslavers or elite officials of the time frame who saw Africans as human cargo. The documentation included in the database acknowledge this perception through separate statements demonstrating the text as historical statistics rather than the emotional experience of those involved.

The Slave Voyages database also addresses the historically difficult task of distinguishing the classification of vessels during the time period as "slaving voyages". Many vessels endured multiple voyages across the Atlantic, but not all voyages carried human cargo- some carried other goods or trading items. Through voyage documentation and surgeon logs, the

distinguishment as slaving vessels, and specific slaving voyages, is made more apparent in the instances of the French, Portuguese, and Dutch voyages to Africa; the research behind the collective database, however, determined that slaving documentation from Africa to the U.K. and Americas remains more complex and obscured in the language provided to distinguish some of these listed vessels as slavers.

The database exists as an excellent resource in maritime slave archaeology as it attempts to identify the differences between slaving vessels and non-human cargo traders in the historical context supported through primary sources. Without this highlighted appeal for accurate documentation, the statistical representation of the observed slaving vessels in this thesis would have been drastically skewed (Figure 3). The historical accuracy is of extreme relevance in reference to the female narrative associated with the slave trade. As previously discussed, the narrative of African enslaved women remains sparse through the historical narrative; by presenting statistical findings broken down specifically by gender, research is lent to support the evidence of these women, and their impact on this era of history. The database not only allows for the examination of specific voyages of specific vessels, but it also highlights the documented populous based on gender for the majority of these voyages. Presenting documentation as percentages, while being statistically accurate, lends representation and validity to the identity and existence of these women aboard slaving vessels, their experience as human cargo, and the evidence of mortality rates suffered as a result of the Trans-Atlantic voyage (Figure 2).

The Slave Voyages database was fundamental in examining the identity of African enslaved women aboard *Brookes*. During the vessel's voyage of 1787, 596 slaves were transported to Kingston, Jamaica. The database allows us to visualize the static impact of such a voyage on the historical narratives of those who endured it through the represented populous.

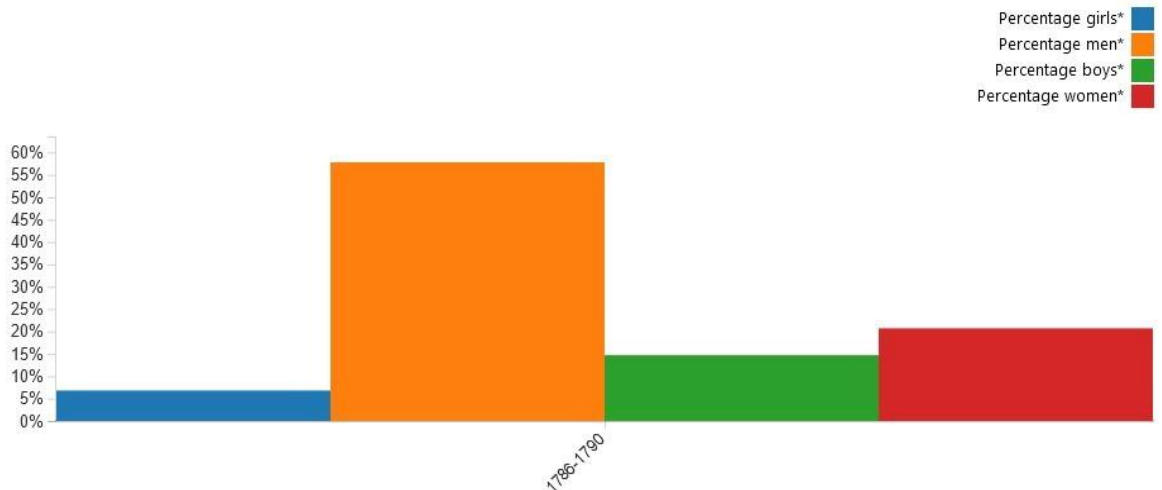


FIGURE 5. *Brookes*-Statistical Analysis of year arrived vs. percent of the gendered population (created via slavevoyages.org).

Brookes departed the Gold Coast of Africa for the 1787 voyage carrying 609 slaves. Of these, 58% were men, and 21% were women. The remaining portions depict African girls (7%) and boys (15%), historically aged 8 to 12. The combination of boys and girls totaled 22% children onboard the vessel is significant in comparing the statistics to the historical depictions of identity understood aboard slaving vessels. These 134 children would have been looked after by the women on board the vessel (Figure 4). The depicted maternal observance of these children is reflected directly in the outline of human storage aboard *Brookes*.

Separated by the central partition of the vessel, boys are documented in the EE section, at mid-ship, followed to the aft of *Brookes* by women in the GG portion. Girls, who represented the lowest populous of the human cargo, were stored in the smallest area of the vessel at the far stern, labelled on Figure 5 as I, deep within the hull.

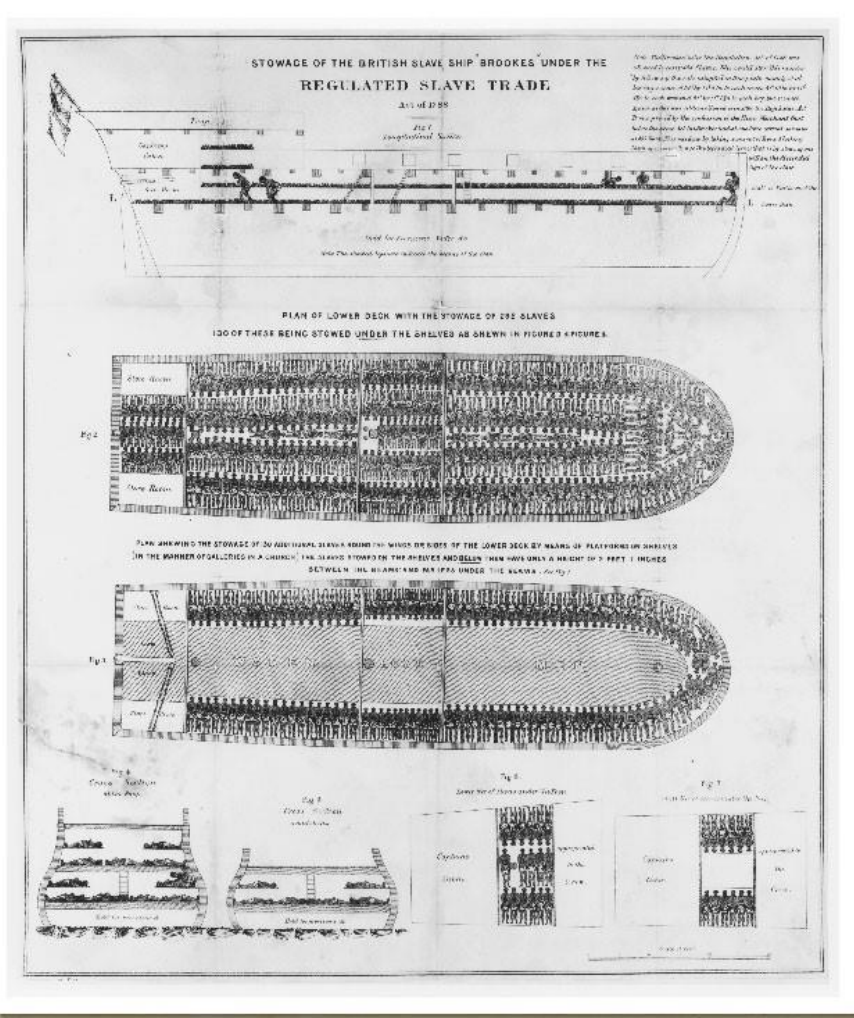


FIGURE 6. *Brookes*--Storage of the British Slave Ship 'Brookes' under the Regulated Slave Trade Act of 1788 (Alfred 1790).

The statistical analysis and lithographic depiction of human cargo storage aboard *Brookes* support the archaeological theory that women, as well as children, were stored in the aft of vessels from the late 1700s through the early 1800s. The lithograph sketch of the vessel supports the statistic representation of the Slave Voyages database, as well, in documenting the percentage of these women on board. However, no direct testimony is given by the women on board; their direct narrative remains lost within the historical narrative of this specific voyage. By analyzing the statistical representation of these women, we can calculate that an estimated

128 African enslaved women undertook *Brookes* voyage from West Africa to Jamaica. The voyage lasted 51 days, and during that time frame, 19 slaves passed. The gender of these deceased peoples remains unknown within the existing database records, as well as missing from the primary documents of the voyage. Further research and investigation are necessary to determine the number of women who sub came to the total mortality rate across the Middle Passage for this specific vessel.

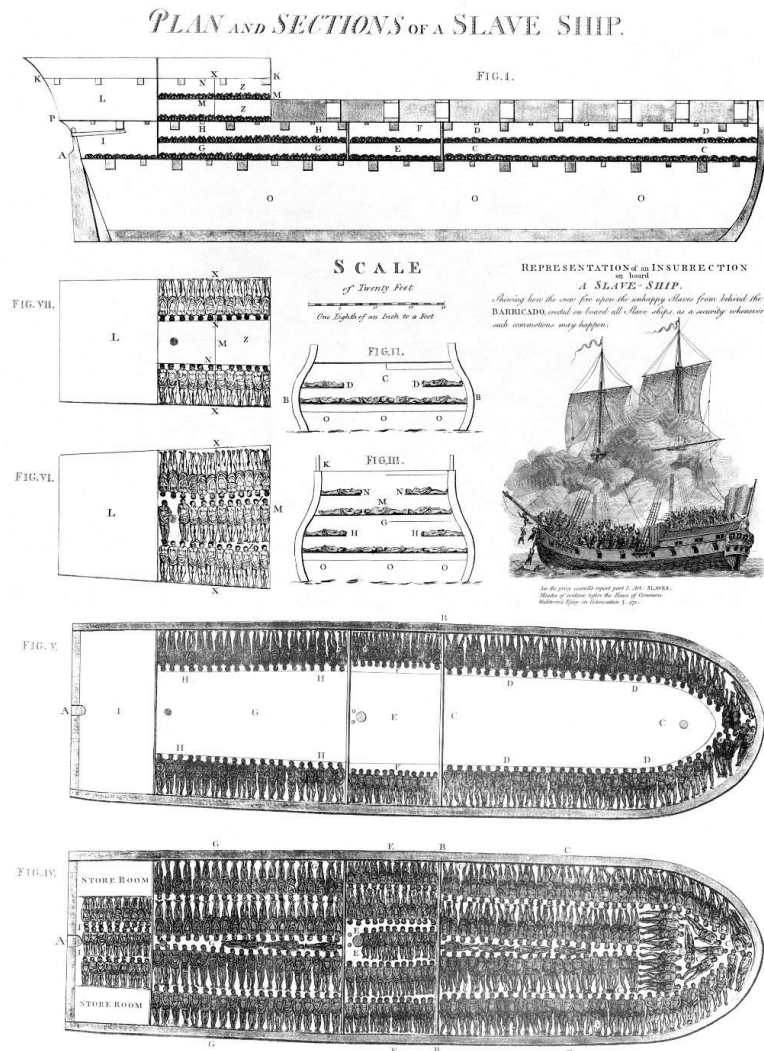


FIGURE 7. "Plan of the British Slave Ship *Brookes*, 1789" (Courtesy of Slavery Images: A Visual Record of the African Slave Trade and Slave Life in the Early African Diaspora, <http://www.slaveryimages.org/s/slaveryimages/item/2061>).

In the pamphlet of *Brookes*, the associated text does allude to the presence and treatment of these women (Figure 5). As discussed previously, the document notes that the women and children remained unchained while aboard the vessel. Equally, the pamphlet draws into question the validity of the original dimensions and amount of cargo transported. This difference is present in the numbers of stowed slaves and therefore draws into further question the overall presented statistics of the Slave Trade Voyages project. Statistical clarity lacks on the part of if the numbers are based initially on the predicted amount of slaving cargo or if the presented percentages demonstrate a variation to the comparative slaving logs (Figure 6). These two conflicting primary documents highlight a larger issue of the period- overall context of abolitionists in comparison to the narration of surgeons aboard slaving vessels. In the case of the *Brookes* and the presented database, the evidence is given that the statistical findings are supported solely through the surgeon logs of the Parliamentary Papers; however, a different presentation of actual versus expected outline of human cargo would provoke future study and interest. Furthermore, some of the information listed through the Slave Voyages database is missing. While this can be expected as many documents exist for the traveling vessels over the extended timeframe that is the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, some of the cited documents include information that is not present in the breakdown of each ship. The database could be considered more complete with time and effort devoted to referencing these citations and implementing the data that primary documents depict.

Chapter 3: Historiography of Slave Ships, Enslaved Women, and the Slave Trade

The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade has a deep and powerful mark on modern western history. The depictions that are often understood in association with the slave trade include imagery of individuals, the oppression and subjugation inflicted upon them, and the materials used to do so. Within the field of archaeology, we see these reflected through the material possessions left behind in the historical narrative, demonstrating markers of time periods, locations of origins, as well as systematic uses. However, one of the greatest artifacts that represents the Atlantic slave trade is excavated few and far between, but the importance behind the mass artifact that are slave ships cannot be overlooked.

Currently, there is developing scholarship concerning the discussion of gender and the slave trade. Previous works have mostly highlighted the treatment of women on plantation systems or early anthropological discussions of women in earlier African societies. By establishing foundational knowledge about the history of the slave trade, slave vessel construction, and the methods of exploitation used aboard slaving vessels, the developed identity of African enslaved women begins to emerge. Analyzing the works of Glickman, Cook, and Rodriguez were particularly fundamental in establishing this maritime groundwork in framing the discussion of the slave trade through slave vessel construction analysis. In addition, Dave Elti's work on the statistical analysis of slave numbers during the Middle Passage gave further evidence in supporting the developing identity of individuals involved, instead of viewing them as a collective and historically represented number. The use of primary surgeon documents aboard these vessels further allows for first-person depictions of life aboard, the impact on the enslaved cargo, and the outcome of gender exploitation that was witnessed there. Citing logs from *Brookes*, *Vigilante*, *Ruby*, and others, the surgeon logs specifically allow for an insight into

the treatment of African enslaved women, the exploitation they endured, and the outcome of their identity as they traveled throughout the Middle Passage.

The topic of African enslaved women is a new and blossoming discussion within the historical, sociological, anthropological, and archaeological fields of academia. The main contributors to the topic have been Dr. Barbara Bush with her analysis on the roles of African enslaved women, both within Africa as well as in the Western Caribbean world. Supporting her work has been Eddie Donoghue, who highlights the efforts of black women and their relations to white men, promoting a discussion on the sexual exploitation of enslaved women within the Caribbean. While this gendered topic remains virtually undiscovered within the context of archaeology, this thesis will allow for the opportunity to connect gendered studies of identity, slavery, and maritime artifact assemblages. It forms a new and primary discussion on the role African enslaved women played within the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade examining how the tangible remnants of their struggle for identity can be viewed today through the constructs of maritime artifact assemblages (Bush 2010: 14).

Lasting over 300 years, the construction of slave vessels varies greatly over the give timeline of the slave trade, taking into account areas of origin, as well as the length of the voyage and destination. In order to maintain a successful delivery of cargo, both goods and individual enslaved peoples, the construction of slaving vessels needed to be specific to the cargo in which it was selling. The consideration of quantity of this cargo is seen in the overall mass construction of these vessels, and the configuration of the hull as well as decking systems. Also, of note, the security features on board slaving vessels hold significance to the time period as points of protection, items of potential violence, and in certain circumstance artifacts that would transform identity as they shifted hands from slaving vessels to future pirate ships.

Security measures placed aboard slaving vessels provide a distinct marker for identification in the historical narrative. These security measures served as both protection from the outside, potential looters on the sea, but also to keep the individualized crew safe from the human cargo they were transporting. Mutinies onboard these vessels were a continuous fear of slaveholders as well as loss of human cargo from both disease and suicide. A feature that created both fear towards slaves as well as security for crew members were swivel guns and rifles held onboard. These implementations of weaponry allowed for quick and effective execution in instances that they may be needed and were a form of transferrable good in their own right. Weaponry represents one common good traded during the slave trade, and again we see a transference of its use and importance in examples where slaving vessels were overtook by pirates, thus converting the items onboard, and the human cargo, into pieces and members of the future pirate ships (Duane 1805: 14). Constructed of iron and metal compounds, these items of weaponry are highly likely to withstand in the archaeological record, making them excellent elements for determining time period, country of origin, and use aboard these ships. A primary example of this, to be discussed further, is the existence and excavation of *Whydah* as well as the weaponry recovered from *Henrietta Marie*.

A distinguishing marker of slaving vessels resides in the construction of the hull framing. Specifically designed for large quantities of cargo, in different varieties, the hull of these vessels is made unique by the bulkheads used to create separate partitions along the ship from bow to stern (Figure 9). Bulkheads aided in the systematic loading and unloading of cargo, creating intentional separation aboard the slaving vessels as well as storing technique that created tortuous containment circumstances across the Middle Passage. The partitions aboard slave ships existed for a number of important, gendered, reasons; firstly, the separation across decks as well

as throughout the hull prevented undesired encounters, sexual or otherwise, between women and men. Coming from different backgrounds across Africa, these enslaved peoples represented different identities and familial settings, sometimes from separate kingdoms and tribes. This dynamic held potential for creating tension during mass storage, during the sale, and during the transport of these enslaved human cargo. Equally, as discussed, the occurrences of rape and exploitation of African women was a specific gendered concern, which the construction of slave ships helped to deter- although the exploitation and assault of these women still occurred, as will be discussed in greater detail.

Women were often stored towards the stern of the ship within the hull, as is documented in the hull layouts of both *Brookes* and *Vigilante*, however due to constructs of their “docile” nature, women and children were often brought onto the open-aired deck, giving them freer roam of the overall ship (Glickman 2015: 12). During this time, African enslaved women were able to watch over the younger children, “dance” or perform other methods of exercise, cook, but also learn the outline of the ship for future access and communication to other slaves. For this reason, enslaved women held an important role in the manifestation and execution of mutinies aboard slaving vessels. While documentation of this only exists in the western depiction of slaving vessels, as told through surgeon logs or slaveholders’ accounts, other forms of slaving behavior did not survive to become a part of the archaeological record. Unlike iron pieces, such as weaponry or items of restraint, the netting constructed across the sides of slaving vessels most likely did not withstand the erosion of time (Glickman 2015: 25). These netting systems were installed to keep slaves from jumping overboard, in attempts to flee their situation near ports or to commit suicide while out at sea during the Middle Passage. This can be seen in depictions such as William John Huggins’ “The Capture of the Slaver *Formidable* by *HMS Buzzard*, 17

December 1834” which is an oil on canvas painting of the siege (Figure 7). In it, the *Formidable*, whose sails are clearly distressed through gun and cannon fire, surrounded in a netting system covering the full upper decking. The netting extends into the full rigging system of the sails, creating a surrounding barrier to the deck. The nets were specific to slaving vessels and often made from repurposed fishing nets, securing those enslaved onboard instead of giving opportunity to flee.



FIGURE 8. The capture of slaver 'Formidable' by HMS 'Buzzard', (rights provided by Royal Museum of Greenwich, <https://collectionsrmg.co.uk/collection/objects/12117/html>).

Below deck, further construction implementations aided in the containment of the transported human cargo. These features included planking for sleeping, and quarters for the

separation of men, women, children, and the crew (Glickman 2015: 25). Lined with port holes, the ships ventilation provided air circulation, which aided in the health of the enslaved, keeping them alive longer during the journey.

Most notable to the slave trade, is the specialized configuration of cargo that was selected for transporting these enslaved peoples. While configurations of cargo vary based on the time period, the legality of slaving during that time period, and the country of origin of the slaving vessel, the general intent of loading as many healthy persons as possible, sustaining them across the Middle Passage, and disembarking with high numbers of surviving slaves was the ideal (Figure 36). By transporting these human cargoes in specific configuration patterns on board, larger numbers of enslaved people were able to be successfully transported and sold. “Cargo space available depended first on the legality of the slave trade, with more cargo space associated with ships when the trade was legal. The number of decks and tonnage varied depending on the merchant and country of origin. Speed was influenced by the same factors as cargo space and could also be affected by the number of decks, number of sails, tonnage, angle of the stern post, and angle of the stem post” (Glickman 2015: 26). Taking these factors into account, we recognized that the construction of slaving vessels was not only pertinent to the selling of slaves, but the speed and profit with which it was done. Because of this, the construction of slaving vessels highlights the larger understanding that the exchange of human cargo represented a profitable business in the Western world that was catered to within the constructs of individual time periods.

Vessels of the early slaving periods began as early as 1526 (Eltis 2007: 17). These early slaving vessels were comprised of restored and repurposed ships, wherever they could be found. They represented large variance in size, speed, and cargo capacities. There was minimal regard

for effective design, security to cargo, or anticipation of necessary weaponry onboard. During the 16th century, the types of slaving vessels were dominated by caravels and naos produced by Western Europe. These ships existed as round sailing ships including a square sail on the main foremast, a lateen sail on the mizzen mast, and large fore and stern castles (Eltis 2007: 28) all of which allowed for easy, fast transport along the African coastline. An example of a slave shipwreck excavation reflecting this construction and time period would be the Elmina wreck, 1642, in Ghana (Cook 2012: 251). During the height of the slave trade that would follow through the 18th century, we see typically British and Portuguese vessels dominating the slave trade. Examples of this include *Brookes* and *Henrietta Marie*.

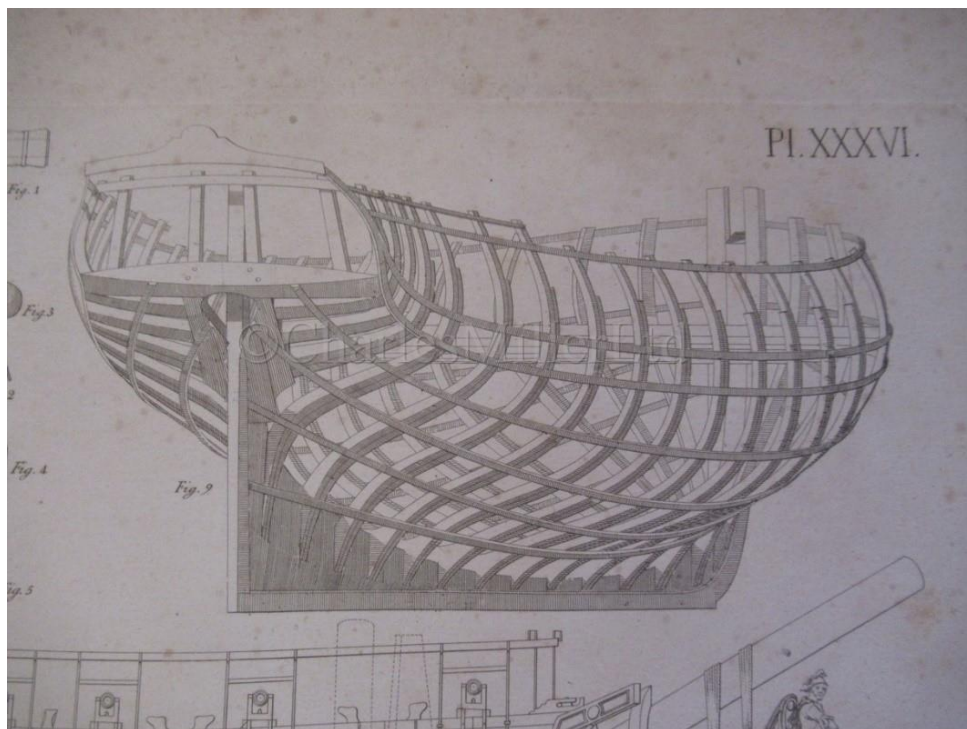


FIGURE 9. Common Vessel Types of the 18th Century, 2006, Line drawing in Frederick Chapman's *Architectura Novalis Mercatoria*: the class of Eighteenth-century naval architecture New York: Dover Publications, Inc. Plate LXII. (Auctioned by CharlesMillerLtd).

These vessels averaged around 200-300 tons and are distinguished by the deep hull and broad sails used to create speed for the vast amount of transported cargo. Built specifically for the slave trade and exploited by its captains, these vessels during the 18th century were solely used for the transportation of traded goods, with specific highlight to human cargo (Rodriguez 1997: 582). Construction for these vessels developed to have “widely spaced double frames and alternation double and single frame sets” in order to create a lighter vessel with a larger carrying capacity, however no archaeological excavation has yet produced archaeological evidence supporting this written historical documentation (Rodriguez 1997: 36). *Henrietta Marie* remains an excellent example of the misidentification of slaving vessels based on this lack of archaeological construction remains because it was only identified as a slaving vessel based on the manacles and chains found on board, which will be discussed in further detail.

During the latter part of the 18th century, as importance was being placed on speed and efficiency of slaving vessels, construction took to adding copper sheathing to slaving vessels, especially those designed by the British. Factors that help to illustrate the need for this shift focuses mainly on cost efficiency (Solar and Ronnback: 807). Pushed by a general decrease in slave mortality rates during the Middle Passage, a narrower focused formed aboard British slavers to create faster means of transportation as the amount of human cargo being transported grew in the 1760s, 1770s, and 1780s. Significant outfitting cost reductions can attest to this generalized shift, falling from 50-55 pounds per ton to 35-37 pounds in the last years of the British slave trade (Anstey 1977: 84-93). By observing the longevity of slave ships, the speeds at which they traveled, and the overall death rate during the middle passage, Solar and Ronnback create excellent documentation of the impact of slave ship construction, the addition of copper sheathing, and the overall development of ships in the slave trade. Their

conducted research parallels the work documented here in methodology as their research base comes from the Slave Voyages database, with primary documentation supported by the *Lloyd's Register of Shipping*.

Another construct of the copper sheathing that aided in the efficiency of slave ship construction and voyages was to prevent infestation and deterioration caused by shipworms. Found mostly in coastal waters, where many of these voyages took place, shipworms bury into the wooden structure of the ship causing escalated wear on the vessel. In the earlier parts of the eighteenth century, wood sheathing would be added to the hull framing of slave ships in hopes of deterring this deterioration; however, the wood used did not prevent clusters forming and the tar used as adhesive caulking was most agreeable with the shipworms natural diet (Solar and Ronnback: 810). With the installation of copper sheathing, more benefits were documented than just the deterrent of shipworms:

Sheathing prevented accumulations of seaweed and crustaceans that slowed ships and made them less maneuverable. They reduced the costs of maintenance, in money and time, since ships did not have to be scraped free of these accretions so frequently (Solar and Ronnback: 810).

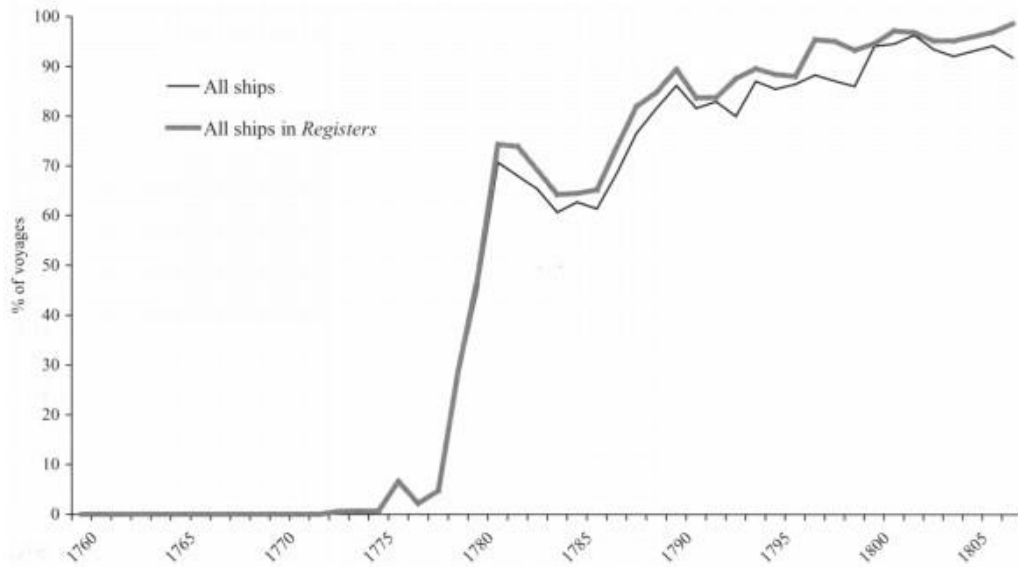


FIGURE 10. Statistical depiction of recreated diffusion of copper sheathing (Solar and Ronnback: 811).

Table 3. *Distribution of slaving voyages per ship, 1760–1807*

| <i>per ship</i> | <i>Ships</i> | | <i>Voyages</i> | | |
|-----------------|--------------|------------------|----------------|------------------|-----------------------------|
| | <i>No.</i> | <i>Share (%)</i> | <i>No.</i> | <i>Share (%)</i> | <i>Cumulative share (%)</i> |
| 1 | 1,371 | 51.5 | 1,371 | 22.6 | 22.6 |
| 2 | 519 | 19.5 | 1,038 | 17.1 | 39.8 |
| 3 | 279 | 10.5 | 837 | 13.8 | 53.6 |
| 4 | 174 | 6.5 | 696 | 11.5 | 65.1 |
| 5 | 122 | 4.6 | 610 | 10.1 | 75.2 |
| 6 | 65 | 2.4 | 390 | 6.4 | 81.6 |
| 7 | 57 | 2.1 | 399 | 6.6 | 88.2 |
| 8 | 32 | 1.2 | 256 | 4.2 | 92.4 |
| 9 | 18 | 0.7 | 162 | 2.7 | 95.1 |
| 10 | 9 | 0.3 | 90 | 1.5 | 96.6 |
| 11 | 8 | 0.3 | 88 | 1.5 | 98.0 |
| 12 | 1 | 0.0 | 12 | 0.2 | 98.2 |
| 13 | 5 | 0.2 | 65 | 1.1 | 99.3 |
| 14 | 2 | 0.1 | 28 | 0.5 | 99.8 |
| 15 | 1 | 0.0 | 15 | 0.2 | 100.0 |
| Total | 2,663 | 100.0 | 6,057 | 100.0 | |
| Mean per ship | 2.3 | | | | |

Source: TSTD.

FIGURE 11. Distribution of slaving voyages per ship (Solar and Ronnback: 813).

By creating this construction adjustment to the vessels, they were enhanced to withstand the long and multiple voyages of the Middle Passage that ships were undergoing during the height of the slave trade at the turn of the century (Figure 9). By 1781, 75% of used slave ships had coppered sheathing. Copper sheathing demonstrates one way in which slave vessel construction was adjusted to the specifics required of a successful slave trade. Acting on efficiency, speed, and cost initiative, the addition of copper sheathing to slave vessels exists as an archaeological distinction for future discoveries in documenting time periods and construction methods of slaving voyages (Figure 10). The manipulation of a vessels construction to fit the needs of individual time periods shifts again towards the early part of the 19th century. We see another type of slave ship construction come forth, as vessels are repurposed, and crews manifested to travel and plunder the western world as pirates.

The repurposing of slaving vessels as pirate ships represents the third type of construction periods for these ships. While the time period does overlap into the height of the slave trade, it remains important to note the siege, salvage, and alterations made to slaving vessels because its leads to proper identification of them as such while they were being used in privateering. Examples of this repurposing exist in both archaeological sites of *Whydah* and *Queen Anne's Revenge*. Archaeological evidence from both of these wreck sites demonstrate how pirates sought out slaving vessels in order to convert them into pirate ships. Sources such as Reigelsperger's "Pirate, Pries, and Slave", and Jane Webster's work on *Slave Ships and Maritime Archaeology* provide excellent evidence for the dual purpose of slaving vessels and pirate ships, the history of their conversion, and the maritime archaeology that can aid in their future identification.

Lastly, slaving vessels of the mid-19th century document another unique perspective into the slave trading systems, as the transition of the abolitionist movement created effects on the constructs of slave ships and the transport methods that they maintained. Beginning in 1807, the slave trade began to shift as the buying and selling of humans became illegal in England. During this time, the British Navy began patrol and investigations into salving vessels, often being able to identify them based on their previous construction methods of catering to large cargoes. The period of outlawing slavery to the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade extends from 1807 in England through to 1863 when it was finally outlawed in the United States. Throughout this specific time period, we observe a drastic shift the use, construction, and adjustments made to slaving vessels. An emphasis was placed on lightening the vessel in order to increase over speed of transport for the now illegal human cargo onboard. The elimination of the lower deck, creating an open area in the hull for slaves to be grouped on top of other pieces of cargo, such as water rations or provisions. “Slaves and their provisions were loaded in a much shorter time, and the reduction in loading time on the African coast was important to slavers since that was the period [during which] they were most vulnerable to British warships” (Dow 1927: 49). The freeboard on these vessels was also lowered, allowing the heigh of the deck to extend just feet above the waterline, and creating a more streamline construction for speed and maneuverability.

An anti-slavery battalion was established by the British Navy to enforce the transport by illegal ships and once seized, these illegal vessels were condemned (Nigel Sadler, *The Trouvadore Project: The Legacy of a Sunken Slave Ship*” The African Diaspora Archaeology Network. 1:27 (2007). At this point in history, the slave ships themselves become a certain type of mystery in their own right. Primary documentation of illegal slaving vessels remains few and far between, while archaeological excavations of late period slavery are limited.

Findings such as the *Clotilda*, however, lend prosperous outcomes for future comparative studies of slave ship construction from early to late periods in history.

While the archaeological record maintains these adjustments and shifts throughout slave ship construction and history, another side to the slave trade remains far less documented and understood. The impact on African enslaved women has been mentioned through its implications and implementations aboard slaving vessels; however, a much deeper analysis to the incomplete testimonies of women of the Middle Passage remains to be seen. There exist only a handful of testimonial texts that speak directly the female perspective of the Middle Passage. Testimonies, such as that of former slave and abolitionist Ottobah Cuguano recalling the deadly violence inflicted to the bodies of women on board a ship where he too was held during the mid 1700s (Cuguano 1825:196) (Figure 12). He notes there was “nothing to be heard but the rattling of chains, smacking of whips, and the groan and cries of fellow slaves” (Cuguano 1825: 124). Cuguano continues- “the slaves agree that death is ‘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: but we were betrayed by one of our own country women, who slept with some of the headmen of the ship, for it was common for the filthy dirty sailors to take the African women and lie upon their bodies; but the men were chained and pent up in holes” (Cuguano 1825: 124)” Here, Cuguano points out the duality of existence for African enslaved women aboard these vessels; in part, these women exist as country women to all African’s onboard the slaving vessels, maintaining the identity of homeland and security. However, security also exists for the individual by circumstance in which many of these women found themselves. Exploited and oppressed by the white crewmen aboard, these women were privy to information and exchanges that did not extend to other members of the traveling

human cargo. At the expense of nonconsensual sexual exploitations, these African women experienced certain freedoms that men below deck in particular did not. Cuguano illuminates this fact in the historical narrative by showcasing how an African woman gave them up to the white captain and thus prevented the mutiny and potential freedom of those on board. While her direct testimonial is lost to history, a lot can be interpreted from this direct interaction. He acknowledges the nonconsensual ongoing aboard the salving vessels, discussing the rape and extortion that was so commonplace during this exchange and time period. Jennifer Morgan highlights this perfectly by stating “the ubiquity of rape on board slave ships is inescapable; it hovers in the background even when it isn’t spoken of directly” (Cuguano 1825: 196).

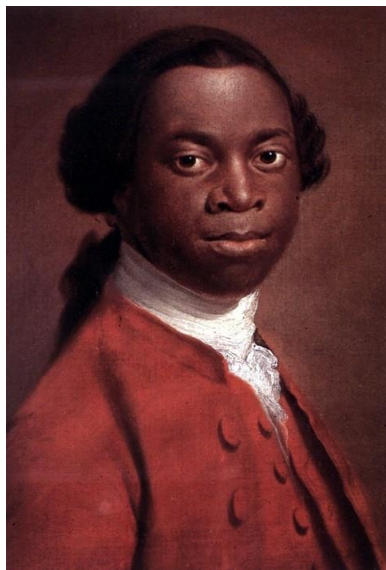


FIGURE 12. "Unidentified Image (Olaudah Equiano or Ottobah Cugoano)" (Courtesy of Slavery Images: A Visual Record of the African Slave Trade and Slave Life in the Early African Diaspora, <http://www.slaveryimages.org/s/slaveryimages/item/2686>).

Depictions of violence and the indirect references to gender exploitative violence are much of what is left in the historical narrative of slavery during the Middle Passage. These depictions and narratives very rarely come from the initial perspective of African women

themselves, but rather through observances such as that of Ottobah Cuguano. A slaveholder collecting slaves off the coast of Whydah recounted:

“To avoid a similar incident, we put the largest part of our Negroes in irons, and even among the Negresses those who appeared to us the most resolute and most dangerous. Although, because of their beauty they were very dear to the chief officers and sailors who had each given their names to chosen ones, there was nothing left to do but put them in chains” (*Voyages aux Cotes de Fuinee et dans Ameriques faits en 1702* (1719).

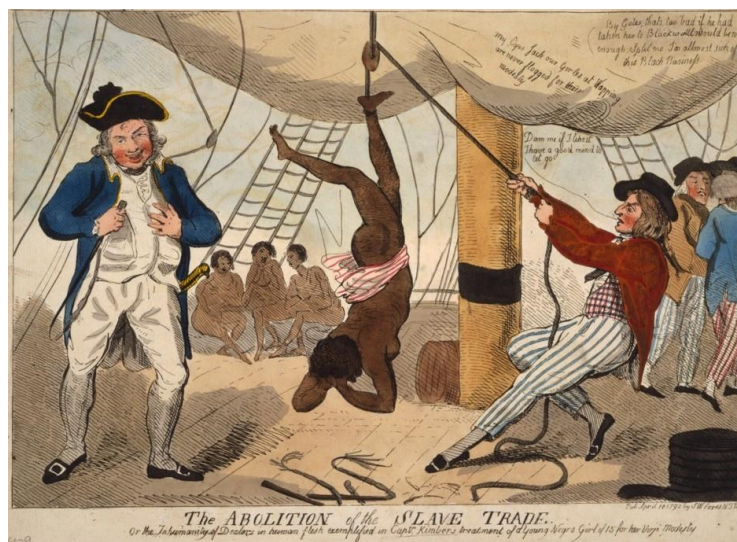


FIGURE 13. Depiction of enslaved woman being punished aboard slaving vessel (Courtesy of Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, British Cartoon Collection, LC-USZ62-6204. Originally published in London, April 10, 1792.).

The fascination expressed by white slavers toward African enslaved women presents problematic fetishism and gendered exploitative violence that was normative by societal standards of the 17th and 18th century. In the publication, *The Journal of a Slave Trader, 1750-1754*, Captain John Newton recounts that sexual abuse was not an exception but rather the norm on most sailing crafts. He states “in some ships, perhaps in the most, the license allowed in this particular, was almost unlimited. Moral turpitude was seldom considered, but they who took care

to do the ship's business might in other respects do what they pleased" (Newton 1962: 102). We see this same disregard for African women depicted by surgeon Alexander Falconbridge in his *Account of the Slave Trade on the West Coast of Africa, 1734*, where he acknowledges that this violent exploitation of African women was not held in secret but was rather commonplace for sailors during the Middle Passage (Figure 13). "The officers of the ship were permitted to indulge their passions among them at pleasure and sometimes are guilty of such brutal excuses as to disgrace human nature" (Dow 1927: 159). As these accounts attest to, the ships individualized layout and separation of genders may have actually created opportunity by white sailors to exploit the women in particular. By creating distinct partitions along the ships and placing the women towards the aft, the oppressive layout allowed for sailors to prey upon the women individually (Donoghue 2002: 65). Surgeon records of George Pixhard explains the strategic access to females generated by white sailors and slave drivers; "The two sexes were kept separate by partition or bulkhead, built from side to side across the ship. Females occupied the aft section of the ship, unfettered, and the men were confined to the forward part of the vessel, chained and fettered" (Oldendorp 1987: 215). By separating men and women through the constructed bulkheads aboard slaving vessels, interaction and especially communication amongst slave women and men was minimal and controlled by the whites onboard.

The narratives addressing sexual exploitation of enslaved women aboard slaving vessels is not limited to white crew members; often, captains of vessels were privy to expressed fetishism of individualized African women on board. With minimal discretion to age, documented offhand tones of captains distinguishes the normalcy of these violent, gender-targeted acts. Jennifer Morgan highlights this duality by addressing how a captain would react in outrage and anger at the propensity of slave rebellion or mutiny on board, but the captain

“reserved no outrage for the behavior of the crew towards captive women and thus the ubiquity of rape persisted regardless of his or any other captains’ feelings about it” (Morgan 2004: 196). For African enslaved women enduring the Middle Passage aboard these slaving vessels, the terms of enslavement encompassed not only their identity but also their bodies’ value and potential for abuse.

A specific example of this exploitation is documented on the vessel *Ruby* in 1789 during testimony to a parliamentary committee (slavevoyages.org; ID 18006). The brig *Ruby*, with a tonnage of 101, began its voyage on August 10, 1787 from Bristol to purchase slaves in the Bight of Biafra and the Gulf of Guinea Islands before picking up more slaves in the Cameroons (slavevoyages.org, ID 18006). Onboard, there were 105 African enslaved peoples, and a crew of 20, captained by Joseph Williams. The surgeon on board, James Arnold, worked aboard the slaving vessel, recounted the specific sexual exploitation of the black women by the officers and captain on board. He noted that it was the “general practice of the captain on receipt of a female slave, especially a young one, to have her come to his cabin so that he might have sexual intercourse with her” (Donoghue 2002: 65). When she refused the unwarranted advances, she was met with immediate and sustained extreme violence:

There was one young girl that he retained for some time as his favorite and kept in his cabin until one day when she was playing with his son, she accidentally tore his shirt. When the captain learned of it, he beat her up with his fist until she threw herself against the pumps and in doing so injured her head so severely that she died three days after. She had been living with him as his mistress for five or six months (Dow 1927: 191).

This young girl was one of 8 slaves that died aboard *Ruby*, passing from her injuries at the hands of the violent captain. “Dehumanization and sexual stereotyping of Africans were the

tools employed to rationalized the sexual exploitation of the enslaved females (Donoghue 2002: 59). By providing narrative experiences, such as those by third-party observers such as surgeons onboard, the legitimizing of women's anguish at the hands of their captors was continued. It is unfortunate to see in the historical narrative that virtually no first-hand immediate accounts of women's treatment onboard vessels by the women who may have survived exist. Instead, they are depicted through the white male persona of observers or even the abusers themselves.

Whether through natural, consenting, occurrences before enslavement, or as a result of the forced sexual exploitation experienced by African women, during the Middle Passage there is documentation of many pregnant enslaved peoples. If we observe the pregnancy of these women prior to the reproduction movement of the mid 1800s, we can better understand the circumstance in which these women found themselves, and even depictions of life aboard slaving vessels while with child.

Reproduction plays a very key role to the ways in which women were exploited aboard slaving vessels. This can be observed in a specific occurrence about *James* in 1675 (slavevoyages.org, ID 9595). Representing an earlier era of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, the *James* sailed under the Royal African Company for Spain and began its journey in London in July 1674. It then spent months collecting slaves from different port systems across Western Africa before finally completing the journey on February 20, 1675 departing its human cargo into Cuba and Nevis. In total, 104 slaves were loaded as human cargo, 36.1% (read 38 people) of them being women.

One of these women, who's name like so many others remains lost to the historical record, died days before the ship left Africa after loading enslaved Africans for months. "She

miscarried and the child dead within her and Rotten and dyed two days after delivery” (Donnan 1930: 208). The distressing experience was so documented that it disrupted the disciplinary columns of the ship Captain’s *Account of the Morality aboard the James* (Morgan 2004: 198). A similar woman, only a few months later, was described by Captain James Cays as breaking down with “maternal madness”; “being very fond of her child, carrying her up and downe, wore her to nothing by which means fell into a feavour and dyed” (Donnan 1930: 207). The ships surgeon, Alexander Falconbridge, specifically described women during this voyage- a depiction that is very unique within the historical narrative. While most testimonies remain focused on either the collective treatment and health of all African human cargo, Falconbridge took special notice to specifically women; perhaps this was because of the number of pregnant slaves on board, or perhaps for the atrocious conditions they suffered through, we do not directly know. He recounts memories of a “woman so dejected that she wanted nothing but to die, women chained to the deck of slave ships due to madness- a madness that did not prevent sale during lucid interval to the sugar fields of Jamaica” (Morgan 2004: 199). He recounts another young woman chined to the deck “who had lost her sense soon after she was purchased and taken on board” (Dow, 1927: 164). Another, he states, “On a former voyage we were obliged to confine a female...about twenty-three years of age, on her becoming a lunatic. She was afterwards sold during one of her lucid intervals” (Donoghue 2002: 68). Such levels of “madness” were also experienced on the aforementioned *Ruby* where the surgeon James Arnold claimed among African woman was brought to a level of insanity based on the specific sexual exploitation she experienced:

Among those brought on board was a woman who was in a very dejected state of mind. Before long she was seized with convulsions and on recovering, she began to laugh excessively and then cried and made a

dreadful noise that greatly disturbed the ship so that the captain got rid of her the next day. (Dow 1927:191)

While the constructs of what “got rid of” meaning are not made clear by Arnold’s testimony, we can only assume that the woman was killed at the hands of the captain or made to perish in some other way, as her disembarkment is never mentioned. The generated fear exerted by these actions onboard the *Ruby* furthermore lend to the psychological breakdown of the enslaved onboard. In continuation of the disturbing portrayal documented by Arnold, he attests to the forced viewing of dismembered body parts by African women (Donoghue 2002: 68). African women were forced to “kiss the lips of bloody heads that were handset and placed on the deck” noting that those who refused were “whipped and had the blood part of the heads rubbed against their faces” (Dow 1927: 164). This repulsive, inhumane, and carnage act maintained aboard the *Ruby*, and other slaving vessels like it during the earlier parts of the slave trade, note the blatant disregard for human life and the slaughtered mutilations in the most inhumane ways, being commonplace during the Middle Passage. While the actions taken aboard these vessels do represent the very real violent actions that were commonplace, they more importantly represent the specific gendered exploitation, manipulation, and abuse of and towards African women.

The influx of violence experienced by African women who bore children is also well documented. In conjunction to those who “went mad” during their terminated pregnancies, similar haunts existed for those who successfully bore children while onboard during the Middle Passage. Slave trader turned abolitionist and Evangelical preacher, John Newton recounts the story of one African woman’s exploitation and treatment of her bore children during the Middle Passage. The incident, while inherently gruesome, demonstrates the power wielded by the officers of slave ships over enslaved women. Donoghue acknowledges the tale well:

The event concerned a mate who had purchased a woman with her suckling child. In the night, the child who was about a year old, began to cry and disturbed the sleep of the mate. He rose angrily and swore that if the child did not cease the crying, he would ensure that it was silenced forever. The crying continued. 'At length he got up a second time, tore the child from the mother, and threw it into the sea. The child was soon silenced indeed, but it was not easy to pacify the woman: she was too valuable to be thrown overboard and he was obliged to bear the sound of her lamentations' (Newton 1962: 104). The woman was subsequently put onboard another slave ship (Donoghue 2002: 68).

John Newton's witness to the disposal of children aboard slaving vessels did not end his career as a slave trader. He continued in the buying and transport of slaves from the African coast to the Western world for four more years. During a significant storm, Newton had a seizure onboard, putting an end to his travels, but not to his involvement with the slave trade. He would later pinpoint this moment in his life as the flash from which God spoke to him; he went on to become an ordained Evangelical preacher and subscribed to early abolitionist movements. While the memories documented by Newton during the time period have withered into the cervices of history, the question still remains if the repentance he spoke to when writing the hymn "Amazing Grace" in 1772 accounts for his direct witness of the African slaves for which he made suffer. He later published his direct opinions in "Thoughts Upon the African Slave Trade" in 1788.

While slave holders and captains remain unsympathetic to the needs, emotions, and overall wellbeing of enslaved women with children, their depicted experience lends a unique perspective into the gendered experience of African enslaved women during the Middle Passage. The identity maintained by these women continued to uphold representation of motherhood, despite the dyer circumstance in which they experienced the slave trade. Motherhood, however, was also a key exploitative business within the slave trade that directly targeted African women for biological reproduction purposes. We see the early transport of

children with their mothers, or with mother figures, as early as 1683 in the case of the ship *Bright*, sailing for the Royal African Company and transporting to Barbados. One third of the enslaved peoples onboard were children, being described as “very small most of them noe better than sucking children nay many of them did suck their Mothers that were on boarde” (Morgan 2004: 206; Voyage 15076, Delight (1683) slavevoyages.org). The transport of children was a cheap initial cost, with ample reward potential at the selling of them. Because of their stature and demeanor, children did not take as many rations to sustain across the Middle Passage. Furthermore, most were kept out of restraints and left free to go across the ship. African enslaved women maintained an identity of motherhood for these children aboard the slaving vessels, sleeping with them in the stern hull of ships. Many surviving narratives of these children exist where they recount how women took care of them during the long journey. One such account exists from a slave woman, taken from the western coast of Africa as a child, named Belinda.

Written at the end of the 18th century, Belinda recounts her child fears of the Volta River, the Gold Coast, of moon-faced men with bows and arrows, all points that sequester into her developed disclosure of her later capture. She documents this capture in the same language and tone of the depicted exploitation of African women who came before her, noting “she was ravished from the bosom of her county, her aging parents cruelly separated from her forever” (Belinda, “Petition” in *Unchained Voices* 2004: 142). Belinda wrote this Petition for compensation to the larger Massachusetts legislature in the hopes of acknowledging the humanizing aspects and effects of the slave trade that she endured directly for nearly 50 years. Her experiences represent the larger voices of those in the slave trade and lend unique

perspective of womanhood through the eyes of an enslaved girl, an exploited woman, and an empowered survivor.

The study of the African Slave-Trade has only recently started to focus on the identity, statistical representation, and documentation of women from enslavement, across the Middle Passage, and throughout the diasporic expanse into the Western world. The lack of gendered consideration and presence of African female voices among the enslaved documentation demonstrates significant gaps in the history of the Atlantic system of slavery. While the overall history and gruesome notions of African enslavement are well documented from Western perspectives, primary-sourced depictions often highlight the collective experience of enslaved peoples, instead of the unique individual gendered experience. In Campbell, Miers and Miller's *Introduction: Strategies of Women and Constraints of Enslavement in the Modern Americas*, this notion of a gendered experience to slavery is eloquently outlined into the segmented portions of enslavement, conditions for women, and female agency as slaves. By following the outlined model they provide in *Women and Slavery: The Modern Atlantic* (2007), the historiography of women and the slave trade begin to emerge and answers the question of who were these women and what was their identity aboard slaving vessels throughout the slave-trade.

Violence and coercion have been considered hallmarks of enslavement: since the eighteenth century, individual liberty became one of the most cherished human rights, particularly in parts of the Americas and no one is assumed to surrender personal autonomy except under compulsion (Campbell 2007: 3). The notion of violence is immediately connected with historic imagery of the African slave trade. Well-documented through writings, artistic depictions, and the graphic forms of artifact bondage, the tone of violence surrounds the conversation of the Trans-Atlantic

Slave Trade. Women in particular, as discussed, were subject to distinct points of violence based on their gender throughout the process of enslavement. The process of enslavement, during the eighteenth century, was mostly based on coercion for these women and violence then ensued during the Middle Passage. The identity and autonomy of the enslaved peoples forced into the slave trade shifted at this point of their journey as the coercion and violence that is enslavement began. “Brute violence had been a widely employed strategy of slaving throughout the histories of every continent in the world, intensely so in Africa in the recent centuries in which that continent served as a source of the women and men enslaved in the Americas (Campbell 2007: 3). Marked by the brute violence associated with the slave trade of the eighteenth century, understanding the conditions in which these women were forced to endure further highlights the shift in identity.

Conditions for women during slavery is not a singular construct that draws comparison of validity based off one experience to another. While conditions did vary depending on the individual, the location from which they came and where they disembarked, as well as the historic timeframe, understanding the gender impact conditions that faced enslaved women of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade is important to understanding their experience and identity of the journey. “Although male slaves in the Americas suffered because of their slave status... it has been contended that black slave women there suffered additionally because they were female” (White 1985: 24). This additional suffering experienced by African enslaved women not only was constructed from their gender, but also the early notions of race and prejudice. Racial divisions that prolonged the suffering of African women is most evident historically in the Caribbean and American South where large populations of black peoples existed alongside their white owners and counterparts. The racial division experienced by enslaved women notably

differed from that of the male experience because of the conflict created by white Westerners determined to minimize the social and cultural existence of Africans. Citing African women as “jezebels” and maternal “mammies” illustrates the increased anxieties of English colonies in the early 18th century, and the presence of these African women immediately began to be exploited for their gendered reproductive value. Marginalized by enslavement, the conditions for these women was reduced to that of their reproductive capacities, once again representing another layer to the fetishism expressed toward black females (Donoghue 2002: 5). Being valued for only the offspring that can be produced, these African women began to directly feel the construct of racism, fetishism, and prejudice; these constructs still exist today and mark a fault in our societal system resulting from conditions experienced and the treatment of African enslaved women.

In the British and French Caribbean, the construct of racism was still relevant during the 1700s and 1800s; however, the impact and prevalence of African women’s race in society held different influence on their associated value as an enslaved person. The sensitivities expressed towards the race of African women’s produced children was not as stark as that experienced in North America. The condition that the African women of North America experienced was the favoritism associated with having a mixed, lighter-skinned, child. Often fathered by managers, overseers, and other English men of lesser stature than the masters of plantations, the produced children existed in a specific condition of society where they were racialized, but not that which was within the previous categorical standing of just black and white, slave or free. Through this fluidity, a new existence brought forth by the enslaved African woman created new opportunity for societal standing through their future generations. We can see this by observing post-emancipation family hierarchies in the Caribbean as compared to

those of free slaves in North America. “The ‘colored’ children of slave women contributed to increasingly racialized local civic orders- in differing ways on different islands- by referring to ‘color’ to distinguish themselves from the impoverished freed people, and siding with their fathers rather than their mothers” (Donoghue 2002: 7). In this scenario, the identity of the African female mother is stripped away from her, even as her children have to turn away from her identity in order to continue the survival imposed by societal western preferences. The enslaved African mother remains a representation of reproduction, as her race does not align with that of her children, creating further societal separation by prejudice. “The key variable lies in the slave women’s ability, or failure, to reproduce American-born children. The economic value of the children was, of course, important, and immediately reflects the worth of women’s work as slaves” (Donoghue 2002: 8). The enslavement of African women, but also the future promise of enslaving her children, both create the politicized ‘race’ as a means of controlling offspring. From this, we again observe that the agency of the African enslaved woman is never her own, and her identity is forced to shift and change in order to survive.

Identifying enslaved female agency within maritime constructs is imperative in understanding the identity of women during the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. The dynamics in which African enslaved women created constructs of control for themselves during their time of enslavement lends an identity of empowerment to the collective history of their survival. One of the most documented constructs in which African women created agency for themselves while enslaved, as previously discussed, is their effects of reproduction. “Unlike men, enslaved women were also valued for their reproductive capacities, for their nurturing abilities as uniquely female wet-nurses and maternally experienced nannies, for their more arbitrarily gendered domestic house skills, and for sexual services that they ... could provide for white males”

(Donoghue 2002: 9). These distinctly female roles that were maintained by enslaved African women offered unique opportunities within plantation life, specifically, that were not allocated to enslaved African men. Most commonly, the discussion of agency amongst enslaved groups touches on extremist points of mutiny, revolt, and marooning; while these are all valid and viable opportunities of expressed agency during the slave trade, women held minor roles in these described violent acts towards freedom. Noting, “this emphasis on violence has heightened the not fully merited attention given to male slaves, who comprised by far the largest number of those who planned or executed rebellions” (Donoghue 2002: 9). Krauthamer’s work on enslaved female populations in the Americas notes that there are cases of women voluntarily joining such rebel groups, offering excellent future study into the methodologies practiced by these women against their Native American slaveholders (Krauthamer 2013: 77). African women in described maroon settlements were scarce throughout the South as enslaved women refrained from fleeing in order to remain on plantation systems with their children.

While on plantations, enslaved African women developed the most intense use for their personal agency as a form of survival. With slave owners and slave drivers exercising greater degrees of surveillance over females, taking control over their own bodies became the most profound form of agency for these women. During the Middle Passage, the barbaric conditions that enslaved African women endured caused both the psychological as well as physiological breakdown of their bodies (Bush 2010: 27). The lethal range of effects of undernourishment extend from the experience of the Middle Passage into the existence on plantation life. Morgan and Follett point out this specific example in the West Indies during the 1750s during which there was a generally low rate of slave reproduction due to the physical and emotional stresses of slave life, the unsanitary conditions imposed on the slaves, and the lethal tropical and subtropical

disease environments where sugar grew profitably. All of these factors collective depressed fertility and raised rates of infant mortality amongst enslaved African women (Bush 2010: 11). In scenarios in which enslaved women were not in harsh conditions doing laborious work, the same mortality rates are present, implying that “factors other than physical hardship were at work, including measures adopted by slave women to reduce conceptions and to induce early abortions” (Bush 1990: 46; Gaspar and Hine 1996: 14). These antinatalist strategies worked as a form of control by women over themselves in order to autonomize their daily existence within the constructs of slavery. The methods used by enslaved women to reduce their own reproductive potential speaks to the heightened level of desperation met with the low level of personal freedoms experienced by these women. Enslaved women could have thwarted their own means of reproduction in the desire to avoid a life of slavery for their future children. The agency of enslaved women again shifts from that of a mothering figure, to controlled agency of self in which that identity of motherhood is stripped away as a form of protection for the self and the future generations.

Agency also existed for African enslaved women existing amongst plantation life. Most documented of these tactics women practiced included creating matrifocal networks of kin, in biological as well as extended terms, with other women. This matriarchal extension of networking allowed for women to become fortified and to gain means of control over their day-to-day circumstance. “Slave kinship relied not on single male heads of co-resident nuclear families but rather on a woman or a number of women” (Glickman 2015: 12). Providing vital social and emotional support to all slaves and served as points of leadership within existing slave communities. These women who lead these kinship communities are often referenced with reverence in historic plantation documentation by both African and white interactions. This

matrifocality expressed in Caribbean and North American slave plantations is a direct derivative of central African matrilineality, in which families were passed through mothers and women, rather than the western ideals where family ties are based on the male. “The particular hardships of Western slavery provided ample reason for the women living together to care for one another and one another’s children, using the terms of extended kinship from their personal backgrounds to characterize entirely new and creative responses to the otherwise isolating conditions in which they lived” (Glickman 2015: 13). We see these maternal bond structures throughout the story of identity in enslaved African women. Coming from matriarchal community kinships in central Africa, brought to the Western coast for sale, taking on the identity of mother and matriarch to children and other women in the hull of transport slaving vessels, and again creating new dichotomies of matriarchal community structures for survival on plantation life. The identity of African enslaved women is continually marked by the gendered perspective of strength, guidance, and nurturing that classified these women before, during, and after they were oppressed within the slave trade.

As well as being historically documented through plantation records and individualized letters (Starobin 1974: 64), the kinship systems maintained by African enslaved women created cultural forms of agency and resistance that can be seen within the archaeological record, as well. Women created elaborated ritual and belief systems, adapting and integrating elements both from their homelands as well as from communal exchange aboard slaving vessels that have manifested artifacts, which can be observed today. The tangible reflections of the developed agency of enslaved women can be seen in practiced religious expressions, household practices, and jewelry adornment of the time period. Current as well as future studies into each of these elements is extremely valuable and pertinent to the tangible historic effects of identity for

African enslaved women. Beads in particular hold a large significance in the discussion of African enslaved women as they have been excavated throughout all portions of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. Collections of beads offer a unique insight into different groupings of women, where they came from, and the methods used to keep the beads across the Middle Passage. These studies would lend greatly to the research conducted here on artifacts of restraint and the slave trade. Understanding the theoretical identity of the women who endured the slave trade is understood on a more engaging and sympathetic level through the observation of physical items that represent the oppression of these women. Archaeological findings note the story and existence of these people, and while often hardened by modern remorse, the artifacts found from slaving vessels are extremely important to lending validity to the gendered experience of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade.

Archaeological Evidence of Gender

The concept of the Atlantic Slave Trade, immersed with vivid imagery of the malnourished African male cargo aboard a slaving vessel juxtaposed with the strong black man working on the plantation fields, is conceptualized by images of slavery in the Western World during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These images focus on the struggle and hardship of the over-worked black male, whose dehumanized existence revolves around the terror of a white master. While this scenario remains well documented through historical context, another depiction of slavery should be understood. The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade transported nearly twelve million slaves to the Western World; an estimated third of which were women (Bush 1990: 35). By associating artifact assemblages of the Atlantic Slave Trade with gender, tangible objects can contribute to an intangible thought or experience of the past, leading to a more holistic identity of African enslaved women. Artifact genderfication provides insight into the experience of enslaved women during the Middle Passage and throughout plantation life in the Caribbean, which is supported by both maritime and terrestrial archaeological findings. By observing how the value and identity of black enslaved women are reflected in artifact assemblages of slave shipwrecks, the effect of African enslaved women on the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade will lead to transformative thought on gender and material culture.

A more morbid view of the African enslaved woman's identity aboard slaving vessels is through the sexual exploitation experienced during the voyages of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. Once these women boarded the slaving vessels, they were stripped of all material possessions, including clothing, not to harm themselves (Donoghue 2002: 64). As a means of further isolating these women in an already merciless situation, they were separated in the aft of ships by a bulkhead built across the entirety of the vessel, consequently forming an intangible

partition between the experiences of male and enslaved women aboard slaving vessels. Surgeon George Pixhard speaks on this manner in his letter to a friend, saying that "the females occupied the aft section of the ship, unfettered, and the men were confined to the forward part of the vessel, chained and fettered (Donoghue 2002: 68; Oldendorp 1987). This arrangement made communication impossible between the two sexes for the majority of the voyage. Alexander Falconbridge noted further evidence to support the effectiveness of this physical separation of genders on African enslaved women in his *Account of the Slave Trade on the West Coast of Africa*, published in 1734. Falconbridge noted:

On some ships, the common sailors were allowed to have sexual intercourse with the black captives. However, the officers of the ship were permitted to indulge their passions among them at pleasure and sometimes are guilty of such brutal excuses as [to] disgrace human nature. (Dow 1927: 159)

The testimonies from both surgeon and Captains' logs lend an outside perspective of sexual exploitation of African enslaved women during the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. Despite the lack of physical archaeological evidence of such exploitation, the written historical record offers insight into the occurrence of female exploitation and daily life of these African enslaved women during their time aboard these slaving vessels. The physical reflections of such mistreatment of these women may be long gone; however, remnants of other forms of human bondage remain to tell the story how these women survived the capture in Africa, transportation across the Atlantic, and the distribution within the Caribbean.

Following the Middle Passage, African enslaved women distributed throughout the Caribbean, the majority of which landed in capital port cities during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Gaspar 1996: 19). After being promised paradise, women were fed nourishing foods and given luxuries, such as relief from restraints or barriers a few days before the ships docked in the port cities of the Caribbean (Donoghue 2002: 74). This offering of false

hope was a further strategic plot against African enslaved women, used to entice them towards their fates in the New World. After these women disembarked from the vessels of their original capture, they were once again subject to another example of loss in their identities as they underwent the process of the slave auction.

Slave auctions in the Caribbean create another historical example of the continued identity of the African enslaved woman. Slaves were brought onto land and kept in barracoons, or hand-made corals similar to those that would keep livestock during this period. These corals harbored slave men, women, and children together and were the first place that white masters would lay eyes on their purchasable property. After each slave was brought to the auction platform, a physician, who was hand selected by the white purchaser, would conduct a thorough examination of their client's potential purchases. This included "the slaves [being made to] either run, leap or jump from the ground, thereby stretching their arms and legs to show if they are agile or if they become short of breath" (Donoghue 2002: 32; Haagensen 1995: 12). This process of demonstration reduced the identity of African slaves from that of human cargo to an even further abyss of being objectified as items, property, or things. Exploitation again becomes a factor in the discussion of African enslaved women as the youngest slaves purchased were "destined to be sexually exploited by owners or to be utilized for breeding" (Donoghue 2002: 76). Women were not only be purchased for their predicted labor force offered on plantations but also their biological ability to reproduce and continue the lines of slavery, without creating a further cost for their master or the hindrance of having to buy new slaves.

African enslaved women were being viewed as a means of production and reproduction while they were being purchased at auction. Each slave, branded and given a new name, loss their original sense of identity. The loss of their original, African name would create yet another new

turn of identity for African enslaved women and would force them to leave behind their African roots in the assumption of a new, Western identity of plantation life.

Life on plantations in Jamaica during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was marked by hard work, economic prosperity, and slave identity. In order to observe this phenomenon through historical and archaeological perspectives, a future more in-depth case study will create research into the identity maintained on specific plantations in Jamaica by African enslaved women. Plantations in the Caribbean existed as colonial outposts of European commercial capitalism (Hauser 2008: 28). In order to further understand the way that plantation life operated and contributed to the holistic growth of the Caribbean, there is a necessity of placing the individual plantations within the historical, political, and geographic context of the areas in which they operated. By looking at historical data and archaeological findings, a more in-depth understanding can be reached concerning the daily habits, thoughts, and identities of African enslaved women as they continue their journeys on Caribbean plantations. The argument for the existing correlation between artifacts and gender applies to this same necessity within the academic community, placing the experience of slave plantation life into the historical, political, and geographic context of the plantations on which they operated.

The association of gender with artifact assemblages leads to a more holistic contextual understanding of the past. Such artifacts allow for individualism, and more specifically female identity, to be accurately reflected through the objectification of slaves as property. The archaeology of slavery enhances the historical context of slave exploitation within the Caribbean and allows for specific gendered experiences of slaves to be accurately represented within the historical context. By observing artifact assemblages through a gendered lens, future studies of both maritime and terrestrial landscapes separate into both historical and individual context. The

archaeological assemblages present on shipwrecks as well as within primary-sourced documentation and evidence support the argument for gendering of artifacts, ultimately leading to a more holistic identity of African enslaved women and future discussions which will intertwine archaeology, history, and gender.

Chapter 4: Restraints

The oppression of African enslaved women of the 18th-century Transatlantic Slave trade maintains physical and archaeological significance in the different forms of vessel bondage that were practiced to maintain order across the long voyage. Often taking over a month (McDonald 1993: 113) to cross the Atlantic, enslaved women were restrained using a variety of shackles, chains, helmets, and neck restraints, all detailed by their specification to the female gender. By observing these restraints through a gendered lens, their presence on shipwrecks can provide further evidence of enslaved women aboard slaving vessels.

Manacles and chains are among the most common imagery provided during the time of the African slave trade. Placed on both the wrists and the feet, manacles restricted the movement of the adorners in all physical positions and methods of motion throughout the slave's range of movement. Manacles ranged in varying length, widths, and were unique both to specific periods and locations throughout the Atlantic slave trade. Manacles were produced for slavery in Spain and then transported aboard vessels to the Western coast of Africa beginning in the late 17th century (Starobin 1974: 52). Consisting of two loops and an iron bar, these early stages of manacles restricted the personal movement of slaves as they were captured within specific kingdoms of Africa and transported to the coast. Rarely used in chains and the more popularized neck restraint was constructed from branched wood and tethered string to tie slave to slave together. During the early 18th century, the concept of conjoining slaves together was made more efficient with the additive of linked chains (Starobin 1974: 54). Linking chains allowed for more slaves to travel on a single voyage while restraining movement to all parties. Towards the end of the 18th century, the concept of manacles and chains became standardized to include locking systems, standardized lengths based on gender and age, and production processes across

Europe and the Caribbean (Hauser 2008: 36). An archaeological hypothesis can be formed about the location, iron allele type, and described slave cargo can be determined for existing and future shipwrecks from the observed location of these manacles.

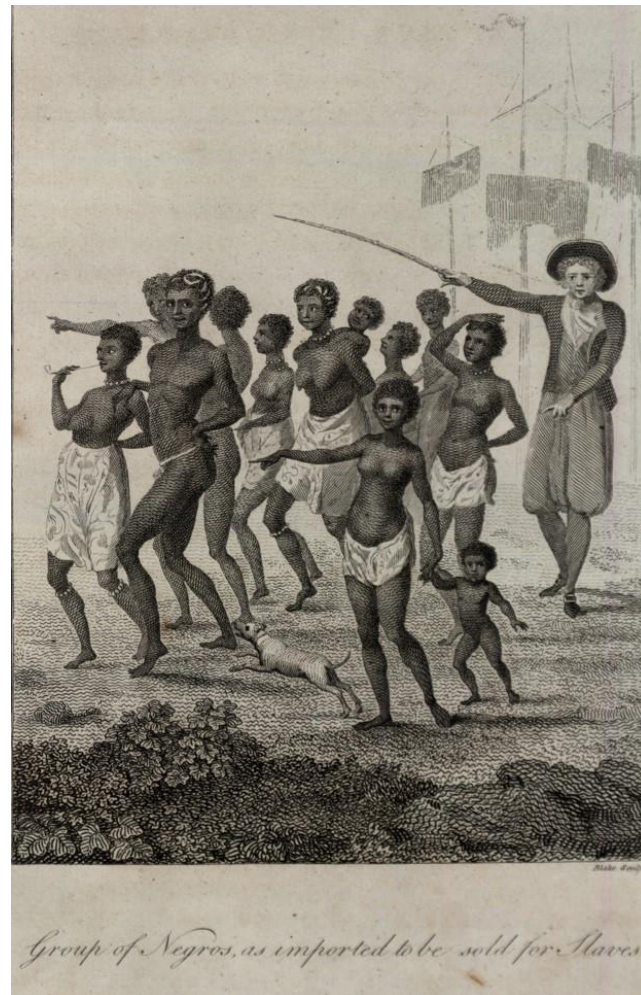


FIGURE 14. “Group of Negroes, as imported to be sold...” Stedman 1796: 200 (<http://www.slaveryimages.org/s/slaveryimages/item/1902>).

Once slaves had been collected and brought to the Western coast, the loading process would begin. Sorting slaves based on their physique, age, and general health status, they would be restrained as cargo and held in corals against their will. Manacles would be placed on their hands, and often on their ankles. This technique of restraint allowed for minimal movement, contact, and was one of the first identifiers for these slaves that they were now considered taxed

property instead of people (Gaspar and Hine 1996: 9). Manacles enclosed with the addition of chains on both the wrists and ankles, as slaves were lead aboard the ships that would cross them nearly halfway around the world, leaving behind any sense of previous identity and sense of normalcy that they may have known.

The infamous packaging of slaves aboard transatlantic vessels remains to be one of the most horrific conditions that these people were exposed to (Figure 15). Slaves continuously treated as the cargo with which Europeans identified them, stacked as human bodies in varying positions across the hull of these massive ships. Positioning from stern to bow, slaves have backed body to body in uncomfortable positions and inhumane circumstance. Their manacles and chains further prevented movement from these positions, and slaves would have to be unchained by sailors on board in order to move about the ship. Manacles would be latched to the hull framing of the vessel, pinning down the slave on his or her back, side, or in a seated position (Humphries 2007: 11). Layered on top of one another using shelves within in the interior frames of the hull, the groups of human cargo we separated based on their age and gender. Men remained historically housed towards the front of these transatlantic vessels and women were held in the aft (Lewis 2001: 4).

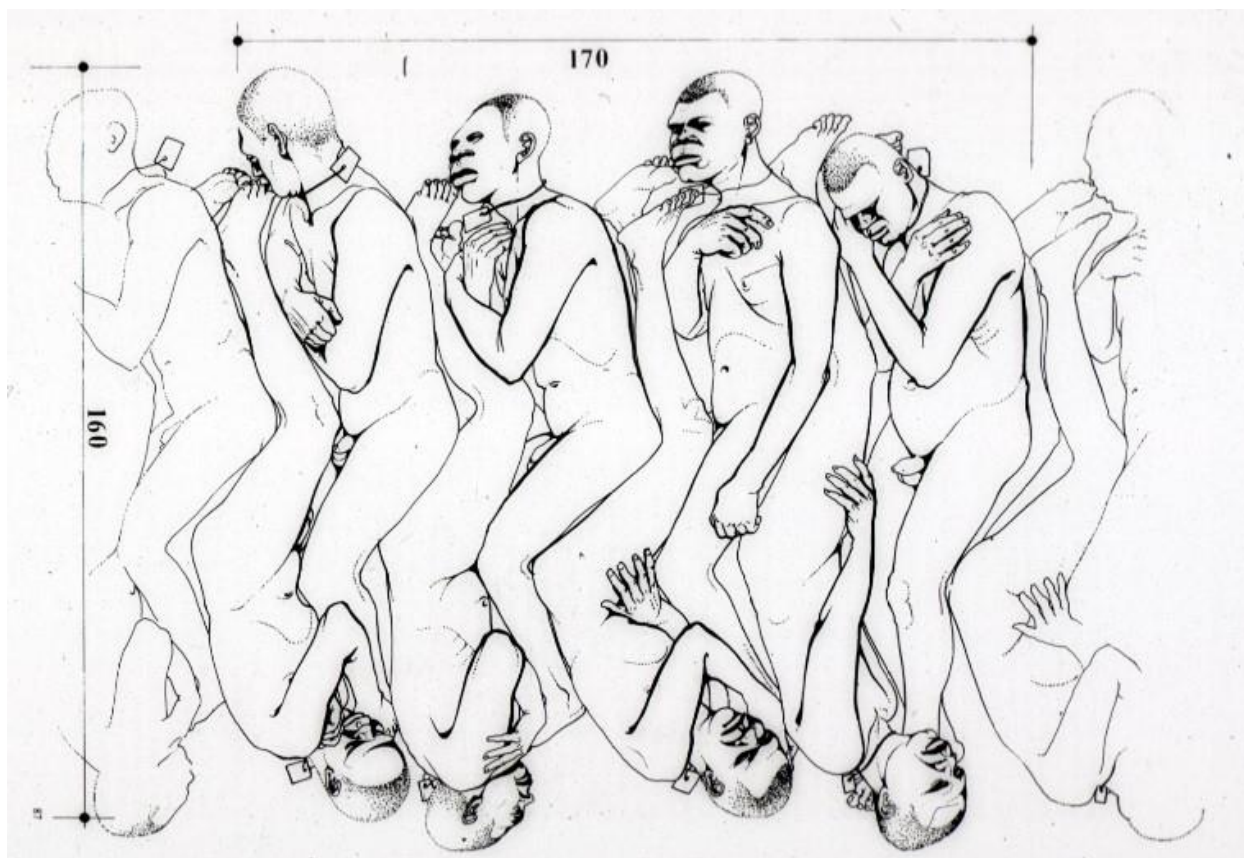


FIGURE 15. Sleeping Positions of Captive Africans on the French Slave Ship L'Aurore. Boudriot1984: 87 <http://www.slaveryimages.org/s/slaveryimages/item/2552>).

While variants of this observation exist, through the examination of slave logs and surgeon logs aboard these vessels, it can be stated that this layout was amongst the most common (Starobin 1974: 40). Physical dividers were put in place to separate men and women in the hopes to decrease communication between the groups and to maintain the health of the slaves. Women gather with children aboard the vessels independent of their gender up until around the age of ten. By housing children with the women, the female identity of mothers is maintained even within the perspective of human cargo. Utilized for their nurturing qualities and "calming nature", women served as mediators to children who were separated from their families and justly terrified during their experience of the inhumane Middle Passage.

Despite their identity of children, these young pieces of property were still bound in manacles and chains occasionally. Evidence to support this exists in the alterations made to discovered manacles in which pieces of cloth, rope, and even swollen wood were woven around the sphere of the manacle, thus adjusting the sizing (Starobin 1974: 41). It is unknown as to whether these alterations made by crew members as a means of keeping the children in the restraints, the slave women grouped with the children in order to provide comfort and size adjustments from the original, adult-sized manacle, or if the additives made by the children themselves in order to provide more comfort against their smaller wrists and ankles. Despite the existence of restraints during the initial portion of the Middle Passage, children were allowed to run freely amongst the ship, existing as hands aboard. Women and men were also let out of their restraints, almost always separately, to go to the upper-level decks where they would be washed and exercised. Furthermore, women were also let out of their shackles and brought from below deck to cook, although evidence for this being an everyday occurrence is weak.

The physical separation of men and women exists not only in surgeon logs aboard the vessels of the 18th and 19th centuries but also in the modern-day discoveries and archaeological contexts. On vessels such as *Henrietta Marie* wreck site, shackles made up of both manacle, and chain remnants seen in both the bow and stern regions of the spread-out wreck. These corroded shackles varied in sizing and remained separated into two distinct collective groups (Moore 1997: 8). The smaller of which, averaging in size at 5.68 inches in length of the manacle with an 8.2-inch bar, were found in the southern region of the wreck, where the stern would have been (Figure 15 and 16). The more extensive collection of shackles, averaging with 7.3-inch manacles and 10.4-inch bar, was found facing the northern head of the site in the area of the bow. Knowing that the vessel wrecked without slaves aboard, the manacles and chains would

have been collected and placed in their respective areas of the ship, sometimes contained within barrels or on racks (Moore 1997: 10). It can be inferred using this information that the smaller grouping of shackles, found concreted together, would be associated with women aboard these vessels. The existence of women can be inferred based on the historical location of women aboard ships in congruence with the archaeological findings in the late 20th century.

As slaves approached the Western hemisphere, whether it be the Southern United States, the Caribbean, or South America, they would be prepped for the offloading process. In the weeks leading up to their arrival, slaves would be allotted more and more time with fresh air, fed more often during the day, and bathed often. By being allowed above deck, they could stretch and exercise their malnourished bodies in hopes of regaining a decent level of strength. If slaves did not appear healthy, they would not be sold at a reasonable price for the auction. Because of this, they would be rubbed with oils to disguise the appearance and stench of sores they had received during their containment aboard these ships (Morrissey 1989: 3). For this reason, the nourishment of body for these slaves was of the utmost importance right before the docking of the slaving vessels at trading posts. However, slaves remained chained to one another; as they moved and bathed, they remained bound to one another as slave drivers would make them dance across the deck from bow to stern (Starobin 1974: 12). This method of dance as a form of exercise remained a group occurrence and not separated by gender- all participated in order to increase the overall value of human cargo.

Once the vessels docked, specifically in the Caribbean, slaves restrained to one another using manacles and chains exited from the ship six to ten at a time (Beckles 1999: 4). This proximity offloading process prevented slaves from "running, causing commotion...[or] jumping to put themselves to an end" (British Parliamentary Papers 1822). As groups disembarked the

vessels, they separated based on their gender. This separation of men and women was the starting point of their auction experience, no longer as people, but as buyable slaves. Women, individually, moved into separate corals, called barracoons, where they remained in manacles, but unchained and were encouraged to roam around the contained slave pens. Slave auctioneers would then select a woman and pull her from the pens, where she remained naked, and present her on a pedestaled slave block. Once a slave was purchased at auction, either by the owner of plantation or slave drivers who directed slaves on plantations, she would be placed back into manacles and chains, given clothing to wear, and transported to the plantations in carts or were forced to walk (Hauser 2008: 6).

Through plantations in the Caribbean in the early 19th century, manacles and chains became less of a means of restraints and instead turned to forms of punishments. Slaves who were disobedient attempted runaways or were deemed promiscuous by their owners were placed in manacles and chains for weeks at a time (Hauser 2008: 6). Overseers expected the slaves to continue their work, whether in the fields or other areas of the plantation, with the manacles intact, often creating deep wounds in the wrists of these men women working in the hot Caribbean sun. Chains grew out of use in the early 1800s, now described as "barbaric" to well-behaving slaves (Gaspar and Hine 199: 26). The irony behind this examined quote should not distract from the fact that chains were barbarically used to separate slaves who had created familial bonds and kinship on the plantation. When slaves engaged in relationships that were deemed unfit by plantation owners, they could be physically separated by behind chained to separate areas of the fields and housing units. Using a weight attached to manacles and chained to the slave, male or female, they would have to be dragged wherever the slave moved to and from; these weights or stones weighed upwards of twenty pounds (Beckles 1999: 22). These

separation weights would cause debilitating wounds while chained to the ankles and often break flesh on the slaves' extremities, giving them the label as "unfit to work" (Beckles 1999: 22). "In the nineteenth century, there was a gradual change in the treatment of slaves. Supervision of the plantation owners increased, and the government introduced new regulations in an endeavor to outlaw the worst excesses in punishment" (Holtrop, 2015: 151). However, the use of manacles and chains was still maintained to a lesser degree amongst extreme cases on the plantation. No longer used to declare order over slaves, manacles and chains were now utilized with runaways and marooning movements in order to prevent habitual escapees from attempting freedom in a time before emancipation (Holtrop 2015: 152). Slaves attempting to flee the plantation, once caught, would be fitted with varying restraint devices that would restrict them from any liberated movement; the most common and most readily available was shortened manacles and chains (Moore 1997: 46). Runaway slaves would be fitted with manacles and chains, as well as a foot weight in some reported cases, and would have to wear them for an extended period, determined by their owners in the 18th century and even judicially ordered towards the end of slavery in the early 19th century. For this reason, manacles and chains existed as a form of punishment amongst Caribbean plantations systems; however, this idea diminished in favor of corporal punishment in the early 19th century, and manacles quickly fell out of favor (Holtrop, 2015: 151).

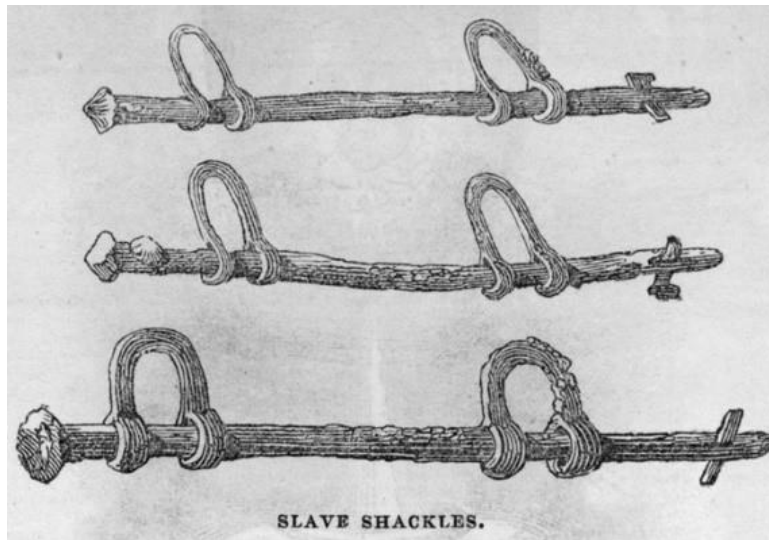


FIGURE 16. "Shackles Used on Slave Ship, 1845" *The Illustrated London News* 1875: 202, (Courtesy of Slavery Images: A Visual Record of the African Slave Trade and Slave Life in the Early African Diaspora, <http://www.slaveryimages.org/s/slaveryimages/item/2723>)

Manacles and chains not only served as restraints for existing slaves during and after the Middle Passage. Slave shackles served and continually serve, as an oppressive physical depiction of slavery for both African men and women. As a symbol of slavery, it is interesting to observe the little physical evidence that remains of slave shackles, both on the plantation and maritime landscapes. They served as tangible remnants of restraints, loss of personal identity, and conversion to the property during the Transatlantic Slave Trade. Their variants in size, material, and location aboard maritime vessels give evidence to the presence of African female aboard these ships and the vital role they played amongst both crew and other slaves.

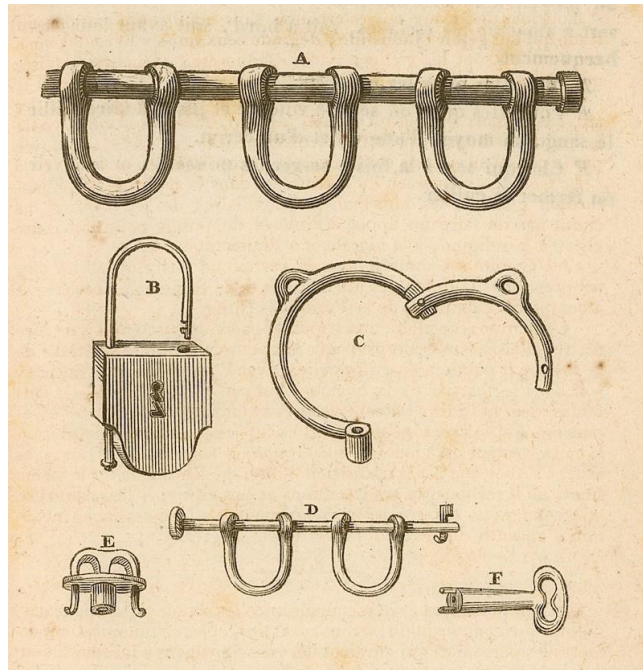


FIGURE 17. "Shackles, Manacles, and Padlocks Used in the Slave Trade, early 19th cent. "Faits relatifs a la traite des noirs (Courtesy of John Carter Brown Library at Brown University; Slavery Images: A Visual Record of the African Slave Trade and Slave Life in the Early African Diaspora, <http://www.slaveryimages.org/s/slaveryimages/item/2007>)

While manacles and chains remain accessible to the modern-day perspective and imagery of slavery, may other forms of restraint have existed that targeted African enslaved women through the near century of continued slavery in the Caribbean. Helmets, also known as iron muzzles, were created in the late 18th century as methods to restrict both movement and voices of slaves. Muzzles, made up mostly of iron with infusions of copper in-lays adorned the heads, faces, and within the mouths of slaves deemed too vocal for their good (Starobin 1974: 42). Not dissimilar to a muzzle, the iron helmet specifically targeted women initially on the slaving vessels across the ocean (Figure 18). As previously stated, women and men separated aboard slave ships in order to keep their physical contact to a minimum and maintained the high value associated with each gender. Away in which women combated this segregation was to sing, in their native tongue, across the partisans mid-ship. Through this, they communicated the

daily happenings, location of family members, and the avoidance of individual crewmembers (Bush 2010: 64). However, this was outlawed in the early 1800s by slave drivers transporting human cargo. The crew of the *Brookes* noted in 1812 "slaves would sing so loudly and, in such tones, that the ear could no longer bear their song. It was as if an animal was crying to it is young...it had to be silenced" (Starobin 1974: 42). This silence would come in the form of the iron muzzle. Explicitly targeted towards outwardly expressive women who were too loud, attempted communication, or cried too often (Starobin 1974: 42), the muzzle was clasped around their neck like a collar, then brought up and across their face, arching around the nose and eyes. Between the iron bars framing the nose there was a circular iron or copper piece, occasionally punctured with drilled holes, that adorned a flat plate connected perpendicularly. The frame of the muzzle would continue past the forehead of the enslaved woman and clasp against their head, sometimes moving as far back towards to the nape of their neck where the frame would connect back with the collar with a lock or pin. The mouthpiece of the helmet rested against the lips of the enslaved woman or sometimes along the inner gum line of their teeth, with the flat plate continuously pressing down on the woman's tongue, preventing any opportunity for spoken language.



FIGURE 18. Depiction of African woman in iron helmet and collar (Arago 1839-1840:119), (Courtesy of Slavery Images: A Visual Record of the African Slave Trade and Slave Life in the Early African Diaspora, <http://www.slaveryimages.org/s/slaveryimages/item/1299>)

The iron muzzle extended its use past just specifically women during the Middle Passage; the most common use of the helmet historically seen within the Caribbean remains an identifying artefact of African female plantation life of the early 19th century. Through lack of nourishment, enslaved women often chose to eat grass and to vary soil textures as an essential mineral supply for their bodies (Bush 1980: 19). In order to prevent this action, slave drivers and field hands put women in iron helmets in order to not eat unsupervised. The iron helmet further harassed African women within the confines of the generic abusive relationship between African slave women and white men of the plantations. For fear of exposure, white men would deem enslaved women unruly and adorned them with iron helmets as a point of shame, also marking them as victims of horrendous sexual assault that was customary amongst the population of enslaved women. These assaults by white men on African enslaved women will be

discussed in further detail later; however, the existence of the iron muzzle served to silence the identity of these women to a level through which their expression continually remained suppressed by the figurative power of the white man.

The iron helmet extended its use through the experience of the runaway slave (Figure 19). Often when a slave would successfully make it off the plantation and through the harsh environment of the Caribbean brush, only to be found by another plantation owner, they could be captured and brought to the rival plantation (Armstrong 2000: 32). They would be adorned with the iron muzzle upon their arrival to the new plantation so that they could not communicate with other slaves the successes and failures of their attempted escape, leaving them no leads on possible directions to run, paths to take, and areas to avoid. The iron muzzle, in this example, serves yet again to separate the relationship of one slave from the others, furthering the separate identity of African slaves on plantations in the Caribbean (Figure 20).

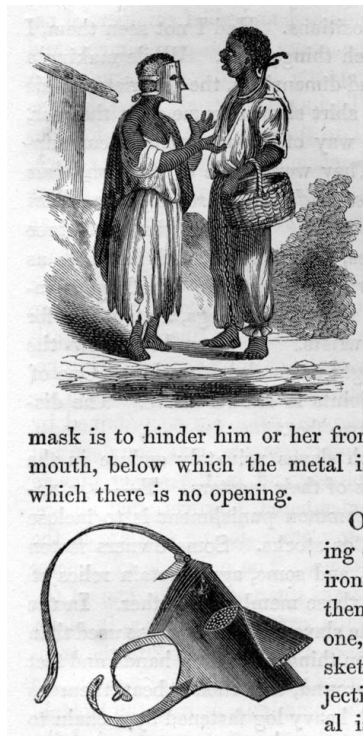


FIGURE 19. Images of Metal Face Mask (Ewbank 1856:437), (Courtesy of Slavery Images: A Visual Record of the African Slave Trade and Slave Life in the Early African Diaspora, <http://www.slaveryimages.org/s/slaveryimages/item/2592>)

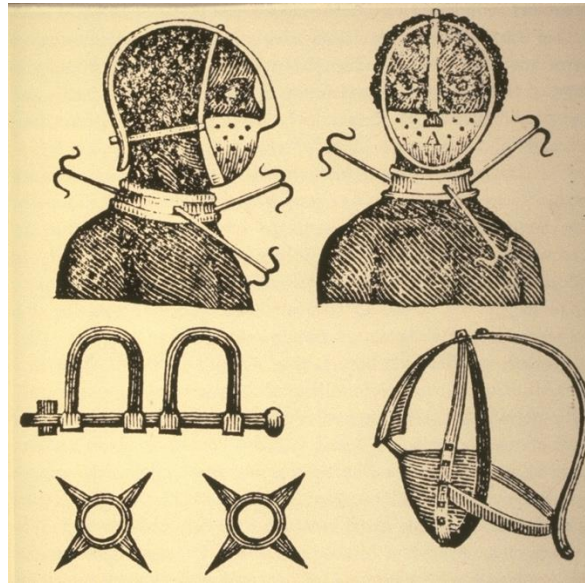


FIGURE 20 Iron Mask, Neck Collar, Leg Shackles, and Spurs, 18th century (Courtesy of Slavery Images: A Visual Record of the African Slave Trade and Slave Life in the Early African Diaspora, <http://www.slaveryimages.org/s/slaveryimages/item/1298>)

Iron muzzles have a distinct and strategized design, which inhibits the vocal expression of the slave. It separates slaves even further by eliminating communication amongst groups. In women individually, the helmets served as a silencer to the victims of gendered abuse on the plantation and aboard seafaring vessels. Overall, the iron muzzle reduced the experience of being a slave into one in which the vocal expression of the person was controlled, reducing their human identity to little more than a figurative labor force. The presence of helmets was primarily seen on plantations, although we know of their existence through slaving records (Figure 20). The archaeological remnants of pieces of iron muzzles denote the opportunity in the field of maritime archaeology to find these same corroded pieces amongst identified slave wrecks. Based on this knowledge, it can be determined that the existence of iron muzzles on a wreck site could lead to the identification of slave wrecks.

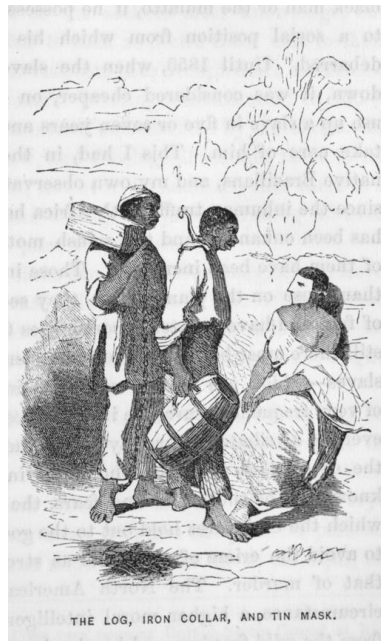


FIGURE 21. "Punishments for Runaways, Rio de Janiero, Brazil, 1850s" (Courtesy of Slavery Images: A Visual Record of the African Slave Trade and Slave Life in the Early African Diaspora, <http://www.slaveryimages.org/s/slaveryimages/item/2890>)

Slaves on plantations were not only restricted by muzzles placed to restrict their communication; other forms of restraints exhibited in the Caribbean in the 19th and late 18th century existed simply as examples of misbehaving slaves and markers of shame within plantation life, as demonstrated through the usage of neck chains. Contrary to their simplistic title, neck chains do not contain chains at all. Neck chains made up of stable iron compounds were made up of a weighted collar with prong extensions. The depiction of the neck chain varied from plantation to plantation, and some plantations even carried their style of neck chains used to mark their slaves and denote property ownership over them. The neck chain prevented escape for slave in this circumstance because they served as such vivid visual reminders of slavery identity and were so cumbersome that movement while wearing one was nearly impossible (Figure 23). The neck chain would be fastened around the neck of the slave and then nailed together at the opened end with a clasped iron pin, thus locking the frame of the chain together, usually at the

nape of the slave's neck where it was least accessible. Often there were more than one clasps continued around the frame of the collar (Hauser 2008: 16). Because of the iron utilized in forging these pieces, the neck chain restraint often weighed between forty and fifty pounds, depending on the wielded size (Starobin 1974: 44). The force exerted by this weight was continuously put onto the neck and shoulders of the slave wearing it, creating deep cuts and sores which would scar the slave, further marking their identity. Neck chains were also unique in their form of restraint because they were worn for extended periods of times for the slaves that wore them and were long-lasting because of their sturdy iron build (Starobin 1974: 44).

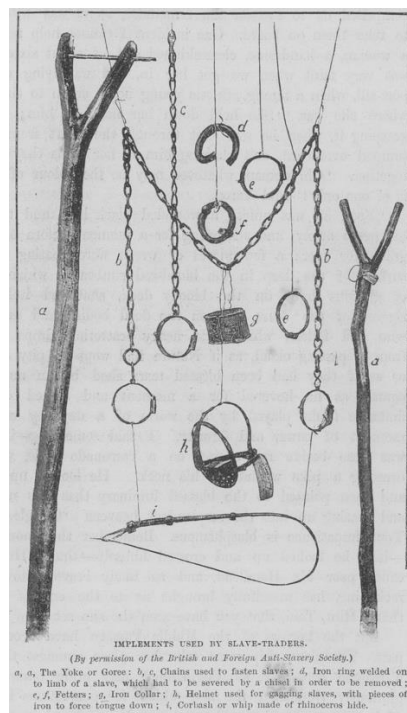


FIGURE 22. "Chains and Other Instruments Used by Slave Traders, 19th cent." (Courtesy of Slavery Images: A Visual Record of the African Slave Trade and Slave Life in the Early African Diaspora, <http://www.slaveryimages.org/s/slaveryimages/item/2013>)



FIGURE 23. Depiction of slave in collar. (Courtesy of Slavery Images: A Visual Record of the African Slave Trade and Slave Life in the Early African Diaspora; Harper's Weekly, Feb. 15, 1862 p. 108).

Neck chains were markers of identity even within established slave systems of Caribbean plantation life. They marked slaves physically against others who were well behaved. Neck chains were long lasting and often marked runaway slaves as troublesome. Despite these varying restraints, the persistent identity of African slaves witnessed through the archaeological remnants remain prevalent and tell their story. By observing the existing restraint material, we can better identify future sites, both terrestrially and underwater, to determine the existence of African slaves that traveled so far and endured so much so ultimately gain freedom and the respect of history today.

Chapter 5: Case Studies

Henrietta Marie (Slave Voyages ID 21285)

The *Henrietta Marie* shipwreck boasts the most substantial quantity of slave artifacts to date. *Henrietta Marie*, initially built in France in the mid-17th century, has a hull that was an estimated eighty feet in length carrying one hundred twenty-ton cargo. Manned by an eighteen-member crew, *Henrietta Marie* completed two separate voyages carrying slaves to the West Indies, sailing under the Royal Africa Company (Figure 24). During its first voyage in 1697, two hundred Africans departed to Barbados; however, once this area became a poor environment for commerce, widespread trade shifted focus towards Port Royal, Jamaica. The ship's second voyage in May 1701 took captive slaves from New Calabar, off the Guinea Coast of Africa, sold them in Jamaica, and then reloaded the cargo space with goods to take back to England. As the vessel passed the Yucatan Channel of Cuba, *Henrietta Marie* wrecked in June of 1701 on New Ground Reef, near present-day Marquesas Keys, a mere thirty-five miles from Key West. There were no survivors of this shipwreck, whose location and carried cargo remained unknown for nearly three centuries. While no slaves were aboard the vessel when *Henrietta Marie* ran aground in June of 1701, the remnants of their existence can be seen through the location of the shackles left behind. Through surgeon logs, the positioning of slaves aboard *Henrietta Marie* provides insight into the distinctions of gender and gender roles across the Middle Passage. Women and children were positioned to the stern of the vessel, while men crowded the bow of the hull (Dow 1969: 221). A determined effort was made to keep the genders separated throughout the travels in order to prevent contact amongst African groups and as an effort to maintain the overall health of the human cargo (Donoghue 2002: 19). By women placed at the stern of *Henrietta Marie*, historically assumed that the appropriately sized shackles for women

would exist in this location. Surgeon Pixhard refers to the storage techniques of such forms of bondage in his 1794 publication (Dow 1969: 22). In the same location that the smaller sized shackles were found, with the stern of the shipwreck, women aboard *Henrietta Marie*, as hypothesized, were shackled using the iron rods found at the stern of the wreckage (Figure 25). The shackles used to restrain these women are located in the same place where they were being stored as human cargo. On the wreck of *Henrietta Marie*, such shackles found on the stern portion of the vessel excavated in 1972. Because of their size and location, gender can be directly applied to these specific shackles of *Henrietta Marie* by documenting the positioning of human cargo in correlation to the sizing of restraints used aboard the vessel (Figure 26). Through historical documentation and archaeological findings, concluding that African enslaved women stored as human cargo utilized the restraints excavated in the stern section of the *Henrietta Marie* shipwreck.

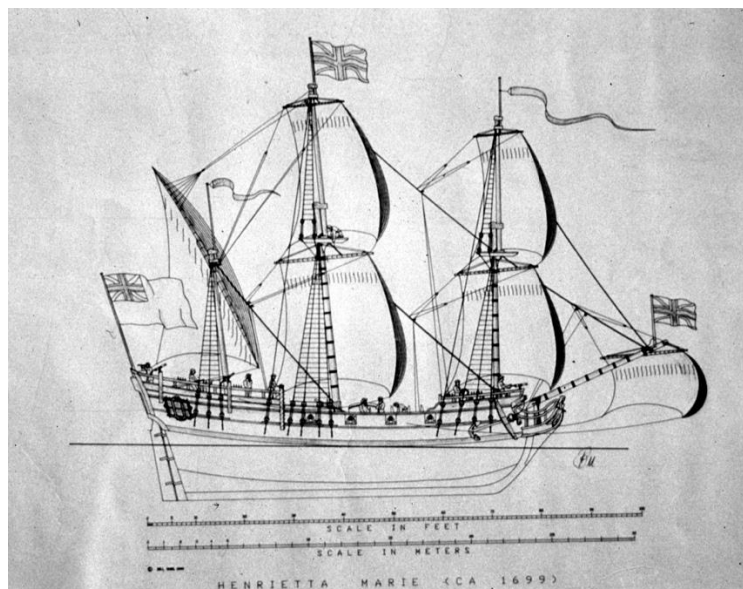


FIGURE 24. *Henrietta Marie* recreation (Courtesy of Slavery Images: A Visual Record of the African Slave Trade and Slave Life in the Early African Diaspora, <http://www.slaveryimages.org/s/slaveryimages/item/2617>).

The artifact assemblage and layout of the underwater wreck offer great insight into the identity of African enslaved women. A focus placed on the means of bondage found and associating the nearly seven thousand observed artifacts within the assemblage with gender. Isolated portions of the wreck that remain today are to the far stern of the hull framing, which is twenty-five feet in length (Moore 1997: 56). That the ship ran aground on New Ground Reef, creating fractured breaks towards the stern where the initial impact was made, causing the stern portion of *Henrietta Marie* to break away from the bow and settle in shallower waters. The outline of the wreckage is determined by the existing framing that litters the archaeological site. Eighty manillas, shackles, and manacles, covered by thick concretions, were found strewn across the stern portion of the wreck.

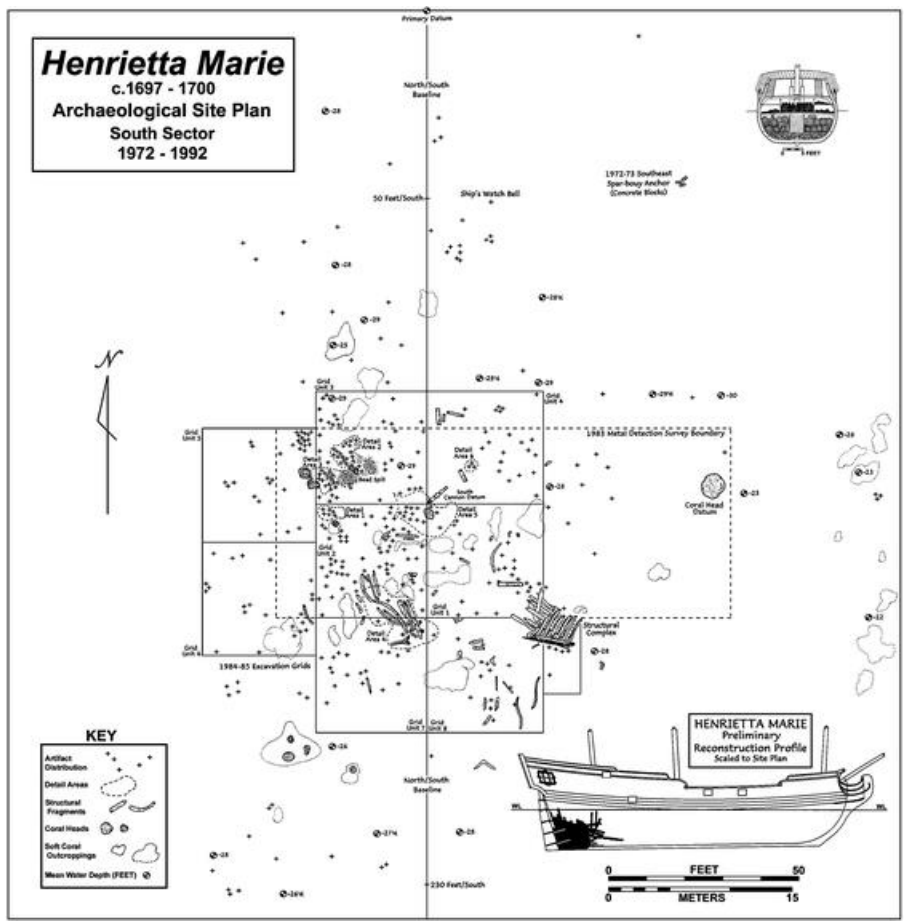


FIGURE 25. Site Map of *Henrietta Marie* (Moore 2008: 22).



FIGURE 26. Shackles Recovered from Slave Ship *Henrietta Marie* (Courtesy of Slavery Images: A Visual Record of the African Slave Trade and Slave Life in Early African Diaspora, <http://www.slaveryimages.org/s/slaveryimages/item/2614>).

The use of shackles, manillas, manacles, neck rings, and chains was common practice during the Atlantic Slave Trade of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These artifacts, which made up the hardware of bondage for the time, are some of the only physical effects that remain from the human cargo that adorned them. Shackles took the form of

a straight iron rod, on which slid two U-shaped metal loops. The iron leg rod had a finished end... and on end a lock or hammered ring, through which a chain might be reeved when two captives came on deck (Rediker 2007: 267).

Typically, only men placed in shackles for the duration of the voyage across the Atlantic had access to all areas of the vessels; women were made to watch over children and even allotted the task of cooking meals, all without restraints (Bush 1990: 127). However, exceptions exist in the case of *Henrietta Marie*. According to surgeon logs, which are descriptive journals of traveling doctors who monitored disease and mortality rates aboard slave traders, all the slaves aboard *Henrietta Marie*, placed in restraints despite their gender and traveled the majority of the voyage in this fashion. Both men and women wore leg and hand restraints, only coming out of such to bathe and exercise on the top deck (Moore 1997; Dow 1969). The size of shackles on men and women varied (Rediker 2007: 269). Amongst the eighty different types of restraints located on the *Henrietta Marie* wreck site, two distinctive groupings of shackles were determined. Two distinctive groupings of shackles seen across the wreck of *Henrietta Marie*; One, a much larger and robust piece, had an iron bar that measured twelve inches in length with five to six-inch diameter iron loops (Figure 27). Another entirely separate grouping of shackles, located elsewhere on the wreck, were iron rods of ten inches with hoops of three to four inches in diameter (Moore 1997: 94 Figure 26). These two types of shackles demonstrate not only the

variant in size of the artifacts but also represent a more contextual understanding of the size of the hands and feet that restrained within them. The smaller features of women and children would have fit into the smaller sizing of shackles, while the width of a man's hands and feet fit more appropriately into the more massive iron shackles. While exceptions will always exist, slave traders kept restraints tight as to prevent escapes, mutiny and fighting amongst intercultural groups of Africans aboard the vessel. However, in order to support the hypothesis of identifying gender amongst seemingly indistinguishable artifacts, a more in-depth observation into the location of these shackles on the wreck itself must be made.

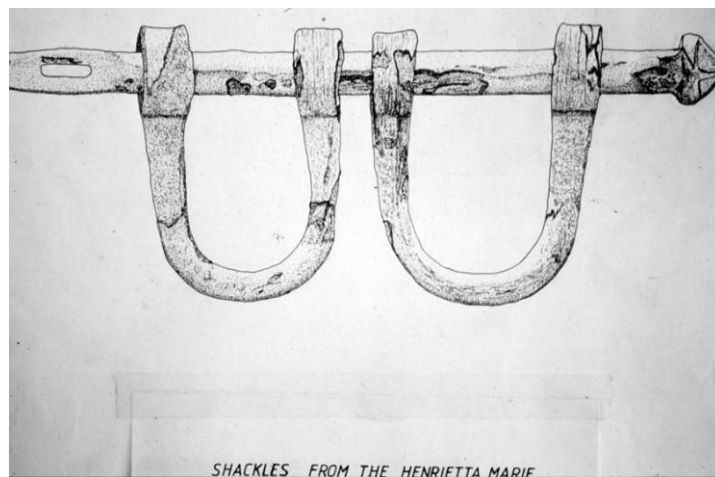


FIGURE 27. Shackles from *Henrietta Marie* (Courtesy of Slavery Images: A Visual Record of the African Slave Trade and Slave Life in the Early African Diaspora, <http://www.slaveryimages.org/s/slaveryimages/item/2613>).

Of the two hundred twenty slaves that disembarked *Henrietta Marie* in Jamaica, ninety-six of them were women (Moore 1997: Chapter III). The experience of African enslaved women aboard slaving vessels of the seventeenth and eighteenth century provide further insight and development into the traced identity of these women which was carried with them across the Middle Passage through the intangible conceptualizations of culture, tradition, and distinctiveness of motherhood. Women aboard slaving vessels, such as those

resembling *Henrietta Marie*, were continuously separated from the men on board, both white and black. Grouped amongst the children, African enslaved women fulfilled a nurturing role of the mother during the long voyage across the Atlantic. The identity of motherhood was a fundamental characteristic in the identity of African females, tracing back to villages in Africa, across the Atlantic, and continuing throughout plantation life in the Caribbean. Aboard *Henrietta Marie*, women sat towards the stern of the vessel with the children. Finding an immediate need to look after the innocence of the youngest members of the slave cargo, African enslaved women aboard would create groups, similar to small-scale kinships, in order to protect, monitor, and nourish African children slaves (Cottman 2017: 167). The maintained identity of motherhood that was said to be carried from Africa and across the Atlantic. Through archaeological records, in the form of captain's logs, there is strong support for the maternal ties created between African enslaved women and slave children aboard *Henrietta Marie*, specifically the role of protector that was often maintained to spare children from torturous acts aboard the ship (Cottman 2017: 188).

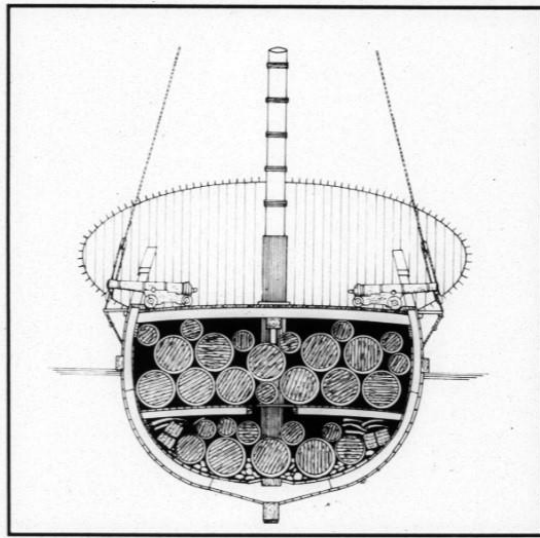
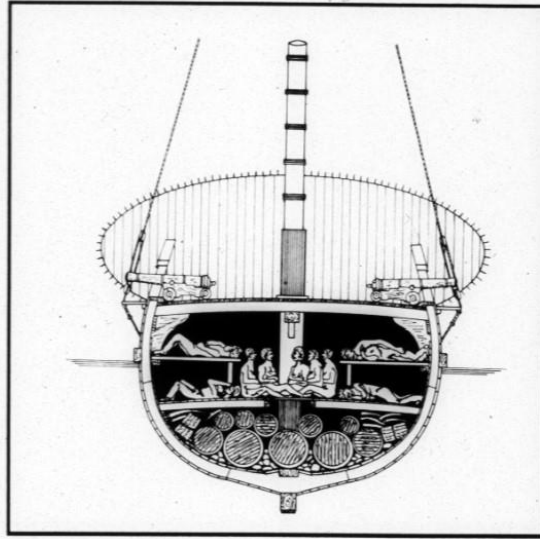


FIGURE 28. *Henrietta Marie* (Courtesy of Slavery Images: A Visual Record of the African Slave Trade and Slave Life in the Early African Diaspora, <http://www.slaveryimages.org/s/slaveryimages/item/2615>).

By using the site reports for *Henrietta Marie*, the tangible artifacts can be used to trace the movement of African enslaved women during the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade while lending a maritime perspective to the argument that women played a key role throughout. There are very

few explicitly gendered remnants of these African enslaved women. Because slaves were viewed as pieces of property in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, many lacked the basic amenities of education and the ability to write their personal strife as a part of the historical record. For enslaved women, the personal history of the Middle Passage exists primarily through tangible artifacts; the highest density of these gendered artifacts resides with the *Henrietta Marie* shipwreck. While the conversations surrounding *Henrietta Marie* remain political due to the methodology used to salvage the slave artifacts, the focus here will only be on gendering the artifacts found within site and comparing them to similar findings within slave wreck assemblages and historical collections from 1700-1850. Whereas these women had no written or spoken voice, an analysis of the artifacts, despite their taboo status within the archaeological community, still holds the critical task of communicating the story of an African enslaved women's voyage, exploitation, and continued struggle for identity.

Whydah (Slave Voyages ID 252721)

In comparison to the archaeological wreck findings of *Henrietta Marie*, the slave ship *Whydah* offers a similar finding in comparative shackles with a unique history. *Whydah* was a galley slave ship, constructed in 1713, travelling from London, England to Guinea on the West Coast of Africa collecting enslaved peoples and then traveling to the Caribbean. The vessel measured 110 feet in length with a tonnage rating at 300 tuns burthen ([The Field Museum 2009](#)). Setting out for its maiden voyage in 1716, *Whydah* carried a variety of goods to exchange for the delivery, trade, and slaves in West Africa. Captained by Lawrence Prince, *Whydah* would embark with 500 slaves, gold, jewelry, and ivory on its initial journey (slavevoyages.com, 25726). Upon its arrival in Barbados.

In late February 1717, *Whydah* was attacked by pirates while passing between Cuba and Hispaniola led by pirate Samuel Bellamy, also known as Black Sam, known to be one of the wealthiest pirates in recorded history. During the Golden Age of Piracy, Bellamy would go on to capture at least 53 ships throughout the Caribbean (Forbes 2008). *Whydah* represents the third vessel to be overtaken by Bellamy in the early 18th century. The capture was a peaceful exchange, remarked by Bellamy giving Captain Prince his previous vessel, *Sultana*, along with portions of silver and gold (Dow 1923: 121). The vessel was then converted from that of a slave ship to a privateer by the adjustment and removal of the slave barricades throughout the hull of the ship, making the vessel better suited for faster travel and the efficiency of privateering (Field Museum, Chicago 2009). The vessel then sailed north along the eastern coast of North America until ultimately coming across a dense fog and violent seasonal weather. Off the coast of Cape Cod, Massachusetts, *Whydah* was driven aground, hitting a sandbar during the thick of night, bow first 500 feet from shore. Facing estimated 70 mile per hour winds, the vessel was then pulled into 30ft of water, where it capsized taking down cargo as well as those aboard with the wreckage (Webster 2008: 2).

The wreckage remained unexcavated until its discovery in early 1986. Buried beneath 10ft of sand substrate with artifacts thrown across the wreckage site from the capsizing of the vessel, the concretions belonging to *Whydah* mark a unique testimony to the slave trade and the dual functionality of slave vessels and pirate ships. From the 1992 site report of the artifact assemblage, the total collection of shackle concretions was located toward the bow of the vessel (Hamilton 1992: 417). It notes the following:

Leg irons, restraining devices for captives, were probably among the original components of *Whydah* as it was used in the slave trade. The location of the leg irons highly concentrated in the bow area of the wreckage, indicates that they were probably stored and not in use at the time of the wreck. This

observation is interesting given that it has been recorded that a number of individual aboard *Whydah* at that time, sixteen were being held against their will.

This observation both illuminates the branched duality of this ship, both that of a slaving vessel and a pirate ship. By having the shackles found at the bow of the wreckage, it can be concluded that they were in the stowing position at the time of the wrecking, again highlighting the use of the vessels for privateering (Figure 29). Had the vessel ran aground during its time as a slaving vessel, it can be assured that the shackle assemblages would be more evenly divided toward the stern of the ship and starkly to the bow. This predicted divination of assemblages would provide an interesting insight to the gender stowage of the vessel, and create comparative analysis with *Henrietta Marie*, of the same time period, to deduce the presence of women on board based on wreck assemblage location.

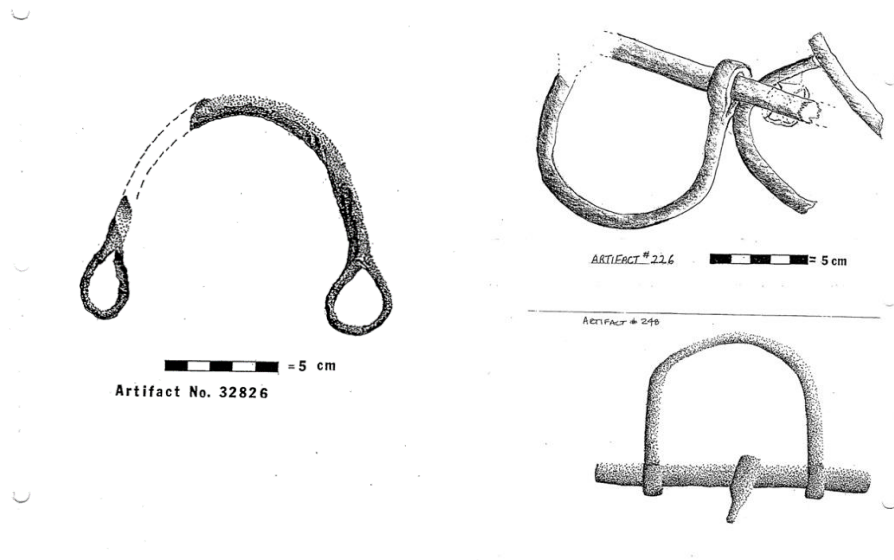


FIGURE 29. Collection of slave shackles excavated from *Whydah* (Hamilton 1992: 10).

However, if we examine the excavated concretions of *Whydah* in comparison to those found across the *Henrietta Marie* site, this gendered comparison takes on new light and

discussions; 16 leg irons were found at the bow area of the wreckage, landing in a small concreted bundle on the northwestern portion of the archaeological site. (Hamilton 1992: 6). Determined to be made of either iron or latex, these leg irons represent a tangible tale of *Whydah*'s dual history. While no immediate gender is placed on these pieces, due in part to their storage positioning while the vessel was a pirate ship, but also to the fragmentation that the artifacts have broken down to as concreted pieces with time, a further analysis of the sizing and shaping of each artifact lends insight into its gendered usage during its earlier involvement with the slave trade (Figure 30).

Of the totaled collection of leg irons discovered, two distinct groupings remain evident throughout the archaeological assemblage. These varying type of leg irons demonstrate not only the methodology of constructed restraints, but also the significance of their size variance. In observing the archaeological assemblage of leg irons on the *Whydah* site we see select shackles that are 13cm in diameter as well as some that are much smaller, being 7 and 10cm. While this variant amount is not large, it does call into significant question why shackles were being constructed with such little variance in size. As noted previously, shackles were constructed to create restraint, whether on wrists or legs, and documentation does exist for the manual manipulation of these sizings - being those where leather or fabric straps have been wrapped around the metal of the shackle. While it is highly debated whether these manual adjustments were done for comfort or for resizing, the vast majority of these cases exist solely in plantation scenarios and very few have been found with adjustments across maritime archaeological sites. Seeing the difference in sized shackles aboard *Whydah* assemblage highlights similar measurements to the restraints found aboard *Henrietta Marie*.

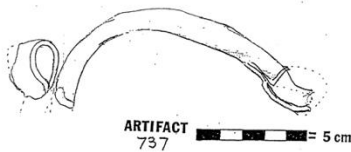
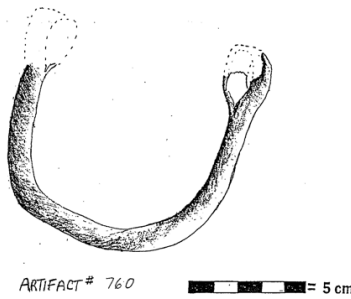
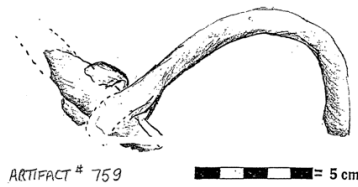


FIGURE 30. Leg iron excavation, *Whydah* (Hamilton 1992: 9).

For example, artifact 32826 of *Whydah*, a traditional iron bilboe measures 13cm, or 5.21 inches in diameter (Figure 29). It exists in two separate pieces, although there is only a small portion missing that would have completed the artifact. The measurements of this shackle piece vary drastically in comparison to other artifacts; artifact 226 and 248 measure 10cm, 3.9 inches,

and 7cm, 2.76inches, respectively (Figure 30). These same sizes of smaller shackles can be seen in both artifact 759 and 760 with the same measurements in diameter. While these comparative findings bring a lot to the point of discussion, a last example more clearly aligns with the most common occurrence seen in maritime artifact assemblages. Artifacts 726 and 737 (Figure 30) demonstrates the rarity of finding a shackle complete with measurable widths. Most often, shackles are found as separate splintered pieces within concretions, making it difficult to hypothesize and measure the totaled value length of each artifact and to compare it to others. Pieces of fragmented slave restraint artifacts still hold immense value in the overall discussion of the slave trade but prove more difficult in demonstrating gendered differences across maritime shipwrecks.

As with the assemblage of *Henrietta Marie*, the *Whydah* presents the example in varying shackle diameter size, leading to the understanding of a varying type of shackles being used on board. It is important to note the documented work of the National Parks Service (<https://Vigilante.nps.gov/articles/Whydah.htm>) citing that the same shackles used on *Whydah* while a slaving vessel were repurposed during its time as a pirate ship. Because of the varying sizes of these documented shackles, their variant use could have been to restrain the ligaments of varying sizes accordingly. With this notion, the idea behind gendered artifacts is again brought to the surface. By having smaller sized shackles onboard the vessel, compared to those that are larger, it can be hypothesized that out of the enslaved peoples and the human cargo of *Whydah*, a portion would have been women. As previously discussed, the smaller sized appendage of female African slaves and children could account for the smaller sizing of these shackles, bilboes, and manacles, whereas if the larger shackles were placed on women, their hands or feet might more easily slip through.

We see this theory further by observing individual layout plans of traveling slave vessels across the time period of the western slave trade. By observing the allocations given in the Dolben Act which limited the number of slaves on board vessels to be congruent the tonnage of the ships, we see a historical shift of legality from following government standards in the 18th century, to a distinct shift towards mass transit entering into the 19th century (Garland and Klein: 239). Following the dissatisfaction of the Dolben Act, new spacing requirements extended to “prescribing a minimum of eight square feet for each slave” (Atlantic Slave Trade, 1799: 330-331). Other methodologies practiced during the 1800s included breaking up the allotted square footage within the decking system by creating multiple levels within the hull, creating a stacking of enslaved peoples that wouldn’t coverage a large amount of surface space within the ship. From this multiple decking system, we see the notorious depictions, such as that of *Brookes* and *Vigilante* in which mass numbers of human bodies are laid out throughout the ship, separated by gender and age. Within this study we see that women are organized within the stern of these vessels, which highlights the archaeological findings of shackles, separated by sizes, found at opposite ends of wreckage sites. By using depictions of storage practices aboard slaving vessels in comparison to modern archaeological slave shipwreck site maps, we can see the existence and location of the women store onboard based on archaeological evidence of the restraints used to oppress them.

By comparing storage locations of human cargo across maritime landscapes of slave shipwrecks, there is growing support for the presence and location of enslaved women aboard salving vessels during the Transatlantic Slave Trade. By understanding the tangibly historic methods to restrain these women and oppress them while on board, future excavation sites can be identified as slaving vessels and furthermore lend credence to the presence of African women’s

survival of the Middle Passage. This methodology of scanning observed artifacts of bondage exists as a key identifier to the future success of finding historic wrecks as well as future developments of identity for enslaved African women.

Brookes (Slave Voyages ID 80666)

One of the most tangibly representative testaments of the enslaved women's experience is demonstrated through slave ship construction layouts in which different stacking methods were utilized. The poignant imagery produced through these historic construction depictions lends both to the humanitarian horror behind slavery, but also to the innovative trading methods of the eighteenth and nineteenth century. By comparing the ship packing methods of enslaved people aboard varying vessels, a gendered pattern emerges in both the historical record, as presented by testimonials and surgeon logs, as well as within the archaeological record of slave shipwreck, as noted through artifact assemblage locations.

One of the most recognizable depictions related to the ships of the slave trade is *Brookes*, whose model references as one of the earlier images of slave ship cargo construction (Figure 31). Used primarily in historical context as a reference by abolitionists, *Brookes* construction highlights the inhumane conditions that were so normative to the slave trade of the late eighteenth century.

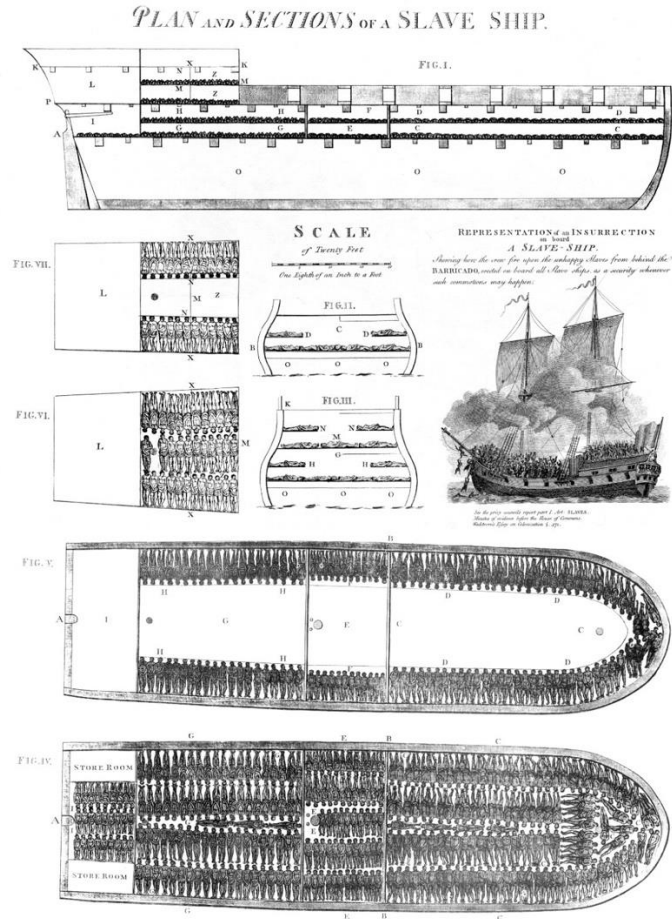


FIGURE 31. "Plan of the British Slave Ship Brookes, 1789" (Wadstrom 1794: fold-out included in pocket attached to cover).

Brookes was constructed in 1781 in Liverpool, England and continuously sailed under the British flag during all of its eleven slaving voyages. The ship had a registered tonnage of 297 and exchanged between 10 separate owners during its existence as a slaving vessel, with each travel outcome delivering slaves to the Americas and Caribbean. The discussed imagery of *Brookes*, as published in the Plymouth's 1788 pamphlet, is derived from the third voyage of the vessel, under Captain Thomas Molyneux. The initial place of purchase during the voyage of *Brookes* was at Anomabu Castle, later named Fort William located in Anomabu, Ghana, on the Western coast of Africa. The start of the third voyage of *Brookes* began on October 17, 1786, and the vessel

delivered the human cargo to Kingston, Jamaica on January 11, 1787. It is from this voyage that the published construction image comes.

During the fifty-one days of travel across the Middle Passage, the forty-five staffed crew alongside Molyneux orchestrated the enslavement of six-hundred and nine slaves. By observing Lloyd's Register of Shipping, it is historically documented that 58% of these slaves were men, 21% were women, and the remainder made up of children. Ultimately during the passage, six crew members and thirteen slaves passed, a relative few amount in comparison with other slaving voyages of the same period. (Williams 1897: 585) (Figure 32).

The original lithograph depiction was produced in England in 1788 by William Alfred, a fellow of the Royal Society and Royal Academy. It shows a one-hundred-foot cargo vessel bearing 320 tons and a crew of 45. (Glickman 2015: 10) The 1808 published image of *Brookes* layout describes the lining of the hull with human cargo in a specific grid-area pattern. The construction shows that the enslaved were set on different levels of the ship, laying down, with their feet facing the outer hull framing. In the deepest levels of the ship, bodies lined the lower deck in order to allow for the most considerable amount of cargo possible within the hull. The construction of *Brookes* allotted for a cargo of 470 slaves total. This total number was broken down based on location and gender within the structure of the ship; however, ultimately, *Brookes* transported over 600 African humans on board. The already crowded amount of human cargo is further intensified when the physical dimensions they were subjected to are brought into consideration. *The History of the Rise, Progress, and Accomplishment of the Abolition of the African Slave-Trade by British Parliament* (Clarkson 1836: 237) in which the publication of *Brookes* was initially published, lists the spatial dimensions for each cargo group. The image descriptions list :

The room allowed to each description of slaves in this plan is [as follows]
... To the Men, 6 feet by 1 foot 4 inches. Women, 5 feet 10 inches by 1 foot 4 inches. Boys, 5 feet by 1 foot 2 inches. Girls, 4 feet 6 inches by 1 foot.

This was the usual manner of placing slaves aboard a vessel this size; however, the amount of room given varied based on which level of the ship enslaved peoples were placed. Observing the cramped dimensions presented to enslaved people aboard *Brookes*, and in observing the overall layout construction of the vessel, a difference emerges between male and female cargo passengers. Referencing the storage capacity onboard, *Brookes* made a clear distinction of gender by the location in which it stored its slaves. Men were stacked toward the mid and bow of the ship on all three described levels of the vessel, totaling in 351 slaves. They were bound continuously to each-other by a foot shackle that was never removed. The publication even marks on the daily ritual of bringing male slaves to the upper deck and forcing them to "dance", hearing the clanking metal at their feet as it tore into the constructs of their flesh. Enslaved women were stored at the aft of the ship on the lower and mid-levels, totaling in 127 on board, but remained unchained as they, collectively, were not seen as a threat to the seamen on board. African women were stored amongst the boys and girls aboard *Brookes* and took on mothering rolls to the youngest members of the vessel across the eight-week journey. Of the journey, the description outlines the following conditions of the enslaved travelers :

The half-deck is sometimes appropriate for a sick birth; but the men slaves are seldom indulged in the privilege of being placed there, till there is little hope of recovery. The slaves are never allowed the least bedding, either sick or well; but are stowed on the bare boards, from the friction of which, occasioned by the motion of the ship, and their chains, they are frequently much bruised; and in some cases, the flesh is rubbed off their shoulders, elbows, and hips. (Citation here)

These gruesome depictions of the treatment of slaves aboard slaving vessels remain steadfast in the historical record; while the documented expression remains jarring to a

modern audience, it is essential to reflect the tone and distinct group of initial publication. The construction pamphlet of *Brookes*, which include the reflective summary, was created and published through abolitionist groups of the early 1800s. In a retrospective connotation, the descriptions appear bleak and gruesome as we understand the treatment of humans as cargo to be. The normalization of African slave cargo, however, is equally reflected within the time period of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade; these layouts of slave ships were commonplace, the storage practices and daily routines of the cargo on board were traditional for the times. While the pamphlet remains valid, its descriptive nature must be understood within the tone of its publishers and referenced within its distinct timeline.

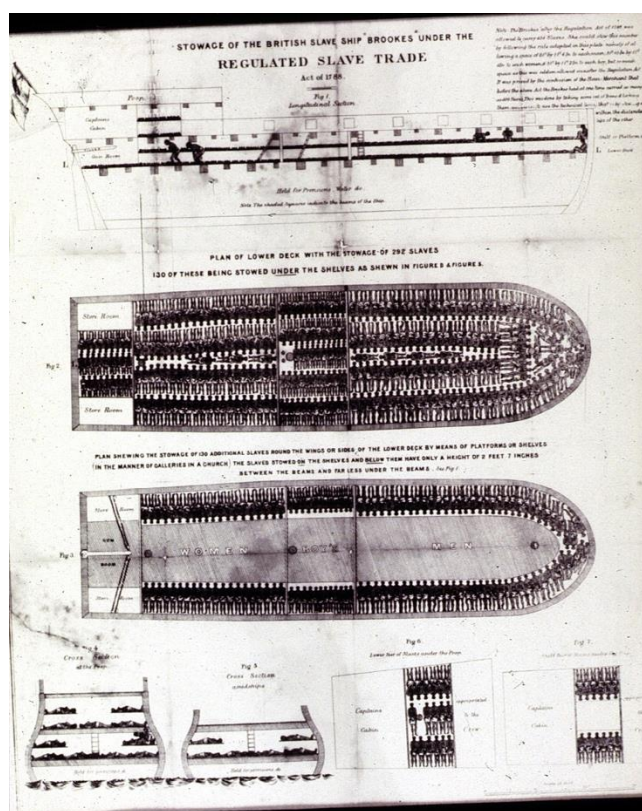


FIGURE 32. "Stowage of the British Ship *Brookes* under the Regulated Slave Trade Act of 1788" (Courtesy of Library of Congress Portfolio 282-43)).

Debates over the exaggerative nature of *Brookes* extends to the physical layout demonstrated in the depiction. The image lays out an estimated 487 slaves; however, the journey

taken before the initial measurements were made held 638 slaves on board. Later, *Brookes* is recorded holding 744 slaves. Each amount meets the legal requirements in correspondence to the tonnage of the ship set through the Slave Trade Act of 1788 and does not exceed that amount (Cohn 1985: 688).

Notwithstanding the questioning accuracy of the depictions, the overall impact of publication had lasting historical effect amongst the public of the time. The publication, which originated as a construction diagram of the slaving vessels of the late 18th century, had an added twelve-hundred-word description added to it to form the infamous pamphlet of 1808. As previously mentioned, the description held stark abolitionist depictions and was taken as eyewitness testimony, presented as a forensic case to which no reference of religion or other abolitionist thought was made (Glickman 2015: 14.) The generalizations presented by the created testimony do hold true to some circumstantial evidence of other slaving vessels travelling from 1750 to 1850; however, the original purpose of the construction, which was not connected to any first-person testimony, much less from the perspective of the oppressed, and therefore should be viewed from the two time periods in which it is historically referenced: before and after the 1808 edit publication. Depth and understanding of identity can be discovered; however, by viewing the archaeological evidence that remains as a part of the vessel, giving insight where debate remains. Descriptions made in Lloyd's Register of Shipping (1764, 1768, 1776, 1778-84, 1786-1787, 1789-1808) in comparison with accounts made in the British Parliamentary Papers for equivalent years offer documented insight into what tangible items remained with the enslaved peoples aboard the vessel during its nearly two-month voyage across the Atlantic. This is directly referenced through the supportive surgeon logs to denote the treatment of these women, the methods of restraint used against them, and the small tokens of African culture

they maintained on their persons, such as beads and beading structures. Despite the argued exaggerative tones of the treatment aboard *Brookes*, evidence exists equally for the poor treatment of slaves aboard a different vessel nearly forty years later: *Vigilante*.

Vigilante (Slave Voyages ID 221)

Vigilante can be described as “the brig from Nantes, as vessel employed in the slave trade, which was captured by Lieutenant Mildmay, in the River Bonny, on the coast of Africa...She was 240 tons burden and had on board, at the time she was taken 345 slaves.” The slaving vessel *Vigilante* represents a unique visual to the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade as the documentation of its ship construction, and slave cargo layout, is well documented. As the description of one such depiction states, *Vigilante* was a French slaving vessel from Nantes, constructed in 1820. Described as a brig, the ship maintained a tonnage between 232-240, depending on the cited reference. Its first voyage began on January 5, 1822 sailing to Bonny on the western coast of Africa to collect 345 slaves from up and down the coastline. The vessel departed the African coast on April 15, 1822 and sailed under the oversight of Captain Antoine César Bouffier with a crew of 31. The Middle Passage for this vessel took 39 days, during which 45 slaves died. 40% (138) of the documented slaves were men, 20% (69) women, and 40% (138) were children (Figure 33). The vessel was captured by the Royal Navy squadron during which slaves were “found lying on their backs on the lower deck, those in the centre were sitting some in the posture in which they are shown & others with their legs bent under them, resting upon the soles of their feet” (Dow 1927: 44). The original goal of disembarking this large amount of slaves for profit had been thwarted and the transference of human agency was ceased for *Vigilante*.

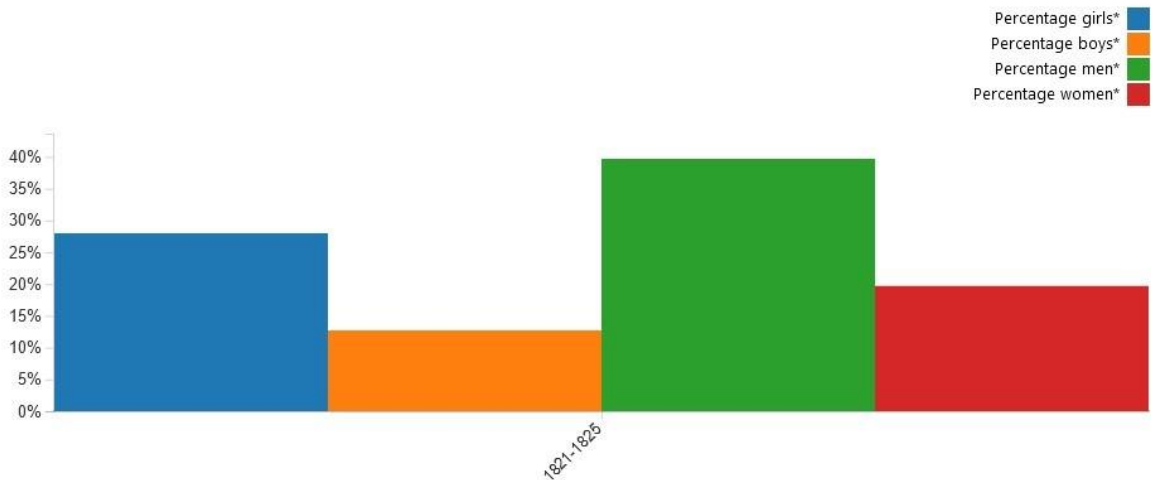


FIGURE 33. Statistical representation of year arrived vs. Percent of gendered population for *Vigilante* (created via slavevoyages.org).

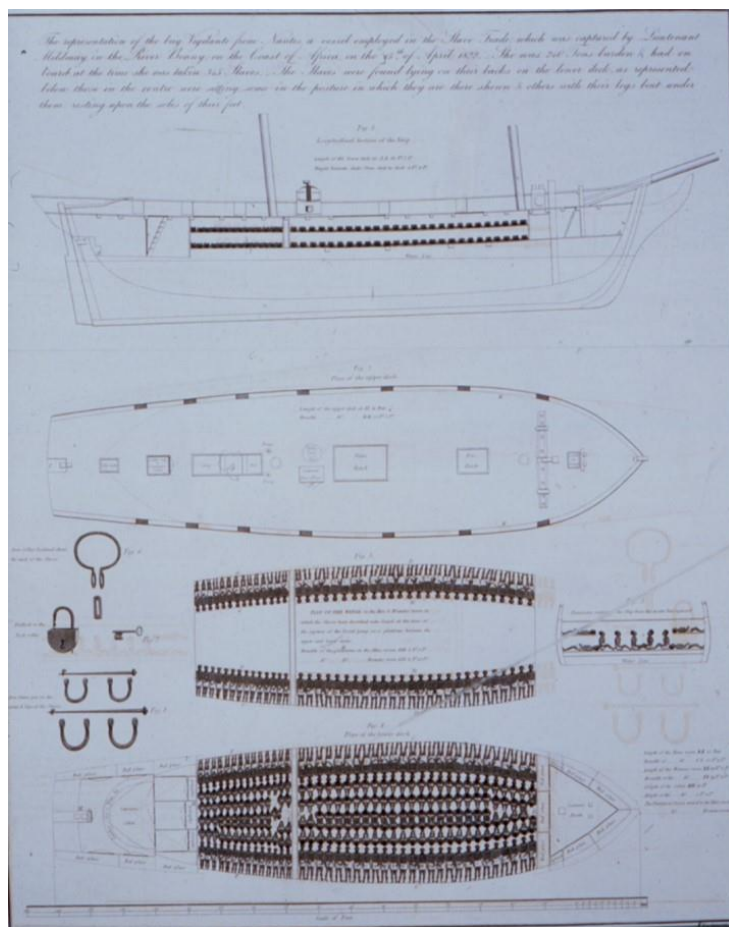


FIGURE 34. "French Slave Ship, Vigilante, 1823" (Courtesy of National Maritime Museum, London).

Abolitionists use the example of *Vigilante* to highlight the storing methods used on board for the documentation of inhumane conditions suffered by these enslaved peoples (Figure 34). Slave restraints are depicted to the bottom left of the depiction. They show two distinct sizes of leg restraints utilized on board, these depicted leg irons would have been used on varying sizes of individual ligaments. The restraints documented within the pamphlet also include a documented collar with locking from clasp and associated key. By documenting the restraints on board the vessel, this abolitionist depiction of *Vigilante* is lending to the larger archaeological framework of slave assemblages. Appropriating the time period and varying sizes of used leg irons and collars allows for future study, dating, and recognition within slave assemblages of future discovered slave wrecks. Through the association of these leg restraints directly with the enslaved cargo layout of vessels, tangible artifacts can be utilized to lend identity to the individuals onboard. Furthermore, due to the varying sizes of the depicted leg restraints in the documents of *Vigilante*, evidence is given to support varying genders aboard the vessel.

In the bottom portion of the pamphlet image, we see the unique layout of individuals within the hull framing of the vessel. Of important observation is the distinction of gender within the depiction. The image shows men stored in the bow of the vessel, while women, acknowledged by the open bosoms shown, in the stern (Figure 35). From this depiction, as well as others such as *La Marie* (Figure 36) the existence of women aboard these vessels is acknowledged. Their presence is indicated by those documenting the vessels, lending validity to their overall experience. It is important how this separation of gender was referenced by those creating these ship layout designs in the early 19th century, because it demonstrates how the distinguishment was important then, during the times of slavery. By representing the differing genders and their respective location aboard slaving vessels, such as *Vigilante*, the presence of these women and

the historic narrative they represent is documented, acknowledged, and analyzed. The human cargo on board is not a singular representation of bodies, they are individuals who had existing identities, narratives, and experiences aboard these slaving ships. Through the abolitionist depictions of the storage techniques, we can still see these identities of gender today.

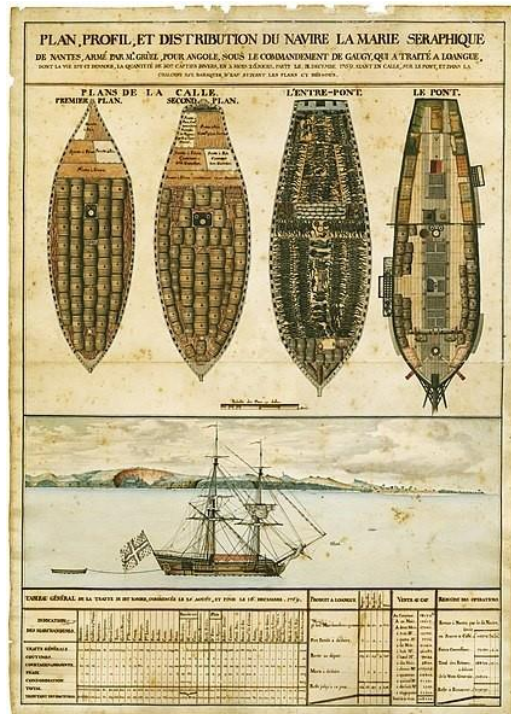


FIGURE 35. *La Marie* (Guillet 2009).



FIGURE 36. Depiction of women aboard *La Marie* (Guillet 2009).

Chapter 6: Female Voices of the Voyage

The history of African enslaved women extends far beyond enslavement and slave identity. The shifting identities of these women impacted not only their history but also the history of future generations. Following the narratives of young mixed children, the shift of treatment and self-identity within slave culture lends knowledge within the comparative contexts of imperialism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Through the analysis of African enslaved women descendants in the Caribbean, a more extensive comparison is determined concerning the treatment of women both historically and during modern times. This comparison is reached based on mulatto children, Creole culture, and the continued identity of African enslaved women. By examining these similar traits of past and present slave descendants, a broader understanding of the holistic identity of African enslaved women, and their impact on modern culture is explained allowing for greater understanding all changing points and evolutionary status of African female identity, interpretations about modern Afro-Caribbean cultures.

During the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, African enslaved women maintained different situational identities throughout their travel from Africa, across the Middle Passage, and through their distribution in the Caribbean, specifically Cuba and Bermuda. The experience of enslaved women while in Africa existed through family structure and a societal role of motherhood. For these purposes, African women maintained higher slave worth compared to men. Women not only had the physical strength to work in a rural setting that varied in different regions of Africa but also could biologically reproduce and raise their children as slaves. In African culture, motherhood existed as the fulfilment of female adulthood and a woman's fertility was her greatest gift (Bush 2010: 72). By distinguishing the relationship between African women and

their children, a further element of identity established within Africanist values of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries.

With the involvement of Trans-Atlantic slavery beginning in the early sixteenth century, this perspective became manipulated by slave traders, Western society, and even African enslaved women themselves. The European perception of black women in Africa implied that of a primitive, underdeveloped, and barbaric animal, classifying motherly actions as savage and uncivilized. African women carrying their young, open-breasted, was distinguished as ape-like activity by European, Mediterranean white society. This continued bestial comparison of African women-led Europeans to see African females as a potential for slave profit rather than humanitarian mothers. This viewpoint, which held African enslaved women to a different standard than men, attributed to the high numbers of women exchanged within African borders as well as those eventually sold into the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade.

Once African enslaved women entered into the slave trade, their identity transferred across the Atlantic during the Middle Passage. While the total number of black enslaved women that survived the venture across the Atlantic does not exist in the historical record, the number of women that were logged through slave trade records demonstrate that an overall African enslaved female population thrived. The Middle Passage of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade is a historically daunting and traumatic exchange of human slaves. The trading of this exploited property created lasting effects on the societal roles of the enslaved passengers, evolving their identity from one of the self to that of the objectified cargo. The established identity of these women no longer existed through a humanitarian lens; instead, they were stripped of their established identities and treated as objectified cargo that could be bartered and sold. In this sense, their established identity now meant a contextual lack of freedom. The

dehumanizing nature of the Middle Passage is observed through a historical lens and discussed with reverence. While the conditions onboard slave vessels drastically affected all Africans, African women became specifically affected in unique and lasting ways, their identity transforming once again to adapt to the situation in which they found themselves.

The targeted gendered exploitation of African enslaved women in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries occurred both aboard vessels and throughout the distribution of slaves throughout the New World. Gender exploitation encompasses all acts of objectification against a person based on their gendered sex; for women, this includes harassment, sexual violence, and rape. Historically, gendered exploitation existed joint amongst slave groups because it endures as another form of dominance, authoritative control, and objectification. This objectification stems from sexual stereotypic, as argued by Eddie Donoghue, in which exploitation exists because of a person's biological sex.

Rape became commonplace onboard slave vessels traveling the Middle Passage because both slave traders and crewmembers commonly objectified black enslaved women. Captains, slave traders, and crewmembers preyed upon African enslaved women while being they were purchased from the barracoons, or slave carrels, in Africa. Because of these relations between captains, crewmembers, and eventually plantation owners, many of the women of the slave trade became pregnant before or during their arrival to the Western World (Donoghue 2002: 123). From the relations of these white men with African women, a new identity was formed. According to Donoghue, the establishment of identity marked by self-awareness and categorizations of self-worth based on situational context. To elaborate further on this, the identity of African enslaved women continuously moves between a spectrum, marking them as mothers, cargo, beings of exploitation, and ultimately empowered by modern movements.

Identity, therefore, maintains biological, cultural, and social spectrums of self (Donoghue 2002: 120).

While understanding how the mixture of race historically began with African women, it is also essential to observe the changing identities of the nineteenth-century generations of mixed-race children. Representing more than just a mixture of race, these children embody unique traditions, culture, and identity that transitioned from times of slavery and into the modern context. Because of this, an adequate description of this generation is mixed-heritage and will be referred to as such.

The cultural construct of mixed-heritage children existed since the beginning of Caribbean slavery. Because of their lighter skin tones, the natural aesthetic stood out amongst both Africans and whites alike. This discrimination against mixed-heritage children documented through the life stories of both Juan Francisco Manzano, a Cuban slave, and Mary Prince, a slave girl living in Bermuda allows an insight into the identity of these children. From the moment that these children were born, their status as mixed-heritage marked them, both physically and psychologically, in contrast to all other members of society (Donoghue 2010: 93). While they still followed the label of "slave" upheld by their mother's social status, they remained a racial enigma because of their unique aesthetic. The mothers of these children, often African enslaved women were continuously marked by their connection with the white man; the fathers of these children, White plantation workers and men of authority, held little to no relation with their mixed-heritage children throughout their lifetimes (Bush 1990: 188). Regional as well as historical differences existed between these two groups. However, the imperial systems employed in both regions of Cuba and Bermuda varied significantly and even more so in the different periods of Juan Francisco Manzano. Manzano represents early nineteenth-century

Cuban society under Spanish involvement, while Mary Prince, demonstrates early eighteenth-century plantation life in Bermuda. Because of this, the identity of mixed-heritage children and that of African enslaved women are continuously intertwined, creating a comparative and unique cultural experience of race relations within the Caribbean of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The story of Juan Francisco Manzano accurately represents this varied perspective on mixed-heritage children in the nineteenth century. Born to an African slave mother and a Spanish white father, Manzano grew up as a mixed-heritage Cuban slave. Born in the Matanzas Province of Cuba around 1797, his story is the only documented testimony of a slave in Cuba during the eighteenth century. He later went on to become a famous poet, but his autobiographical work written about his childhood as a confined slave remains to be an intricate part of Cuban culture and history. Born to Maria del Pilar Manzano, an African enslaved woman, and Toribio de Casto, a white man, Juan Francisco Manzano was placed under the control of Señora Beatriz de Justiz de Santa Ana to whom his mother was the handmaiden. Manzano does not mention these historical characters further in his autobiography, choosing instead to highlight his own experiences as a young child instead of that of his parents. Manzano recounts his life, beginning around the age of four, with Señora Beatriz, an infamous plantation mistress in northern Cuba during the eighteenth century. Ordered by Señora Beatriz, Manzano was not allowed to play with other slave children, and because of his skin tone, he was treated as a white child within the plantation community; compared to other slaves and children, he initially lived a comfortable lifestyle, segregated from the harsh realities of African slaves' daily lives.

At the age of eleven, Manzano was given to a new mistress in exchange for thirty-five dollars, a María de la Concepción, la Marquesa del Prado Ameno so that he could work the plantation as

well as being her house slave. Here, separated from his previous life and his parents, Manzano began to endure the realities of slave living, experiencing cruel treatment from both his mistress and fellow slaves alike. He states that his second mistress held the power of "life and death" over him while he stayed with her, denoting that he lived in a state of constant fear (Manzano 1836: 16). He also opens his autobiography with "remember when you read me that I am a slave and that the slave is a dead being in the eyes of his master." Such a harsh and drastic statement demonstrates the actual relationship experience by Manzano throughout his life with María de la Concepción. While he worked under her, he was outcast by white members of the plantation as well as by black members of the slave community. His light complexion created isolation because fellow slaves saw him as the betrayed byproduct of black and white sexual relations, whether consensual or not. He tells the story of how he could not reach out to other members on the plantation because they understood him to be one of the whites, continually linked with his mistress and her relations (Manzano 1836: 33). On the same notion, Juan Francisco Manzano existed as being a tainted being by white members of the plantation; despite being initially treated as a white child with his first mistress, his second mistress felt determined to make him feel lower than a black slave because he was the product of mixing races. A distinct Caribbean population experienced this sense of extremities, being of mixed-heritage in a time when people viewed as literally white or black maintained a lower-class level. While Manzano's experience highlights a part of Spanish Cuban slave systems of the nineteenth centuries, the imperial relationship between Spain and Cuba during this period allowed for a general lack of laws for the established treatment of slaves. Effectively, slavery was an untamed beast that Spaniards used to expand a dying empire.

Unable to connect to either group, black or white, free or enslaved, these mixed-heritage children were left in isolation and often resorted to extreme measures. Manzano himself escaped slavery by running away from his second mistress after he had endured years of torture and cruelty under her ownership. Once he had run away, Manzano loses his attached identity to the white man, a fact he illustrates poetically through the dressing of his body by Marquesa de Prado Ameno, his second mistress. He experienced his body as a tool to be used for and by his mistress' pleasure, both through entertainment and sexual endeavors. His second mistress' control was encompassed psychologically by the dressing of Manzano. When she dressed him in fine, Victorian clothes, she is enamored with him. When she placed him in rags or left him naked to the forces of nature outside, she demonstrated her disdain for his behavior. This publicized display of dress demonstrated his stripped identity in front of all members of the Cuban plantation. Through this physical change as well as his status as a mixed-heritage slave, Manzano's dignity demolished and his identity further complicated (Molloy 1989: 417). This complication of identity intensifies after Manzano's emancipation. Many white English writers discredited him, and his texts were deemed unsuitable for modern society (Molloy 1989: 388). His previous identity as a slave held such power over his new-found identity as a writer that he gains credentials through a white Spanish writer, del Monte, in order to promote his autobiography and gain any success, both as a novel and a historical document, within nineteenth-century Caribbean society.

Mixed-heritage children and families existed as a form of fetishism for Westerners throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Seen as a unique occurrence marked by cultural and racial intermixing, mixed-heritage families allowed white members of society to view a new class of citizen and a new racial divide within society. Existing as a form of scientific

racism, the categorizing based on outward aesthetic highlights the struggle of mixed-heritage identity. By explicitly labeling identities based on race, Western society only enhanced racial thought throughout the Caribbean. Fetishism contributed significantly to the ideas of scientific racism, promoting standards, which owners of mixed-heritage children aimed to uphold. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, Europeans expressed this fetishism physically by parading mixed-heritage children around, even strapping them to leashes like dogs (Bush 2010: 155). This contextual evidence lends identity to the mixed-heritage child being a societal commodity that demonstrated both wealth and ownership on a physical level. Psychologically, as demonstrated through the previous testimony of Juan Francisco Manzano, the fetishism of these children was manipulated based on factors such as behavior, familial lines, and relationships to their owners. If these children acted out, their treatment would shift to resemble that of the treatment of slaves; however, if they were right, they maintained the identity of a white child paraded by their owners. Similarly, if the master well liked the mother of these children, the children were cared for as if they were the master's own; however, if they mother misbehaved, the children would be equally punished (Donoghue 2010: 144). The shifting identities of these mixed-heritage children show a fluid appearance within the perspective of whites. This unique fluid identity is one of the many ways in which mixed-heritage children were fetishized in the nineteenth century the Caribbean. Their race was marked by both black and white; consequently, their treatment on plantations expressed in the same light.

Slavery narratives exist as a direct connection to the past histories of slaves, whether they are of mixed-race or not. Their testimonies demonstrate perspective insight into the daily experiences of slavery that would otherwise be lost. Following the example of Juan Francisco Manzano, a *mulatto* Cuban boy, the experience of Mary Prince, a black slave girl, shows the

gendered exploitation of children throughout slavery. Her testimony eventually gave strength to the identity of newly freed slaves and the lasting impact that slavery had on historical women, despite efforts made for the emancipation.

Mary Prince was born in 1788 at Devonshire Parish, Bermuda. Her parents were both existing slaves on the plantation of African descent. Her account, published in 1831, was the first written by an enslaved woman and to be distributed throughout the United Kingdom and it gained great success as a description of the legal battles fought by freed African enslaved women. However, the beginning of her narrative equally demonstrates the struggle of identity and race within slave systems of the Caribbean and, for this writing, will remain a focal point. Her extensive family and the relationships she maintain with other slaves initially mark Mary Prince's identity. On Devonshire Parish, Mary lives with her biological mother and her three siblings, including sisters Hannah and Dinah. Their master is the genuinely kind-hearted Charles Myners, who gives Mary to his youngest daughter. As early as ten years old, Mary is Ms. Myners' nanny and companion. Because of their ages, Mary being only a few years older than her white mistress, they can maintain a sense of innocence to their relationship and activities; commonly they play as regular children throughout the parish. In her earliest years with Ms. Myers, her identity is not a reflection of her status and race. She routinely plays with her mistress as if they are equals, untouched by the societal and racial marked status of slaves and white. These are some of the fondest memories of Mary Prince, recounting that her Mistress was her baby doll and they were nearly inseparable. It is interesting to observe through her descriptions how her racial identity becomes a part of discussion only when given tasks, such as watching over her mistress in the evenings and only then does she quote terms such as "black

girl" about her herself or her behavioral interactions with whites. However, her identity would shift soon after a new family purchases her.

When Mary Prince's master dies of old age, she and her immediate family are sent to auction. Being only twelve years old at the time, Mary describes the experience as:

At length the venue master, who was to offer us for sales like sheep or cattle, arrived, and asked my mother which was the eldest. She said nothing but pointed to me. He took me by the hand, and led me out into the middle of the street, and turning me slowly round, exposed me to the view of those who attended the venue (Prince 2008: 62).

Here, the fear of Mary's mother expresses to her child; having already been sold multiple times in her lifetime, Mary Prince's mother, at this point in her narrative, expresses the grievances she has for her oldest daughter, knowing full well the fate that awaits her after being sold at auction for the first time. The exploitive nature of the selling of slaves demonstrates through this expression. By specifically targeting Mary Prince, being the eldest daughter of her family, her identity portrayed through an opportunistic perspective by slave owners. Using exploitive measures, often young girls were sold at high auction prices because of their biological and gendered ability to reproduce (Bush 2010: 26). This idea of production and reproduction lent targeted young girls to be at the center of the slave trade beginning in the early eighteenth hundreds (Donoghue 2001: 93). By naturally producing more slaves, the white masters would no longer need to purchase them, thus saving long-term costs. While this application remains referenced in the text of Mary Prince, reproduction and production were not always put into use and viewed through reproduction rates, mortality rates, and the overall statistics of slave distribution, which also varied by region and time. The exploitive concept of production and reproduction, which targeted young African enslaved women, marked their identities as that of

cattle, born and bred for others' use without informed opinion for their happiness. She remarks that:

I was soon surrounded by strange men, who examined and handled me in the same manner that a butcher would a calf or a lamb he was about to purchase, and who talked about my shape and size in like words- as if I could no more understand their meaning than the dumb beasts (Prince 2008: 26).

Mary Prince was purchased by whom she describes as Captain I. Mary Prince refers to this man as Captain I; however, his full name and identity remain a mystery to the historical record. Likely, Captain I represents the initial of his family name which Mary did not include in her text, an extremely aggressive and hostile man who already owned many slaves on his working plantation near Spanish Point. Here in the narrative, Mary begins her incredibly visual accounts of the demise of both her happiness and her trust in whites through the exploitations of Captain I. His floggings and tortuous activities were explicitly targeted at the enslaved women of his plantations. Mary recounts a time when another African enslaved woman, Hetty, was flogged to death in Captain I's chambers, hearing her pleas with the man before falling silent at the crack of a cattle whip.

The mistress of the plantation, Captain I's wife, is also of particular cruelty in Mary's account. On one occasion, Mary remembers two mulatto slave children who would run and play, but who were also the targeted recipients of the mistress' rage. She would scowl the grounds looking for the young boys to beat and flog them at her pleasure (Prince 2008: 66). The relationship between the mistress and these two mulatto children, as told by Mary Prince, represented a unique identity and maintained a relationship between mulatto children and white women.

Similarly to the story of Juan Francisco Manzano, these children were most likely the byproduct of relations between black African slave women and the white master, Captain I.

Through expressions of jealousy and rage, the mistress in Mary's account mostly like sought out the boys to take out her fits of anger against them. Existing points of secrecy, these children were raised as illegitimates of her husband. Once again marked by their aesthetic, these lighter skinned children could not identify as entirely African. Their mixed-heritage put them at risk.

Mary Prince again references the impact of mulatto slaves in her narrative through the discussion of another Master, Mrs. Woods. Here, mulatto women were purchased and bred to be the caretakers of white children on the plantation (Prince 2008: 79). She believed that because of their racial identity linking to lighter aesthetics and white lineage, their role remained in control of raising, nursing, and tending to white children. For Mary, this portion of the narrative is remarkable to her having cared for white children herself; her racial aesthetic is no longer acceptable for tending to children according to her masters. This mulatto ruled over Mary Prince and held a higher social status than African enslaved women. Mary comments that "I thought it very hard for a colored woman to have the rule over me because I too was a slave" (Prince 2008: 79). The narrative of Mary Prince not only highlights her struggles with identity as African enslaved women but also creates comparisons between blacks and mulattos and the relationship upheld between each group. Self-identifying as a black slave, despite her mulatto aesthetic, Mary exemplifies the spectrum of identity upheld by mixed-heritage children. Whether conflicting or targeted, Mary Prince's narrative demonstrates, through her perspective, the lives maintained by mixed-heritage peoples within Bermuda during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. While her personal history remains remarkable in its light, it is through the relationships that she maintains with other slaves that make the work of Mary Prince genuinely inspiring.

In the nineteenth century, a unique racial identity developed for mixed-heritage slaves throughout the Caribbean. Compared to that of African-descended slaves, mulatto slaves developed new racial standards that set them apart from all other groups of slaves through the development of Creole culture. Within the Caribbean during the nineteenth century, racial divisions evolved into the creation of a new culture, Creole, in which mixed-heritage became a point of pride and uniqueness, bonding groups of slaves and free people alike based on their aesthetic (Hoetink 1973: 111). By comparing the treatment of mixed-heritage peoples and the development of self-identity within the Caribbean, a more holistic identity can be gathered about the modern, post-slavery, peoples of the Caribbean today.

Within Cuba, the identity of being mixed-heritage placed people in a separate category of race than those who were white or specifically black. During the Cuba insurgencies of the early 1800s, this racial identity led to specific treatment by Cubans and the government alike. In Insurgent Cuba, the physical separation of these mixed-heritage peoples described, as mulattos ventured to the West of the island where their own unique identity developed. Fighting for Cuban independence, these mulattos represented the power of mixed-heritage people and their culture. Although racist movements were still maintained, the overall treatment against mixed-heritage people within Cuba developed into a force that strengthened the activist and nationalist movement of the time. With the development of Cuban identity following the emancipation of slavery and the insurgency movements against the government, a new self-identity of Cuba has developed that centralizes on the Creole identity of mulattos. Creole culture not only has the power to create a revolution, but it also allows for the development of self-identity to create positive connections between race and nationalism.

The narrative of African enslaved women has grown exponentially since the beginning of slavery in sixteenth-century Africa. The identities of these women have shifted across a spectrum throughout the centuries and evolved through future generations of mixed-heritage children. The testimonies of these mixed-heritage children remain invaluable to the extensive knowledge through the effects of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. Impacting not just areas where slavery was prominent, mixed-heritage peoples created the Creole culture that is expressed around the world today. By comparing the treatment of African enslaved women and their mulatto children through slave narratives, a more significant historical understanding and perspective gained on their treatment, identity, and empowerment from the eighteenth century until the present.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

Evidence for the impact of African enslaved women on the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade can be encompassed through archaeological findings, slave ship construction and wreckage layouts, and through the narratives that they women left behind. As the different points of their journey shift, so does the identity of these women and their impact on history. The history of the western slave trade from 1700 to 1850 presents a wide range of these historical narratives, experiences, and developments for these women. While each experience remains unique, an observation into historical narratives of capture, archaeological findings of the travel, and documentation from disembarking to plantation life lend an important insight into who were these women, what evidence remains from their story, and the larger impact that they have lent on today's society.

Understanding the gender-specific experience of African enslaved women begins at the origin of these African women. Noting the familial structures of different communities within African during the late 1600s, we observe a predominantly matrilineal tradition in which motherhood was an important role within societal exchanges. The identity of these women is marked by their abilities to maintain family structures and nurture their children. At the early onset of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, we see this point of identity shatter as families are torn apart and separated, being put up for sale under varying circumstances across different regions in coastal Africa. The gendered experience marked by identity for these African women shifts as they are loaded aboard slaving vessels and transported far from their initial home.

One of the most publicized enslaved African women who demonstrates this transition of identity is Phillis Wheatley. Originally taken from Senegal in West African when she was seven years old, Phillis was purchased in August of 1761 as a refugee slave in the ports of Boston,

Massachusetts. As a domestic purchased by Susanna Wheatley, wife of prominent tailor John Wheatley, Phillis was taught to read and write, becoming immediately immersed in the Bible, astronomy, geography, history, and British literature. This foundational success would lead her to become the most well know poets of her time- despite remaining enslaved. By the age of eighteen, Phillis had amassed 28 poems which were ran as advertisements for subscribers in Boston newspapers. "On Being Brought from Africa to America" is perhaps her most famous piece.

'Twas mercy brought me from my Pagan land,

Taught my benighted soul to understand

That there's a God, that there's a Saviour too:

Once I redemption neither sought nor knew.

Some view our sable race with scornful eye,

"Their colour is a diabolic die."

Remember, Christians, Negros, black as Cain,

May be refin'd, and join th' angelic train. (Wheatley 1773)

Phillis Wheatley's poem directly reflects the experience of many enslaved peoples coming to America from Africa. Furthermore, it highlights her personal experience as a child being brought across the sea to experience life as an enslaved person. She acknowledged the prejudice and oppression felt as an African, and the subjected racism felt. Throughout the hardships however, Wheatley ultimately highlights the plight of African enslaved women in her

final phrase (O'Neale 1986: 147). She relies on the depictions of hope through religion and the conformity of change that is possessed by all individuals. Her words highlight the redemption of suffering that she found from religion, and a devotion to God that refined her as a person. This testament speaks volumes towards her experience and identity as an enslaved African woman; the ability to continue to maintain ideals of hope and perseverance, and the seeking of a higher power to ease the holistic suffering, and that Africans are equally children of God.

This work by Wheatley was a foundational piece in the advocacy of abolitionism and generated early discussions for emancipation in American society. However, Wheatley herself was subjected to poverty and squallor. She passed on December 5, 1784 uncared for and alone in a notably dark and unclean apartment and her husband was imprisoned as a result of unpaid debts. She wrote 145 poems in total, seldom of the financials went to her widower to pay family expenses (O'Neale 1986: 158). The life of Phillis Wheatley is representative of the many experiences of African enslaved women. The transitional identity, marked by hardships and achievements, ultimately drowned out by the societal prejudice that remains towards them. Wheatley not only demonstrates immense talent, but the transcendence of her works juxtaposed to her life story demonstrate the ultimate identity of enslaved African women: exploited. While her work has come into new institutional and religious works, she remains a historic marker of enslaved African female identity, and her gendered narrative serves as a historic framework for discussing early emancipation in America.

The gendered narrative of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade is not well documented historically from the female perspective; because of this, we must rely on the artifact that these women left behind to lend understanding and acknowledgement to their voyages. Maritime artifacts left behind on slave shipwrecks give insight into their individual stories of oppression,

exploitation, and shifting identities. Assemblages such as those on *Henrietta Marie* and *Whydah* in which the African enslaved woman's identity is marked through the artifacts of bondage that were specifically targeted towards women. Remnants that can be used to associate future finds with the identity and experience of African women aboard slaving vessels. By observing variants in slave shackle size and the location of these maritime assemblages, the existence of women and their physical presence in the slave trade can be accounted for.

The spoken narrative of African enslaved women aboard slaving vessels rarely comes from those who experienced the Middle Passage first-hand. Surgeon logs, such as those of *Ruby*, and the evidence provided by onboard observers such as Falconbridge, Pixard, Newton, and Cuguano all represent an observation into the experience of exploitation of women onboard slaving vessels. Within these narratives there are distinct references to maritime artifacts used to oppress and exploit specifically women on board. The gendered artifacts found aboard slaving vessels during the Middle Passage highlight the separate treatment of male and enslaved women on board and thus the varying experience of both genders.

The mothering identity of African enslaved women continues when the discussion of children on board slaving vessels is observed. Noting the large numbers of children that crossed the Atlantic aboard these vessels, the identity of motherhood is maintained by these enslaved women. We can see the physical manifestation of these abstract characteristic of their identify through the construction layouts of vessels, such as *Brookes* and *Vigilante*. Women were placed in the stern of vessels voyaging across the Middle Passage, separated by physical partitions from the male slaves. They were grouped with the children on board in this location of the hull, and in some cases left unfettered so has to have larger freedom aboard the vessels. While there may

exist exceptions for the construction and cargo loading methodologies with specific vessel types from varying origins, the vessels observed in through this research all demonstrated gendered specific difference across the Middle Passage. Depictions of slaving vessels and their overall layout show the distinction of enslaved men and women onboard. The social value of human nurturing and interaction is represented in the physical layouts of these vessels and the importance and significance placed specifically upon the enslaved women.

Specific maritime artifacts left behind lend validity to the experience of the enslaved African woman. Tangible items such as shackles, and other items of restraint, specifically targeted towards women show that they did have gendered impact on the slave trade. The observance of varying bead assemblages aboard vessels such as *Henrietta Marie* show a dichotomy of different women, from different backgrounds, sharing the same oppressive and historic experience. These physical items lend identity to these women and their experience and represent gendered narratives.

Lastly, the narratives of generations from these women are extremely important when understanding the gendered impact of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. Well documented accounts such as that of Juan Francisco Manzano and later of Mary Prince hit directly at how women were targeted and impacted differently than men following the Middle Passage. Their first-person narratives lend invaluable testimony to the suffering and impact that African women withstood during their voyaging to continue on into different areas of plantation life in the West. Here still, we see an impact of the maritime artifacts that identified these women across the Middle Passage and within slave shipwreck assemblages lost to time. The identity of these women is marked by the tangible items giving evidence to their experience. The ultimate identity of enslaved African women entering into plantation systems is marked by survival. While the

ultimate number of women who perished aboard slaving vessels at sea is not concretely know, methodologies such as that through the Slave Voyages Project give estimates that connect identity of these people to the statistics that we hear of today. Future studies are imperative because of this to lend more concrete evidence into the specifics of these women, so that they do not remain a statistic within a database.

On February 11, 2021 an archaeological discovery was announced concerning the wreckage of *Whydah* site in Massachusetts. Through the excavation, bones were removed from the site that had not been uncovered in 300 years ([Szanişzlo 2021](#)). While it may take time to discover the DNA found within these bones of six pirates, it will be fascinating to learn if any of them are from women. Future studies lend opportunity to create comparisons of maritime assemblages of gendered artifacts. Using the references researched here, along with the methodologies outlined in varying databases for statistical analysis, a precedent can be created in order to acknowledge the tangible evidence of enslaved African women aboard slaving vessels. These initiatives will create a further diversified archaeological account of the existence of these women that supports the documented observance of them.

The iconic image of a tortured male African slave working on a plantation system is a very real occurrence within documented history. However, the observance and portrayal of women is also abundant throughout historical documentation of the slave trade. Images of enslaved African women from the fetishized white male perspective, the depiction of house nannies in plantation life, and iconic imagery of the abolitionist movement highlight the freedom of women (Figure 37).



FIGURE 37. Quaker Abolitionist depiction of "Am I Not a Woman and a Sister", Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women, 1837-1839 (Courtesy of National Maritime Museum).

Important future research exists in the extension of archaeological evidence of these women in future shipwreck assemblage discoveries, as well and the opportunity for separate terrestrial studies. The powerful work of Sowande' M. Mustakeem exemplifies the important lost narrative of enslaved African women during the Middle Passage. Their book "Slavery at Sea: Terror, Sex, and Sickness in the Middle Passage" (2016) expands the plantation narrative of gendered slavery to look more closely into the social conditions women experienced aboard slaving vessels. Providing insights into the full range of specifically women, from nursing children to grandmothers crossing the Middle Passage, Mustakeem creates connective literature between gender, trauma, and violence that marked the identities of enslaved African women of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. Research such as theirs demonstrates the vastly expanded documentation of women in the slave trade since the early 1980s works of Barbra Bush. Current researchers such as Jessica Marie Johnson look to highlight the experience of enslaved African women during the slave trade. Placing similar emphasis as the research conducted within this thesis, Johnson expands on the discussion of the female experience and narrative in the Gulf of

North America. The work navigates the experience of specific women, direct second generations of the women who crossed the Middle Passage, and the tribulations they find throughout the Western world. Johnson's work highlights similar themes such as oppression, cultural division of mixed children, and the exploitation based on gender. However, *Wicked Flesh* offers unique insight into the continued development of agency that these women undertook in order to better their circumstance through colonial sources using powerful theoretical framework to retell the lives of those who have been silenced by history.

What is distinctly lacking in the historical narrative is the observation, depiction, and investigation into the gendered perspective of African women aboard slaving vessels. Maritime archaeology presents the unique opportunity to observe, document, and discuss the existence of these women based on the tangible remains that were left behind. Slave shipwreck assemblages offer perspective into the identity of these women, where they came from, and the measures taken to oppress and exploit them across the Middle Passage. The physical artifacts that remain tell the story of this said identity and lend to the greater discussion of the impact enslaved African women held to the historical narrative of 1700 to 1850. Without this unique perspective, and the physical artifacts that support its historical documentation, the narrative of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade is unjustly incomplete.

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