

Trans Atlantic Slave Trade Online Database Exercises

Go to www.slavevoyages.org.

The new web site combines searchable new data on 35,000 voyages with new estimates of the slave trade which can be manipulated and presented by any combination of time, region of embarkation, region of disembarkation and national carrier. Please complete each exercise. Thank you.

For exercises 1 to 3, click on “Assessing the Slave Trade” along the top of the home page, then choose “Estimates.”

Exercise 1: Generate a time profile of the slave trade from its beginning in the 16th C to 1866 -the year in which the last slave voyage in the database reached the Americas. (There are three new options on the “Estimates” page, just below the normal menu options. Click on “Timeline,” if it does not initially come up when you travel to the site.) At the bottom of the page is the button to “Download” the information onto your computer, to make it available for printing.

Exercise 2: What were the African coastal origins of the slave trade in each century that the slave trade was carried on? (Instead of “Timeline,” now select “Tables.” For Rows select “100-year periods” and for Columns select “embarkation regions.” Then click on “show” button).

Exercise 3: What were American destinations for the slave trade in each century that the slave trade was carried on? (Click on the Columns box and select “broad disembarkation regions” then on the Cells box above display area on the right and select “only disembarked.” Then click on “show” button).

For the remaining exercises, choose “Voyages Database” from the top menu and then choose “Search the database.” The left of the screen allows you to select the data. The right segment of the screen allows you to choose how to display the data.

Exercise 4: Selections of groups of voyages. What was the statistical profile of the typical slave voyage over the full 367 years? (No selection necessary. Click on “summary statistics”).

- To see the data for a particular year or years - use the “select time frame” option from the left menus
- By port of departure of the slave vessel in Europe or the Americas -Click on “Voyage Itinerary” under “Basic Variables” on the left, and then choose “Place where voyage began”
- By region in Africa -Click on “Voyage Itinerary” and choose “Principal place of slave purchase”
- By region in the Americas -Click on “Voyage Itinerary” and choose “Principal place of slave landing”
- By Slave rebellions on board ship -Click on “Voyage Outcome” and then “African Resistance.” Fill all three filters using a different option for each.

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Exercise 5: Find the vessel that is the subject of the following account. (Go to Ship, and select “Ship Name” and “Captain.” Click on the single record displayed)

In 1782, under Captain Luke Collingwood, the ship *Zong* had sailed from Africa for Jamaica with some 440 slaves, many of whom had already been on board for weeks. Head winds, spells of calm, and bad navigation (Collingwood mistook Jamaica for another island and sailed right past it) stretched the transatlantic voyage to twice the usual length. Packed tightly into a vessel of only 107 tons, slaves began to sicken. Collingwood was worried, for a competent captain was expected to deliver his cargo in reasonable health, and, of course, dead or dying slaves brought no profits. There was a way out, however. If Collingwood could claim that slaves had died for reasons totally beyond his control, insurance --at £30 per slave --would cover the loss.

Collingwood ordered his officers to throw the sickest slaves into the ocean. If ever questioned, he told them, they were to say that due to the unfavorable winds, the ship's water supply was running out. If water had been running out, these murders would be accepted under the principle of "jettison" in maritime law: A captain had a right to throw some cargo --in this case, slaves --overboard to save the remainder. In all, 133 slaves were "jettisoned" in several batches; the last group started to fight back and 26 of them were tossed over the side with their arms still shackled.

When the *Zong*'s owners later filed an insurance claim for the value of the dead slaves, it equaled more than half million dollars in today's money, and the insurance company disputed the claim.

When Equiano showed him the newspaper article, Granville Sharp hired lawyers, went to court, and personally interviewed at least one member of the ship's crew and a passenger. But the shocking thing about the *Zong* case is that after more than a hundred human beings had been flung to their deaths, this was not a homicide trial. It was a civil insurance dispute. Sharpe attempted a private criminal prosecution but Collingwood died from illness associated with the voyage prior to answering charges in court.

Exercise 6: Locate the vessel described in the following excerpt.

When you have identified the voyage, search on all years for this captain (Select "captain" and type in name) and describe his career.

From the *Gentleman's Magazine*, October, 1773.

Part of a letter from the coast of Africa, gives a melancholy account of the *New Britannia*, Captain Deane, who, having 230 slaves on board, some of the black boys belonging to the ship found means to furnish them with carpenters tools, with which they ripped up the lower decks, and got at the guns and powder; being overpowered, however, by the crew, they then set fire to the magazine, and blew up the vessel, by which not less than 300 souls perished.

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Exercise 7: Locate the vessel that carried off Venture Smith to New England.

From Venture Smith, *A Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Venture, a Native of Africa: But Resident above Sixty Years in the United States of America, Related by Himself.* (New London, 1798), excerpts from Chapter 1.

CHAPTER I. CONTAINING AN ACCOUNT OF HIS LIFE, FROM HIS BIRTH TO THE TIME OF HIS LEAVING HIS NATIVE COUNTRY

I was born at Dukandarra, in Guinea, about the year 1729. My father's name was Saungin Furro, Prince of the tribe of Dukandarra. My father had three wives. Polygamy was not uncommon in that country, especially among the rich, as every man was allowed to keep as many wives as he could maintain. By his first wife he had three children. The eldest of them was myself, named by my father, BroteerInvaders pinioned the prisoners of all ages and sexes indiscriminately, took their flocks and all their effects, and moved on their way towards the sea. On the march, the prisoners were treated with clemency, on account of their being submissive and humble. Having come to the next tribe, the enemy laid siege and immediately took men, women, children, flocks, and all their valuable effects. They then went on to the next district, which was contiguous to the sea, called in Africa, Anamaboo All of us were then put into the castle and kept for market. On a certain time, I and other prisoners were put on board a canoe, under our master, and rowed away to a vessel belonging to Rhode Island, commanded by Captain Collingwood, and the mate, Thomas Mumford. While we were going to the vessel, our master told us to appear to the best possible advantage for sale. I was bought on board by one Robertson Mumford, steward of said vessel, for four gallons of rum and a piece of calico, and called VENTURE, on account of his having purchased me with his own private venture. Thus I came by my name. All the slaves that were bought for that vessel's cargo were two hundred and sixty.

Exercise 8: Find the vessel on which Ayuba Suleiman Diallo (1701-1773), aka Job Ben Solomon was taken to the Maryland.

From: *Some Memoirs of the Life of Job, the Son of Solomon the High Priest of Boonda in Africa; who was a Slave about two Years in Maryland; and afterwards being brought to England, was set free, and sent to his native Land in the Year 1734 .* By Thomas Bluett, Gent, who was intimately acquainted with him in America, and came over to England with him (London, 1734).

Job, who is now about 31 or 32 Years of age, was born at a Town called Boonda in the County of Galumbo (in our Maps Catumbo) in the Kingdom of Futa in Africa; which lies on both Sides the River Senegal, and on the south Side reaches as far as the River Gambia. . . . In February, 1730, Job's Father hearing of an English Ship at Gambia River, sent him, with two Servants to attend him, to sell two Negroes, and to buy Paper, and some other Necessaries; but desired him not to venture over the River, because the Country of the Mandingoes, who are Enemies to the People of Futa, lies on the other side. Job not agreeing with Captain Pike (who commanded the Ship, lying then at Gambia, in the Service of Captain Henry Hunt, Brother to Mr. William Hunt, Merchant, in Little Tower-street, London) sent back the two Servants to acquaint his Father with it, and to let him know that he intended to go farther.It happened that

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a Company of the Mandingoes, who live upon Plunder . . . observing him unarmed, rush'd in, to the Number of seven or eight at once, at a back Door, and pinioned Job, before he could get to his Arms, together with his Interpreter, who is a Slave in Maryland still. They then shaved their Heads and Beards, which Job and his Man resented as the highest Indignity; tho' the Mandingoes meant no more by it, than to make them appear like Slaves taken in War. On the 27th of February, 1730, they carried them to Captain Pike at Gambia, who purchased them; and on the first of March they were put on Board. Soon after Job found means to acquaint Captain Pike that he was the same Person that came to trade with him a few Days before, and after what Manner he had been taken. Upon this Captain Pike gave him leave to redeem himself and his Man; and Job sent to an Acquaintance of his Father's near Gambia, who promised to send to Job's Father, to inform him of what had happened, that he might take some Course to have him set at Liberty. But it being a Fortnight's Journey between the Friend's House and his Father's, and the Ship sailing in about a Week after, Job was brought with the rest of the Slaves to Annapolis in Maryland, and delivered to Mr. Vachell Denton. His Memory was extraordinary; for when he was fifteen Years old he could say the whole Alcoran by heart, and while he was here in England he wrote three Copies of it.