



French Connection:

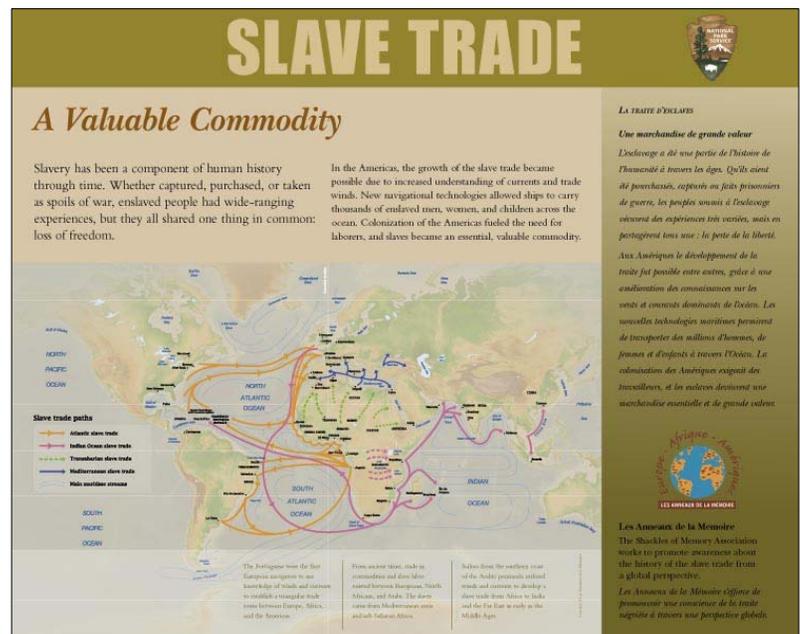
Working with an International Partner to Interpret the Slave Trade

The impact of the slave trade is still lived today on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. Interpreters can find common ground and techniques to begin a discussion of painful aspects of our history, which is shared by a global citizenry.

Project Background

Carol S. Clark was awarded a FY2009 Albright-Wirth Grant to travel to Nantes, France for three purposes: to work with a new international park partner, the Shackles of Memory Association (*Les Anneaux de la Mémoire*, in Nantes, France); to design two wayside exhibit interpretive panels and an educational curriculum about the international slave trade; and to improve her French speaking skills through a language immersion experience.

She lived with a French couple (home stay) and worked with the Nantes Sister Cities organization and *Nantes Métropole* to meet educators, government employees of *Nantes Métropole* or *Ville de Nantes*, historical association and sister cities association members, and museum professionals. She worked with the Shackles of Memory Association on the projects related to the slave trade – permanent wayside exhibit panels, curriculum materials for teachers, and websites.



One of two wayside exhibits co-designed by the Shackles of Memory and Timucuan Preserve, 2010

Partners and Websites

Timucuan Ecological & Historic Preserve:
<http://www.nps.gov/timu/historyculture/slave-trade-connections.htm>

Les Anneaux de la Memoire/Shackles of Memory:
<http://www.lesanneauxdelamemoire.com/index2.htm>

The Shackles of Memory Association works to promote awareness about the history of the slave trade from a global perspective.

National Park Foundation:
<http://www.nationalparks.org/>

The official charity of America's National Parks.

Opportunities, Partnership, and Future Plans

Challenges & Opportunities

- Words carry different meanings in English and French contexts. For example, when discussing a slave uprising, the word choice of “revolution” in French, while in the U.S. we use the word “rebellion.”
- It has only been since the early 1990s that there have been public exhibits and discussions about French participation in the slave trade.
- The U.S. has lived face to face with the legacy of the slave trade and slavery, the French did not have direct contact in their modern society with the legal and cultural effects of slavery and the civil rights movement.
- Two presentations by a French representative of the Shackles of Memory were given at Kingsley Plantation. Music, tours, and Q&A were given with the presentations.
- Staff worked with the Shackles of Memory to create two low profile exhibits at Kingsley Plantation. Staff also reviewed English versions of exhibits from Shackles of Memory for word/term choice and general content.
- Updates on scholarly research articles/books and activities is exchanged, as well as conference and training opportunities.
- There is a lot of interest in organizations and governmental entities in Nantes to further develop a partnership relationship with the City of Jacksonville and with the National Park Service.
- Presentations at conferences & development of training materials about interpreting the slave trade are ongoing.
- Continue to create online materials for interpreters and educators.

Partnership



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

This project was made possible through an Albright-Wirth Grant from the National Park Foundation.

Affiliated National Park Project Site:

Timucuan Ecological & Historic Preserve
Kingsley Plantation
11676 Palmetto Avenue
Jacksonville, FL 32226
904-251-3537

Project Contact:

Carol S. Clark
National Trails Intermountain Region
P.O. Box 728
Santa Fe, NM 87504
505-988-6842
carol_s_clark@nps.gov

The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

Future Plans

Perspectives

Aside from museum visits, interviews with museum professionals, walking tours of the cities, and books or other materials picked up or purchased, I also talked about the slave trade with people of different ages and backgrounds. The following points are essential to understanding the way in which the slave trade is taught or interpreted in France:

- For French history, the slave trade is viewed as part of trade and maritime commerce history.
- The slave trade is at the heart of a very complex system.
- The slave trade’s development was due to the technological advances in navigation that allowed exploration and increased trade opportunities, which included the slave trade.
- Very few African people or slaves ever set foot in France, so few had direct contact with the “face” of the trade.
- Emphasis today in slave trade exhibitions is on the development of the business of the trade. (As opposed to emphasis on the Middle Passage and slavery, as it is in general in the U.S.)
- The slave trade as exhibit content or part of school curriculum is a recent development – most people in their thirties or older did not learn about French involvement in the slave trade in school.

