The Slave Trade, Slavery, and Remembrance

Trade in human beings has occurred for many thousands of years. Slavery has come in many forms, from classical systems to the Anglo/American system of slavery. But why did slavery become such a large part of trade during the settlement of the Americas, and how did is arise so rapidly?

This unit addresses the origins of the slave trade by looking at the slave trade from a transatlantic perspective. The objectives and lesson plan provide teachers and students with a way to understand the international nature of the slave trade, using examples from the "triangle" often described in classroom history books (England to West Africa to North America and back to England) plus specific examples from other nations throughout the approximately 300 years the trade was underway.

Examples for the development of the European role in the trade are taken from France, where large seaports contained financiers, merchants, and ships that plied the ocean in the triangular trade: Europe, Africa, and the Americas.

This unit was written by Ranger Carol S. Clark, National Park Service after traveling to Nantes, France. Funding for the trip to France, reference materials, and a French language course was provided by a grant from the National Park Foundation. The follow-up to that experience is this curriculum unit and two wayside exhibit panels produced in partnership with the Shackles of Memory Association in Nantes.

Goal:

Students will develop a greater understanding of the origins of the transatlantic slave trade and its legacy.

Objectives:

Upon completing the activities, students will be able to:

1. Describe the early development of the slave trade
2. Understand the changing and international nature of the slave trade by correlating specific countries with their century of greatest involvement in the slave trade
3. Identify the ways in which the slave trade was a business in trading with slaves as one of many commodities
4. Recognize the slave trade and its effects on American culture

NPS 04/07/10

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French Ports

It is difficult for students to understand the numbers of slaves that were taken from Africa. This activity uses statistics and geography to show students the places that activities with the slave trade are associated, and to what extent.

Compare this to the plan of the *Marie-Seraphique* and the instructions for how to load a vessel with human cargo.

Skill-building: History, math, data analysis, geography

Objectives: Upon completion of this activity, students will be able to:

1. Quantify the numbers of slaves that were carried across the ocean, based on the statistics provided in this plan.
2. Describe the below decks organization of a slave ship (different types of cargo, space the slaves were provided, etc.)
3. Label the major French ports associated with slave trade voyages.

Materials:

Worksheets
Atlas
Transparencies (maps, charts, slave ship illustrations)

Citations:

Bernard Gainot and Marcel Dorigny, *Atlas historique de l'esclavage*, October 2006.

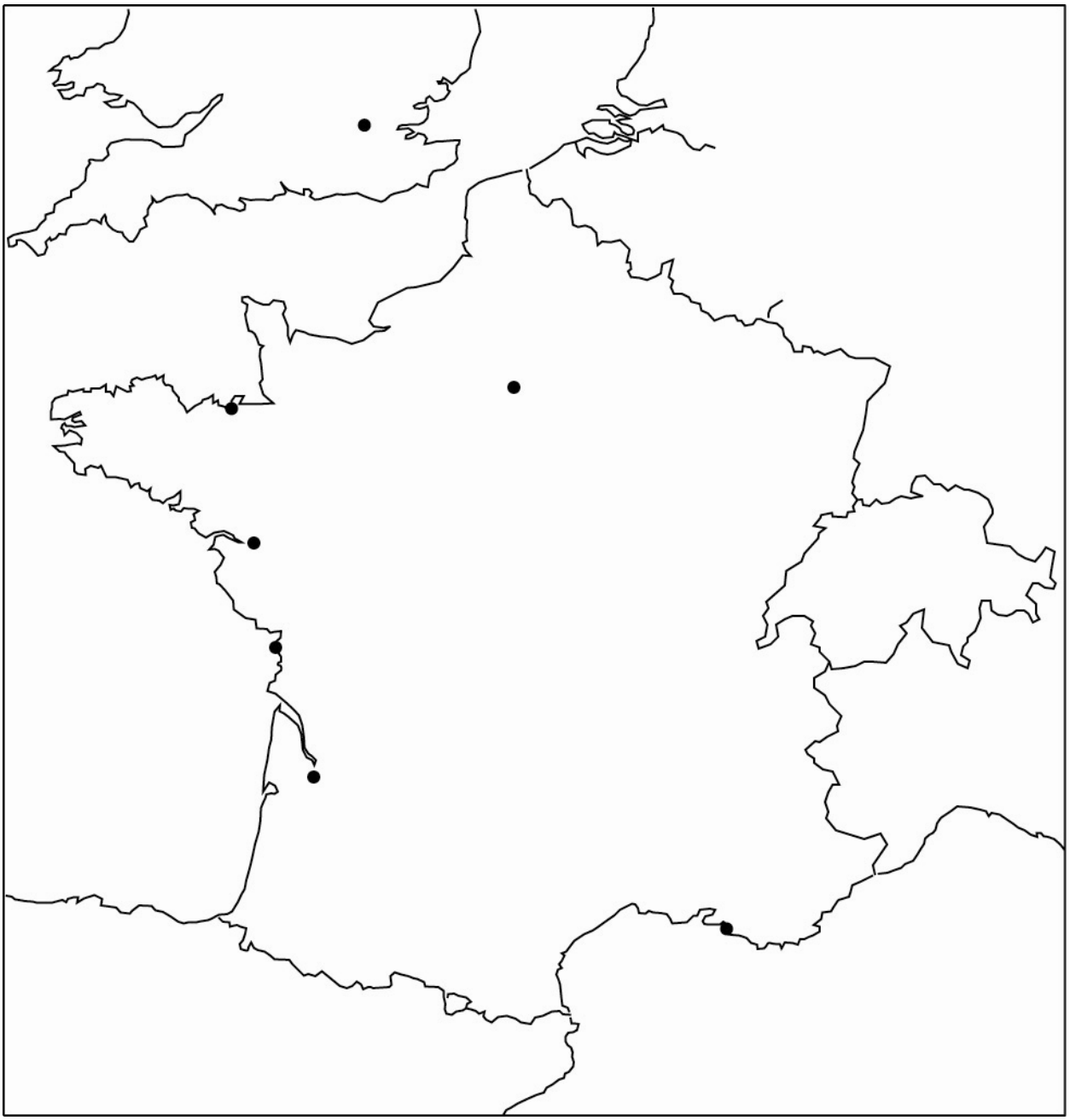
Evelyne Camara, Isabelle Dion, and Jacques Dion, *Esclaves : Regards de Blancs 1672-1913*, April 2008.

Marie-Seraphique ship images courtesy of the Nantes History Museum/ Musée du Château des ducs de Bretagne.

French Ports – Directions and Answers:

1. Introduce a map of France and a world map.
2. Have the students label the items listed on the worksheet.
3. For the statistics labeling portion, put up a transparency (see the next page) that shows the pie charts for slave trading voyages from France.
4. More math – have students add up all the voyages, and then multiply the number of voyages times a mid-sized ships' human cargo to determine how many people were enslaved.
5. Show them the plan of the Marie-Seraphique and discuss with them how the ships were loaded, and how it was possible to fit so many slaves under the decks.
    a. How much space is there between decks?
    b. Can the slaves sit or stand?
    c. Which gets more space – the barrels or the slaves?
    d. Why are they packed in so tightly?
    e. What do you think would happen to the slaves after weeks of being kept below decks?
        i. Food? Water? Diet? Health?
        ii. Physical versus mental or emotional wellness?
6. Close activity by asking students to write one paragraph on the back of their worksheet summarizing how many people were enslaved (based on their statistics and math exercise) and describing how the slaves were carried across the ocean – have the student try to imagine what it might have felt like to be taken from their homes and put in this situation. Explain that we can never fully understand the experience, but we can be aware of it as part of our history.

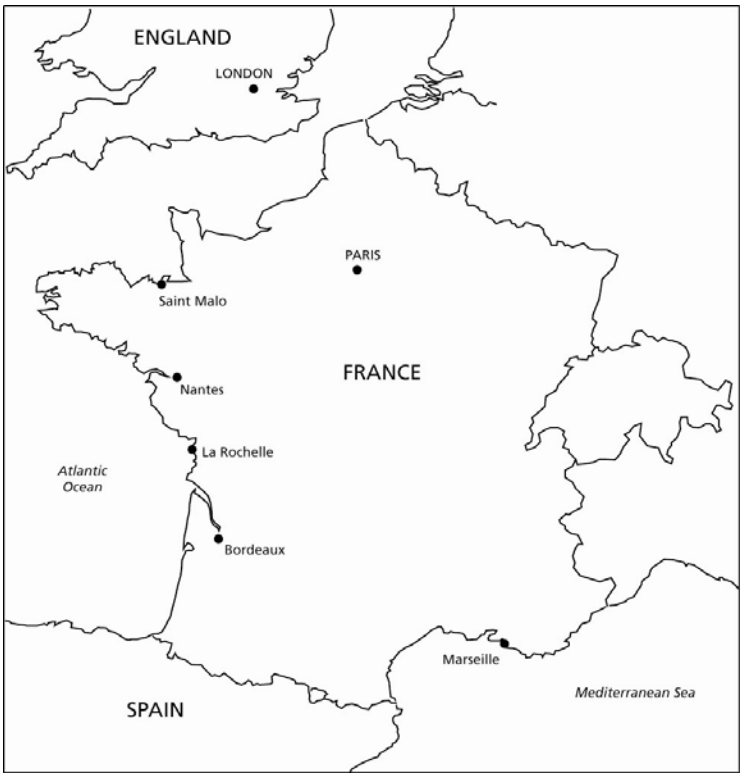
French Ports – Map Activity

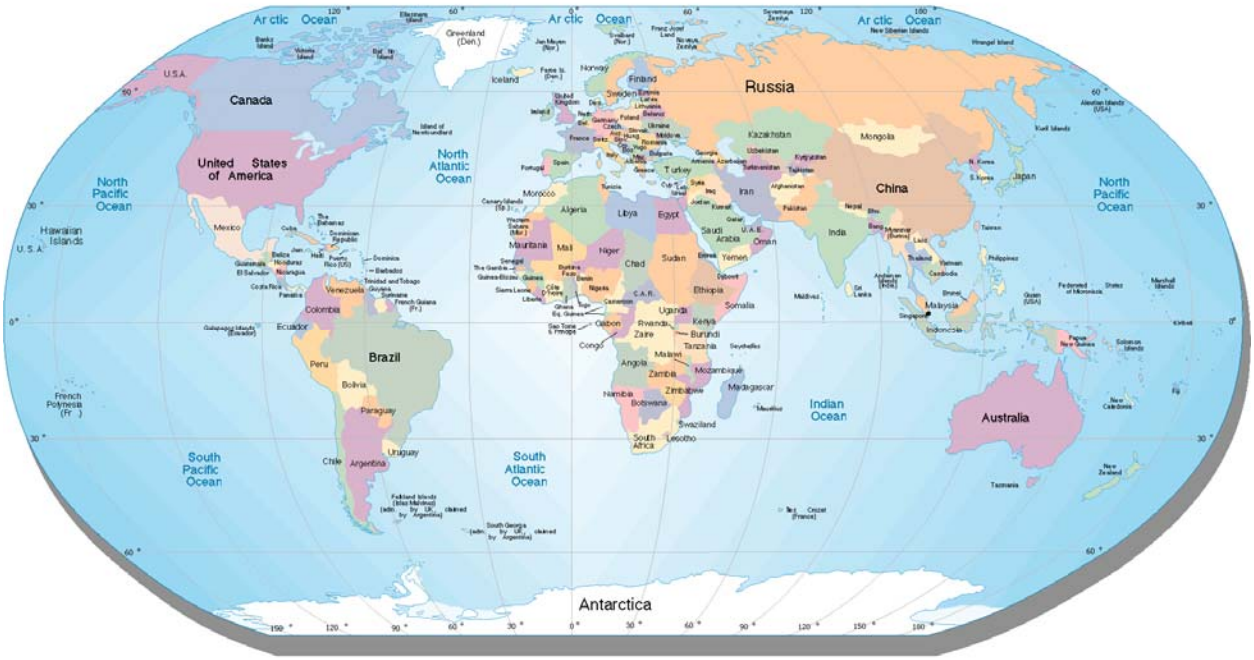


Label:

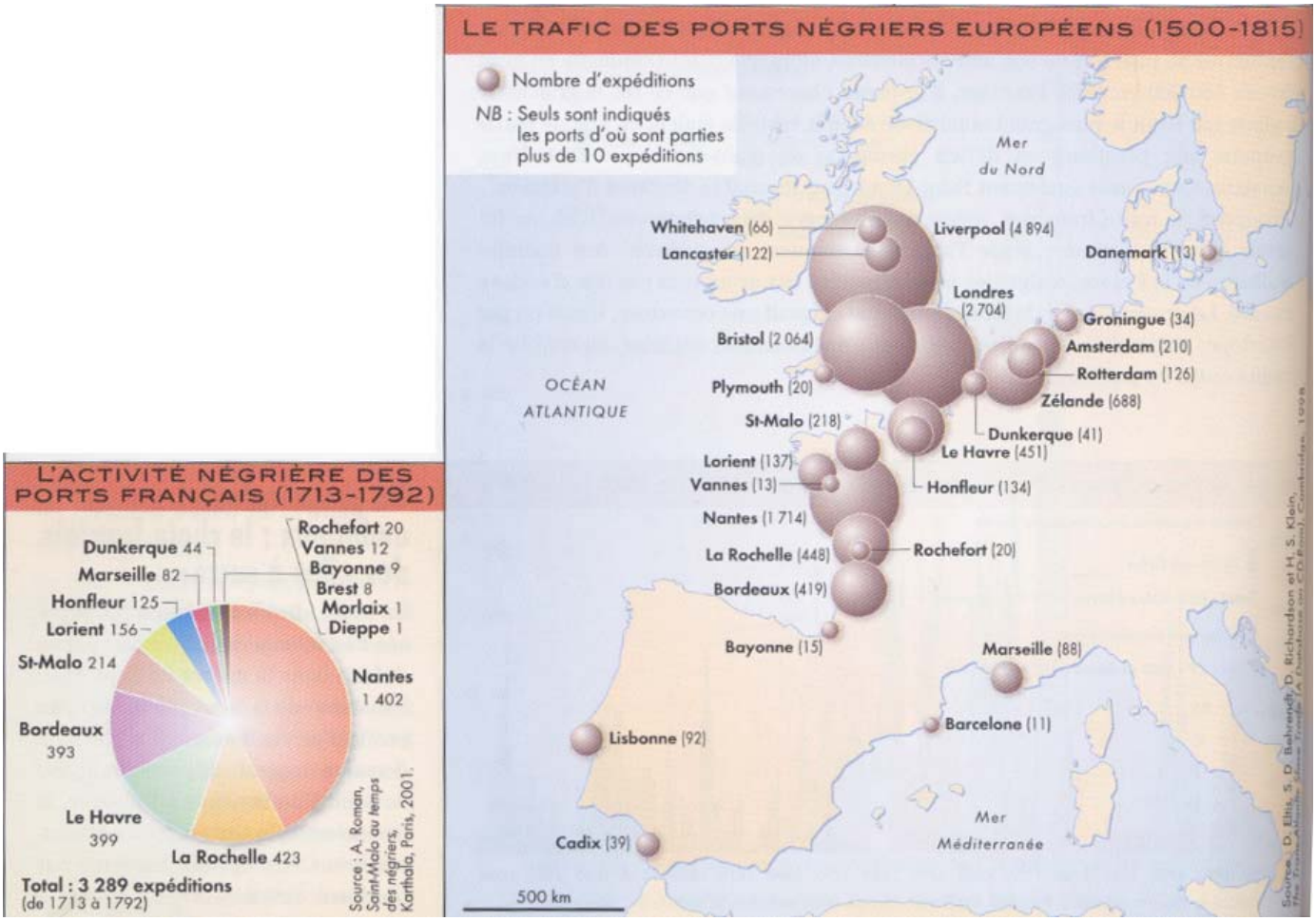
1. Each port town.
2. The capital of France.
3. Two bodies of water that border France.
4. Three countries on the continent of Europe that border France.
5. Statistics: Next to each port town, write the number of ships involved in the slave trade that left that town.

French Ports – Maps Activity





French Ports – Activity in French Ports and Europe in the Slave Trade (1500-1815)

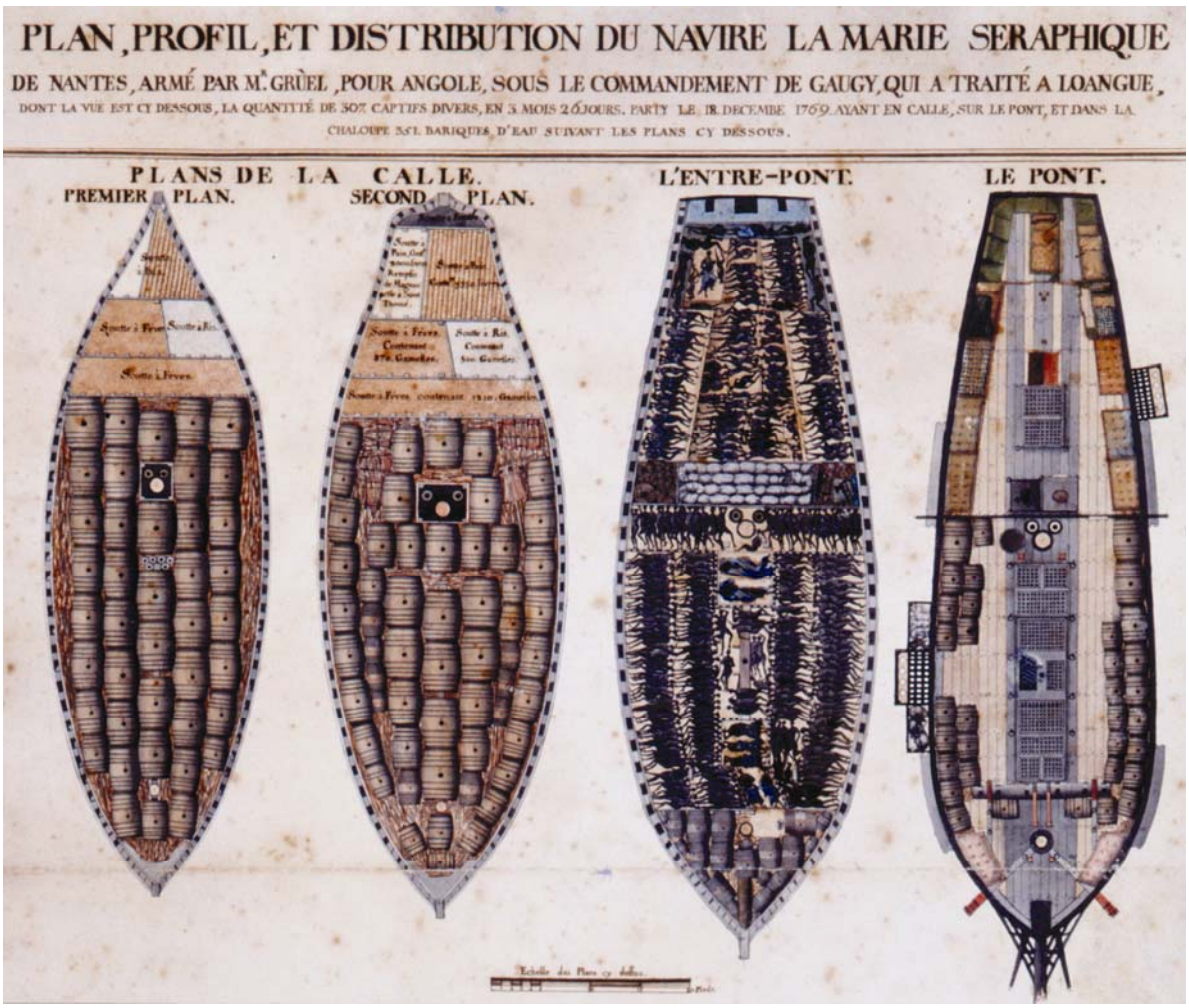


From: *Atlas historique de l'esclavage*

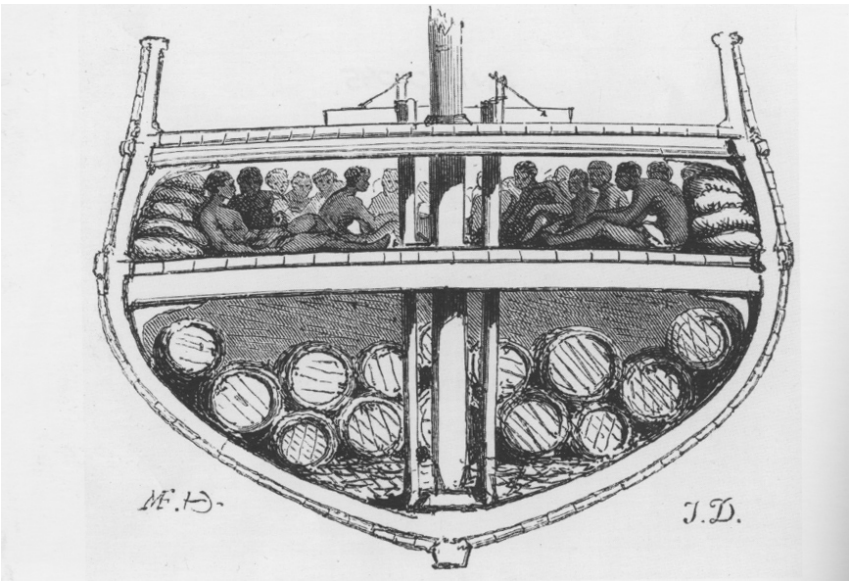
Assignment:

- Look for the port towns you labeled on your map on the chart and map above.
- Write down the numbers of ships that left France from those towns that were part of the slave trade.
- Add up the numbers of expeditions for a total.
- Multiply that total by 300 people, which is a number that a slave ship could have held.

French Ports – How to Load Cargo



Top: Musée du Château des ducs de Bretagne
Bottom: *Esclaves : Regards de Blancs 1672-1913*, p.48 (Musée de la Marine)



World Trade – Identifying the Trade Routes

Technological advances allowed European explorers to travel around the world. These advances allowed for the colonization of the Americas and the slave trade. This activity reinforces how the different legs of the voyages were taken carrying different cargos, all planned carefully to maximize profit.

To summarize, European goods were sent as bartering items for slaves, who were shipped across the Atlantic Ocean and sold, making space and becoming goods to sell or trade for raw products to take back to Europe.

Slavery in the Americas is one part of humanity's slave trading past. Use the Kingsley Plantation exhibit panel to show a more global view of slave trading.

Skill-building: History, geography, science/technology, economics

Objectives:

Upon completion of this activity, students will be able to:

1. Draw the trade routes that comprise the "triangular trade"
2. Identify which leg was the "Middle Passage" or "transatlantic voyage"
3. List three goods transported during the triangular trade
4. Define "supply and demand"
5. (if including activity extension) Identify global slave trade routes.

Materials:

Worksheet
Global map
Transparency
Slave trade exhibit panel from Kingsley Plantation

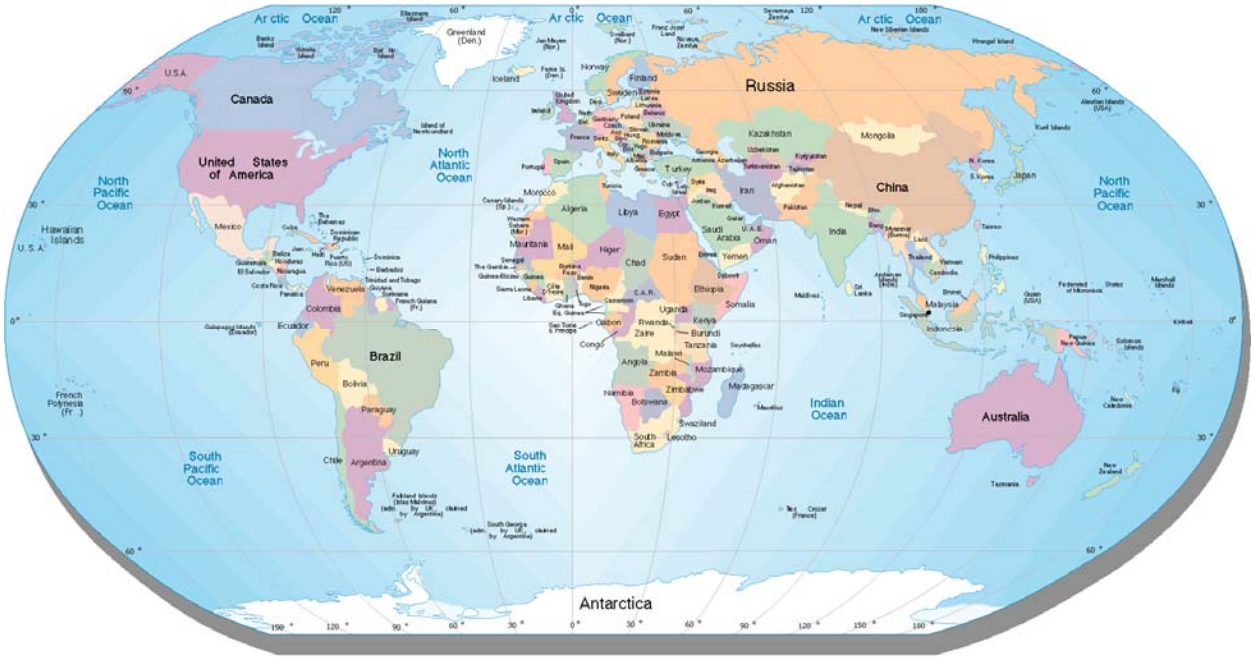
World Trade – Identifying the Trade Routes - Activity:

1. Ask for a show of hands for who can label the seven continents
2. Ask for a show of hands for who can label the oceans
3. As a group add #4-6
4. (transparency) – draw with a red pen the Europe to Africa passage
5. (transparency) – draw with a green pen the African to Americas segment
6. (transparency) – draw with a blue pen the Americas to Europe segment
7. Ask: What shape do our lines make? (triangle, Triangular Trade)
8. (transparency) – teacher adds currents, students copy
9. Refer students to the "List of Goods" box on the worksheet
10. Ask for students to identify which product goes with which segment of the trade
11. Ask: What are "goods?" (emphasize that people are also goods in this example)
12. Supply and demand – what is needed to acquire each good?

Activity Extension:

1. Show the "Slave Trade" exhibit panel from Kingsley Plantation. (It has slave trade routes for the Americas, Africa, Mediterranean Sea, and Indian Ocean.)
2. Ask students to look at the panel and identify the different slave trades.
3. Discuss slavery as a part of the history of many countries or empires through time.
4. Discuss distinctive aspects of slavery in the United States. (Define chattel slavery, explain how American slavery became race-based, etc.)

World Trade – Identifying the Trade Routes



Also use the exhibit panels on the dock at Kingsley Plantation during a visit or download an electronic version of "Slave Trade: A Valuable Commodity" at the park website:

http://www.nps.gov/timu/historyculture/slave-trade-connections.htm

Trade Ship or Slave Ship?

Slave ships did not begin as slave ships. They began as trade ships and became slave ships once loaded with African prisoners along the African coast. For each leg of the triangular trade there were different types of cargo onboard. This activity focuses on the leg from France to West Africa, using resources from an actual vessel's records – the *Diligent*.

Skill-building: History, geography, economics, math, statistics

Objectives:

Upon completion of this activity, students will:

1. Identify cargo for each leg of the triangular trade
2. Create a pie chart showing the percentages of types of cargo purchased for the voyage
3. Describe how Billy made purchases choices (indicating an understanding of goods and fads, which students can relate to)

Materials:

Reading passage
Worksheet

Citations:

Robert, Harms. *The Diligent: A Voyage Through the Worlds of the Slave Trade*.

Trade Ship or Slave Ship? – Directions

The emphasis of this activity is that each part of the slave trade was unique to the ship, cargo, or particular voyage. Also, it is important for students to understand that there was a lot of planning that goes into the voyage, and purchasing the trade goods was only one part of the plan. Finally, this activity places the slave trade in the context of international trade – slavery was one piece of the triangular trade, and it intersects people and goods from around the world. This activity names a number of nations and continents.

Worksheet answers:

1. Why did Guillaume Billy travel from Vannes to Nantes?
   To purchase goods to trade for slaves and other necessary items on the coast of West Africa.

2. Where in Nantes did he go to find out what was popular in West Africa?
   The new Company of the Indies warehouse on the Quai de Chézine.

3. What types of cloth did he decide to buy?
   He purchased limancas, salempouri blue, and "Indian cloth."

4. What other goods did he buy?
   Cowry shells, kegs of brandy, guns and ammunition, smoking pipes, iron

5. Why were cowry shells important?
   Shells served as a currency along the Slave Coast of West Africa

6. What was traded and loaded on to the ship along the African coast?
   Slaves and small items purchased along the coast

7. Complete the table with the percentages of the different types of cargo the *Diligent* carried to West Africa. Write the percentages in numerals and text. Then choose one type of cargo and figure out the cost of purchasing the item, knowing that the total amount of money Billy spent was 37,782 livres.

Cloth	Nearly 1/3 or 33% - 12,468.06 livres
Cowry shells	Nearly 1/3 or 33% - 12,468.06 livres
Kegs of brandy	Nearly ¼ or 25% - 9,445.50 livres
Guns and ammunition	14% - 5,289.48 livres
Long smoking pipes	n/a [not provided in text]
Swedish iron	n/a [not provided in text]

Trade Ship or Slave Ship? – Reading Activity: Excerpt from *The Diligent: A Voyage Through the Worlds of the Slave Trade,*" p. 80-82, by Robert Harms.

Guillaume Billy most likely traveled to Nantes to pick out merchandise for the *Diligent* and find out what the slave traders of Nantes were carrying. African consumers in the slaving ports of West Africa were extremely sophisticated, and fashions in cloth and other consumer goods change rapidly. Slave traders who went to Africa with the wrong goods had a hard time finding customers….

One of the places that Guillaume Billy visited in Nantes was the new Company of the Indies warehouse on the Quai de Chézine, where he purchased Indian cloth and cowry shells to fill the hold of the *Diligent*…The Indian cottons had a bewildering variety of names: salempouri, guinea, baffeta, limanacas, allibani, coupi, guigan, chalbasis, and others. Some were white, some were solid colors, and others were decorated with multicolored stripes and designs. The problem was to pick just the styles and colors that were in demand along the Guinea coast of Africa that year. After much consultation, he purchased limancas (a singe striped cloth from the Coromandel coast), salempouri blue (cotton cloth of varying quality), and "Indian cloth" (a general term for printed cottons, calicoes, and chintzes).

The warehouse also contained wood barrels filled with cowry shells. Many tons of cowry shells were brought each year from the Maldive Islands (near India) on Company of the Indies ships. They were shoveled loosely into the holds of the ships to serve as ballast and as packing material between the barrels of porcelain. When the ships arrived in France, the cowries were packed into barrels to be sent to the Slave Coast of West Africa. Over 40 percent of the value of the trade goods carried by the *Diligent* was made up by cloth and cowries from India. So crucial had Indian products become that in 1718 a group of *négociants* in Nantes petitioned the Council of Commerce for permission to send out two ships to India each year for the sole purpose of bringing back cowry shells and Indian cloth to use in the slave trade.

Of the 37,782 livres in trade goods that Guillaume Billy purchased for the slaving voyage of the *Diligent*, cloth accounted for almost a third of the total value…Close to another third of the value of the cargo consisted of 7,050 pounds of cowry shells packed into thirty barrels. The cowry shells served as a currency along the Slave Coast of West Africa. In addition to being a necessary trade good for purchasing slaves, they were very useful for purchasing small items along certain sections of the African coast. At Jakin, for example, an egg cost twenty cowries in 1731 and a banana cost thirty.

Nearly a quarter of the total value of the cargo was made up of nine hundred kegs of brandy, which came mostly from the Loire valley near Nantes, though some of the them may have some from Bordeaux…Guns and ammunition accounted for nearly 14 percent…Rounding out the trade goods were sixteen cases of long smoking pipes from Holland and ninety-nine bars of Swedish iron.

Trade Ship or Slave Ship? – Worksheet

Read the excerpt from *The Diligent: A Voyage Through the Worlds of the Slave Trade,* pages 80-82. Then answer the questions below.

1. Why did Guillaume Billy travel from Vannes to Nantes?

2. Where in Nantes did he go to find out what was popular in West Africa?

3. What types of cloth did he decide to buy?

4. What other goods did he buy?

5. Why were cowry shells important?

6. What was traded and loaded on to the ship along the African coast?

7. Complete the table with the percentages of the different types of cargo the *Diligent* carried to West Africa. Write the percentages in numerals and text. Then choose one type of cargo and figure out the cost of purchasing the item, knowing that the total amount of money Billy spent was 37,782 livres.

Cloth	
Cowry shells	
Kegs of brandy	
Guns and ammunition	
Long smoking pipes	
Swedish iron	

Analyzing History – Using Primary Documents and Data Analysis to Quantify the Past

This activity looks at statistics related to slave origin, numbers and mortality at French sugar plantations, and the specialized skills of enslaved people from Africa. It also connects Kingsley Plantation to the greater slave trade system by demonstrating that slave purchases were strategic – researched and acquired for special skills.

Using a transparency or projector, show these charts to the class. These charts reinforce that there were varied ethnic origins of slaves – that the languages, religions, and traditions held by slaves were different from homeland to homeland. This activity looks at one chart at a time, showing students how to read statistical data and educating them on the backgrounds of enslaved people on the island of Saint-Domingue (now the island location of the nations of Haiti and the Dominican Republic).

Also, this activity familiarizes students with the challenges of working in another language. A term/translation key is supplied below the charts. Students will use the map of West Africa to match up the place names. Students will learn more about specialized type of works slaves performed on a French plantation on Saint-Domingue and at Kingsley Plantation.

Skill-building: History, math, data analysis, geography, language, culture

Objectives: Upon completion of this activity, high school students will:

1. Use data analysis as a tool for learning about history
2. Identify which specialized skills were most needed of slaves at Saint-Domingue
3. Determine which areas of Africa were the homelands of the majority of slaves at Saint-Domingue
4. Connect Kingsley Plantation primary resources with data analysis

Materials:

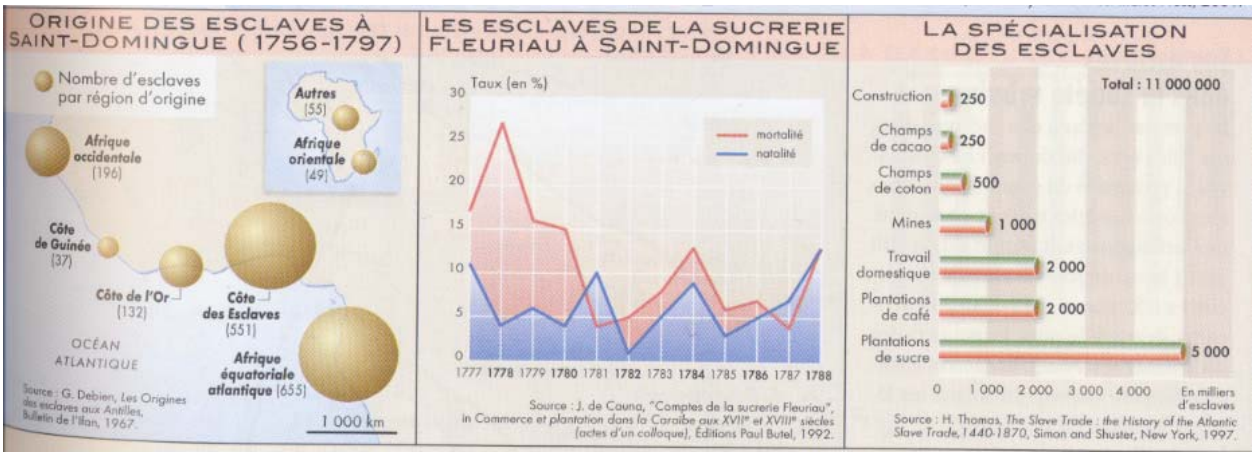
- Transparency/projector
- Charts
- Worksheets
- Map of West Africa

Citations:

Chart citation: Dorigny & Gainot, *Atlas des esclavages*, Éditions Autrement, 2006.
Map citation: http://qed.princeton.edu/main/Image:West_African_Slave_Trade
Laurel Grove slave list : copy at Kingsley Plantation

Analyzing History – Titles of Charts from Left to Right:

1. Origin of the Slaves at Saint-Domingue (1756 – 1797)
2. The Slaves of the Sugar Fields at Saint-Domingue
3. The Specialization (Labor) of the Slaves



1 2 3

Translations of Key Terms:

Chart 2

- Mortalité = death
- Natalité = birth

Chart 3

- Construction = construction
- Champs de cacao = cacao fieds
- Champs de cotton = cotton fields
- Mines = mining
- Travail domestique = domestic work
- Plantations de café = coffee plantations
- Plantations de sucre = sugar plantations

Map of West Africa

Chart citation: Dorigny & Gainot, *Atlas des esclavages*, Éditions Autrement, 2006.
Map citation: http://qed.princeton.edu/main/Image:West_African_Slave_Trade

Analyzing History – Directions

1. Introduce historical research and use of primary documents.
2. Explain that data such as the those used for this activity are derived from large scale research enterprises
3. Discuss the knowledge and skills historians need to have, or work with someone in another field
4. Ask students how much they know about their cultural ancestors
5. Discuss the rarity of personal documents of history of slaves and their descendants
6. Explain that data analysis can help us learn about the past, using this example
7. Review Kingsley slave list as a class (transparency or hand out)
    a. Identify things we learn about the slaves from this list
        i. Family units, gender, work/labor, age, place of origin, monetary value
8. Examine charts and map
    a. Chart 1 – identify the place names (using the West Africa map) and identify which place along the coast had the highest number of slaves purchased
    b. Chart 2 – explain how this chart represents statistics of mortality through time; ask students whether births are keeping pace with deaths
    c. Chart 3 – review each specialization and identify how many millions work on sugar plantations
9. Discuss the needs of a sugar or cotton plantation – numbers of people and skills needed to make a plantation profitable.
10. Ask students whether they think plantation owners did some research into what "type" of slave to buy. *Note:* The term "type" is used here to express skill set or geographical place or origin. This is a key concept – slaves were not considered as people, rather as property.
11. Summarize what has been discussed thus far
12. Tell students work in pairs to complete the worksheet

Analyzing History – Laurel Grove: “Negroes carried off by the Indians”:

Andrew, son of Polly, a boy	7 to 8 yrs
Jacob, a prime Eabo negro	30
Camilla, his wife, Rio Pongo River, prime	25
Jim, boy, child of Jacob & Camilla	7 to 8
Bob, a New Calabar, prime	28
Molly, his wife, prime	26
Sonny, child of above	7 or 8
Prince, a New Calabar, prime	32
M Badie, his wife, prime	26
Charlotte, child of above	8 or 9
Barbara, same	6 to 7
Peggy, same	4 to 5
Toby, same	2 to 3
Jack, Zinquibari, Carpenter, very prime	30
Tamassa, his wife, very prime	28
Ben, son of above	8 to 9
M toto, same	6 to 7
Molly, same	4 to 5
Rose, same	2 to 3
Philip, Calabari, prime	35
Titi, his wife, prime	28
Badja, son of above	8 to 9
Martin, M guinda	26
Jenny, Zinguibara, prime	28
Billy, son of above	4 to 5
Hannah, girl of Old Rose	8 to 9
Breechy, Eabo nation, prime	36
Adda, his wife	30
July, son of above	8 to 9
Dick, same	6 to 7
Hannah, same	4 to 5
Aibo, Calabari	40
M Sooma, Carpenter, Zinguebari, very prime	28
Eliza	26
March, son of above	7 to 8
Mike, son of Old Jinny	8 to 9
Gun , Calabari, driver, very prime	34
Anobia, his wife, very prime	28
Charles, Soo Soo, very prime	24
Old Paul, Eabo nation	48
Cabo, Mouse, sailor, very prime	26
Total Value	$20,500

(average price of $500 & $1,000 for young male slave killed)

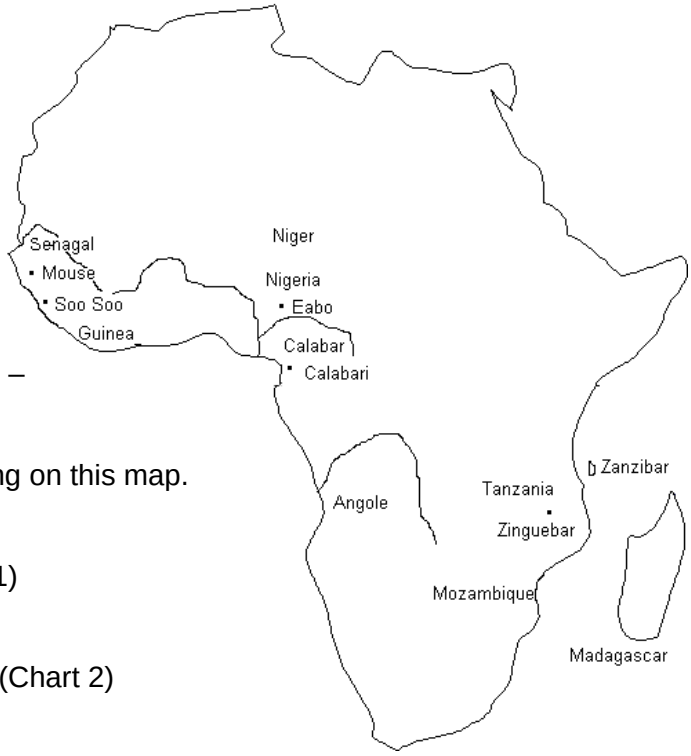
List from the East Florida Claims; Zephaniah Kingsley, Jr., 1843;.The East Florida Papers; B131 F16.

Analyzing History – Map Activity

This map of Africa shows the origins of Zephaniah Kingsley's Laurel Grove slaves that were lost or stolen from Kingsley's plantation in Orange Park, Florida, during the Patriots Rebellion during the years 1812-1814.

The locations on the map are based upon Kingsley's claim for reimbursement for losses during the rebellion, which he made to the U.S. government.

Use the charts, maps, and documents to answer the questions below.



1. Circle the places that appear on both maps – this one and the map of West Africa.
2. Add the places from Chart 1 that are missing on this map.
3. Where were the most slaves from? (Chart 1)
4. Which year had the highest mortality rate? (Chart 2)
5. Name three types of labor enslave people performed on a French plantation from Chart 3 and three types of labor Kingsley's slaves performed at Laurel Grove.

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

6. Based on what you've learned during this activity, write a summary about what the three charts teach us about the slave trade and labor on a Saint-Domingue plantation. Write at least one sentence summarizing each chart, as well as an introductory sentence and a closing sentence.

_____

_____

_____

(Use the back of this worksheet to complete your response.)

“Reading” a Picture of the Slave Trade

In *The French Atlantic Triangle: Literature and Culture of the Slave Trade*, historian Christopher Miller utilizes the works of writers and artists to examine the impact of the slave trade on the culture of France.

The following activity has students study an illustration from a book printed in 1698. It is a French viewpoint of trade on the coast of Africa.

In the book, Miller interprets this image. This activity allows students to being to understand that there are multiple viewpoints in history, as well as the variety of documents that can be considered “primary” documents.

The first of the following three pages is designed to be printed to a transparency or shown though the use of a projector. The next page contains Miller’s explanation of the image and its context. The final page is a student worksheet to accompany the activity.

Skill-building: Reading, history, culture, art, interpretation/application

Objectives:

Upon completion of this activity, students will:

1. Identify aspects of the slave trade that took place along the African coast
2. Recognize that goods are being traded for humans (slaves)

Materials:

Transparencies
Extension activities

Citations:

Image and text scanned from Christopher Miller’s *The French Atlantic Triangle: Literature and Culture of the Slave Trade*, Duke University Press, 2008, page 13.

“Reading” a Picture of the Slave Trade

A French view of trade on the coast of Africa in the seventeenth century. From Le Sieur Froger, *Relation du voyage de Mr. De Gennes au detroit de Magellan* (Paris: Chez N. de Fer, 1698). Detail of title page. Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

Image from Christopher Miller’s *The French Atlantic Triangle: Literature and Culture of the Slave Trade*, Duke University Press, 2008, page 13.

“Reading” a Picture of the Slave Trade – Scholar Christopher Miller’s interpretation of “A French view of trade on the coast of Africa”

The title-page engraving in Le Sieur Froger’s travel account of 1695 to 1697 (see figure 1) depicts the ambiguities of power and exchange that Europeans and Africans must have felt in each other’s presence in the early years. An imposing African leader reclines, at ease but armed, as a European approaches solicitously with offerings (no doubt the *coutume* that was required before trade could open). The African in the middle holds a bolt of checkered cloth, from which his shirt has been fashioned: it could be a West African kente type cloth, or it could be a European imitation thereof known as “Guinea cloth,” purchased from an earlier visitor. Some single garments could be used to purchase one prime male slave (T, 322, 319). But no slaves are in sight here: the most valued commodity in the African-European trade is left out. This engraving idealizes “trade” as fair exchange. Yet in the bay lurks a sign of inequality, a European weapon of mass destruction: a ship.

Christopher Miller’s *The French Atlantic Triangle: Literature and Culture of the Slave Trade*, Duke University Press, 2008, page 12.

“Reading” a Picture of the Slave Trade – Instructions

1. Put up the transparency of “A French View of Trade on the Coast of Africa.”
2. Review the definition of a primary resource.
3. As a class, identify key elements of the image. (Ask: What do you see in the picture?)
4. Depending on student responses, continue to ask guiding questions. “Who is in the picture? What trade items are in the picture? Where is this scene occurring?”
5. Tell students to break into pairs (or work alone, depending on teacher preference) and write down the “who, what, where, when why” answers they brainstorm.
6. Calling the class back together, ask for a volunteer to tell the class what they determined. Continue to ask for ideas. Students should begin to work off each other, coming up with new meanings.
7. Using Miller’s interpretation, continue to unravel meanings.
8. Ask students for a definition of trade.
9. Conclusion – this image can be considered a primary source, a tool to understand the past. Ask the class why this is a primary source (to review) and ask if they were surprised that this image is considered a primary source.

Extension – Interview with Christopher Miller

Students will learn about the path that Dr. Miller took to become a historian of the slave trade and culture, as well as the challenges of history research.

Extension - Online Search

Slave trade, middle passage, slavery – have students research graphics online and describe what they see in the picture. Descriptive writing and evaluation. What is the image trying to say to the viewer?

Matters of Morality

The *Diligent* was a trading ship that was outfitted in Vannes and Nantes, France, for a triangular trade voyage. It was the first time that her captain and financiers had participated in a slave trading voyage.

The following excerpt from Robert Harm's book raises questions and struggles to answer questions about the morality of the slave trade.

This activity will give students a chance to learn more about preparations for such a voyage, as well as time to think about slavery and morality. We encourage the teacher to facilitate a discussion with the class about slavery as a moral issue.

Skill-building: Reading, history, culture, ethics, citizenship

Objectives:

Upon completion of this activity, students will:

1. List 3 items the ship was carrying as cargo from France to West Africa
2. Describe the decision making process for choosing cargo for trade
3. Understand a perspective on the trade, whether or not the students morally agree

Materials:

- Worksheet
- Slave trade exhibit panel from Kingsley Plantation (The Port of Nantes)

Citations:

Robert Harms, *The Diligent: A Voyage Through the Worlds of the Slave Trade*, 2002

Matters of Morality – Activity

Excerpt from *The Diligent: A Voyage Through the Worlds of the Slave Trade*, p 5.

…[Robert Durand] outlined the purpose of his trip. "With the help of God," he wrote, "we are undertaking to go from Vannes, whence we were outfitted, to the coast of Guinea in the ship the *Diligent* belonging to brothers Billy and Mr. La Croix, our outfitters, and from thence to Martinique to sell our blacks and make our return to Vannes."

What is especially chilling about Robert Durand's words is their businesslike, matter-of-fact tone. He was writing about selling people exactly as he would have written about selling barrels of wine or loads of wheat. He gave no indication that he felt any sense of shame or moral ambivalence about his mission…Nor was Durand a hardened slave trader. He was only twenty-six years old, and this was his first trip to Africa.

How could Robert Durance outline such as evil mission in such impersonal prose? If this offhand attitude was not formed by his personal experience, then it must have been part of a general mind-set in the seaports of early eighteenth-century Brittany. There was almost no public discussion of the morality of the slave trade in France during the first half of the eighteenth century. Most public figures were too preoccupied with problems of war, famine, inflation, taxes, religious strife, and quotidian violence to worry about the slave ships that sailed from a handful of French ports. There was far more public discussion of the grain trade in the early eighteenth century than of the trade in human beings.

If slavery was discussed anywhere in France, it was in the slaving ports. Even there, however, the talk focused on the issues of access, profits, tariffs, and bonuses; the humanity of the slaves themselves was conspicuously absent from public discussions."

Answer the questions in complete sentences based upon the excerpt above.

1. What has the author determined to be the reason for Robert Durand's words?

2. What aspects of slavery were discussed in slaving ports?

3. Slaves were considered property. What does the author say about Durand's businesslike tone about selling people?

Interview with Christopher Miller

This activity can be used in combination with "Reading a Picture of the Slave Trade" or as a stand-alone activity. The goal is to introduce students to career possibilities, the connections between Africa and the New World, and how research is done. Christopher Miller's responses highlight the interdisciplinary nature of studying the slave trade, and the wide-ranging cultural groups that were affected by the trade. Students rarely have an opportunity to participate in hands-on historical research. This activity gives students an idea of what research entails and the types of materials are encountered at archives, libraries and online.

Skill-building: History, literature, popular media and culture, career mentoring

Objectives:

Upon completion of this activity, students will be able to:

1. Understand that the study of history can be interdisciplinary and challenging.
2. Identify five primary sources Miller utilized to make connections between Africa and the New World.

Materials:

Interview text
Discussion questions
World map
Map of Africa

Citations:

Email interview by Ranger C. Clark with Christopher Miller, February 1, 2010.

Christopher Miller's *The French Atlantic Triangle: Literature and Culture of the Slave Trade*, Duke University Press.

Interview with Christopher Miller, author of *The French Atlantic Triangle: Literature and Culture of the Slave Trade*

1. Why did you choose to become a historian?

Actually I am not a historian! I am a literary critic by training and profession, but the mistake is understandable because I am working in an interdisciplinary fashion, reading literary texts in relation to their historical context. My topic in this book is all tied up in history and could not be undertaken without doing the historical research.

So how did I become a literary critic? I loved French as a high school student, did well in it, continued with it in college, and decided to make a career out of it. But I wanted to get out the classrooms and into the world before going on to graduate school, so I joined the Peace Corps. First they offered me well-digging in Chad; I said try again, and they came back with teaching English in Zaïre (the former Belgian Congo, now Democratic Republic of Congo). I spent two years there, and after I got back and entered graduate school realized how little I had actually understood. Since then I've devoted my career to the study of Africa and its role in the world--specifically French-speaking or Francophone Africa. I wrote three books about the emergence of French-language literature in Africa, then undertook this one.

2. How did you decide on the French history of the slave trade and its representation in popular media?

In my teaching, I have always stressed to my students the connections between Africa and the New World. In Francophone literature that meant showing how and why Africans and West Indians have felt connected to each other. I was always drawing a triangle on the blackboard to explain the relations between France, Africa, and the islands of the Caribbean--in terms of the famous triangular trade, of which the slave trade was the key element. Eventually I realized no one had ever done a book about the literature and culture of the "French Atlantic"--the connections set up by the triangular trade that are found in travel accounts, literary texts, philosophical writings, films, plays, etc. That's how I came up with the idea for this book.

3. What are the challenges of working in your subject area?

The main challenge is the research. First you have to read everything on your subject, then figure out what is missing. You do this because you have a hunch--you sense that something is missing--but you need to confirm that. You always feel like you are groping in the dark, at least at first. Then you gradually find your way and gain confidence about having something new to contribute. The work has gotten considerably easier, I must say, with the rise of on-line sources and databases. For example, the authoritative slave-trade database that used to be only on clumsy CD-ROMs is now on line (www.slavevoyages.org/tast/index.faces); and tons of literary texts are available on line now as well.

Interview with Christopher Miller – Discussion Questions

1. Is Christopher Miller a historian?
2. What is his profession by training?
3. Why is the historical context important to his research in literary texts?
4. How did Miller become interested in his profession?
5. Where did he travel and work in the Peace Corps? (use the maps)
6. What does Francophone mean? (of, having, or belonging to a population using French as its first or sometimes second language)
7. What is "popular media?"
8. Is there a form "popular media" in every culture or era? (ask students to describe popular media in their lives, then discuss it in the historic sense)
9. What "popular media"did Miller utilize in his research?
10. What are the challenges of research? (consider using the analogy of historical research being like detective work)

In the News

American culture today has many roots in the plantation era. The food we eat and the music we listen to has African roots. We celebrate these aspects of our culture that represent the perseverance of enslaved people and their contribution to the development of our nation.

Yet slavery is a very painful part of American history and world history. During the French history and heritage weekend held in September 2009, one of the newspapers had a special article about one group's quest to recognize the French history of the slave trade.

This article shows that issues related to slavery, race, and remembrance are still major themes that require redress, in the United States, France, and elsewhere.

The activity helps students comprehend the citizen's right to petition, and has them write a petition in teams, then present to the class for a vote.

Note: The original article was written in French, and Google Translate was used to translate the article in English. Portions of the article may seem awkward and the teacher should explain the reason to his/her students.

Skill-building: History, math, civics, government, culture, current events

Objectives: Upon completion of this activity, high school students will:

1. Identify the main issue in this article. (Petition to change the names of streets in historical slave trading port towns to names that acknowledge the city's slave trading past.)
2. Understand the civic process of a petition and citizens' rights.
3. Summarize the position taken by Karfa Diallo and the response/suggestion presented by Jean-Marc Ayrault.

Materials:

Article (translated)
Paper and pencil for notes
Access to the internet

Citations:

Newspaper article - http://www.ouest-france.fr/actu/actuLocale_-Passe-negrier-polemique-autour-d-une-petition-_44109-avd-20090919-56793176_actuLocale.Htm

WikiHow - http://www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Petition

In the News – Directions

1. Ask students if they have ever seen someone trying to get signatures to add a new bill to the ballot. This person may have been outside a library or government building.
2. Explain the steps involved in petitioning.
3. Handout the article from *Ouest France* – "Slave past, controversy about a petition"
4. Read the article aloud, first explaining the awkward translation as well as whom the petitioner is and his goal.
5. Ask the students to identify:
    a. What is Diallo's goal?
    b. Which towns were slave trading ports?
    c. Did the cities seem willing to change street names?
    d. What alternate idea was proposed to Diallo?
    e. Why is that alternate only a partial solution (in Diallo's thinking)?
    f. How many street names does Diallo propose changing?
6. Discussion:
    a. How does it make you feel when someone you identify with is given such an honor? What does it make you feel like when you see a place named for something that is painful to you?
    b. Why do you think Diallo believes the street names matter? (i.e., why does it matter that streets in a French city are still named after wealthy slave traders or others who profited from the slave trade?)
    c. Can you think of an example in the United States where a place name was changed because of slave or race-related reasons? (Ex., school names being changed from a Confederate officer's name to something else; streets in American cities being named or renamed for Dr. Martin Luther King or other Black leaders)
7. Activity:
    a. Break up class into student teams and have them choose a topic that the feel is worthy of a petition. Ideas could include environmental topics, political action, lesser known events relating to civil rights, and topics in American history.
    b. Research topic and write petition statements.
    c. Student teams present their petition. Each team's petition is voted on by the class anonymously (see attached ballot sheets).
    d. The team with the highest number of "votes" earns extra credit points and becomes the discussion topic for another class period.

In the News – Reading Material

Ouest-France / Pays de la Loire / Nantes / Archives

Slave past: controversy around a petition - Nantes

Saturday, September 19, 2009

Karfa Diallo is now in Nantes. The president of the association DiversCités "wants the streets evoking the slave past of the city be renamed. A petition is circulating.

Karfa Diallo, President of the Association Bordelaise DiversCités very active on issues of slave trade.

You were sent in August, a letter, the mayors of the four ports historically related traffic triangular Nantes, Bordeaux, Le Havre and La Rochelle. You ask them to debaptize [change old name to a new one] all streets evoking the slave past of these cities. Have they responded?

Only Jean-Marc Ayrault told us at length (Editor's note: see cons below). His mail has reached us this afternoon (Editor's note: Friday). The other three have not deigned to do. But Alain Juppé, mayor of Bordeaux, has informed us via the AFP, that our approach was absurd.

And you meet Jean-Marc Ayrault?

He does not think debaptize [change old name to a new one] certain streets of Nantes is the appropriate response. He says they must keep their name as a brand history, as dark as it is, which must be accepted and explained to all Nantais [citizens of Nantes, France]. Jean-Marc Ayrault also announced the impending creation of an urban route around multiple traces the history of slave trade of Nantes.

With a historic signage on the main symbolic places.

This response you agree [you agree with this response]?

Yes and no. Yes, because the debate is finally launched. Nantes could not do without it. And what announces Jean-Marc Ayrault is very encouraging. Even unexpected. I hope that his fellow mayors of three other cities will emulate that approach. Nevertheless, we always want to go further. It is not normal for people involved in this dark trade have always honored to have a street that bears their name. They have been complicit in crimes against humanity.

Are not you unjust Nantes already looking past his face slave past two decades?

True, Nantes has been a pioneer. We can not forget the exhibition on the Rings of Memory, the rooms devoted to slavery in the museum of the castle of the Dukes or the memorial project on the abolition of slavery. Nantes and retains much ahead of cities such as Bordeaux and Le Havre. The answer to Jean-Marc Ayrault prove that his city continues to work for this necessary duty to remember.

You identifies eleven to rename streets in Nantes. Some however have little to do with the slave trade ... Bourgault-Ducoudray was, for example, a musician ... shipowner's son born in 1840 ...

Maybe. We have drawn our information from books but seriously. But he will have understood that historians will look into the matter ...

Many associations Nantes as Memory overseas or Metisse Nantes, does not seem to follow you ...
Indeed, there is a debate, including within the association DiversCité I chair. We must meet these associations on Saturday morning. We will explain our approach and they will decide. We must discuss, debate still.

Your petition is still valid?

More than ever. We meet the Nantais wishing Saturday afternoon (Editor's note: from 15 h 30) on the street Kervégan Feydeau Island. A symbolic location ... Our goal is to collect 10 000 signatures by city. In Bordeaux, we have already received 3 000 in a few days. We go to La Rochelle in mid-October.

[Written by] Joel Bigorgne.

Translated using Google Translate on December 28, 2009.

http://translate.google.com/translate?hl=en&sl=fr&u=http://www.ouest-france.fr/actu/actuLocale_-Passe-negrier-polemique-autour-d-une-petition-_44109-avd-20090919-56793176_actuLocale.Htm&prev=/search%3Fq%3Dpasse%2Bnegrier%2Bpolemique%2Bautour%2Bd%2527un%2Bpetition%26hl%3Den%26safe%3Dactive%26rlz%3D1T4SUNA_enUS309US309&twu=1

Original article:

http://www.ouest-france.fr/actu/actuLocale_-Passe-negrier-polemique-autour-d-une-petition-_44109-avd-20090919-56793176_actuLocale.Htm

In the News – Activity - How to Write a Petition

(From WikiHow: http://www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Petition)

1. **Contact the administrative office of your local government.** Verify that a cause for petition falls under its jurisdiction. You might need to petition on a county or state level. Have the office direct you to the department that handles matters related to your cause.Request for petition guidelines. Find out how many signatures you need and whether your petition needs approval before being circulated.

2. **Research your topic so that you understand the various positions fully.** Research whether you must collect a certain number of signatures, and learn what form the signatures must take. If you are trying to get a candidate's name added to the ballot, and the law says you must show an address for each name, you will want to be sure to ask your signers to supply this information.

3. **Consider which medium is ideal.** Paper petitions can be more effective for local petitions, but online petitions can reach broader networks much faster. **For this project, do a paper petition.**

4. **Use the guidelines to write a short summary of your cause.** People won't stick around to read something long, so make it simple and to the point. A good example might be:

   "*We, the citizens of the city of Mapleton, petition the city to install a four-way stop sign at the intersection of Main Street and Palm Drive. Drivers typically speed through this busy intersection at 35 mph or more while our children are trying to cross on their way to school.*"

   Develop a very specific statement which identifies precisely what it is you would like for people to support. *I demand that the Commissioners of Yellow County fully fund the 2007-2008 School Board budget* might be a good phrasing. *I support more funding for a park* would probably be too general and therefore not very effective.

5. **Read over your summary carefully.** Make sure it (1) describes the situation, (2) suggests what is needed and (3) explains why it is needed.

6. **Read over your summary carefully.** Make sure it (1) describes the situation, (2) suggests what is needed and (3) explains why it is needed.

7. **Spell check and review for grammar.**

8. **On a separate page, create a signer's form.** With the petition title on top top, divide it into five columns with a ruler. Label the columns: Name, Address, Phone Number and Signature and voter registration number. Allow plenty of room for the Address column. Add ten to 20 lines per page. If you can, prepare the form using a spreadsheet program. It will look more professional.

9. **Label more pages accordingly or make copies of your original.** Make sure you have enough pages for the number of signatures you need.

10. **Secure the papers to a clipboard.** Attach a pen to the clipboard.

11. **Go out and get those signatures!** Make sure all signers are registered voters. Enlist volunteers to assist you in getting signatures. Each volunteer will need a copy of the petition, with a signature form.

Tips (from WikiHow)

- Try to get the majority support. It will show people really care about your cause.
- Make sure it is about something important. You can make one to rid school uniforms but not to rid chores.
- Type a six sentence paragraph on whatever your reason for petitioning is on the computer. If you do less than six sentences, it won't be very professional. Then print it out.
- Show it to all the people that want to help your cause. Have them tell all of their friends about it and then get people to sign it in their best cursive handwriting. If you can get your town mayor or any type of government official to sign it it has a high chance of being accepted.
- Hold protests after school to help get more signatures. Make up fliers for your cause.
- Give it or send it to the people that you want to accept the petition.
- When trying to get the signatures, be nice.
- Learn about the subject of your petition, so you can answer questions from people. The people will maybe write their signatures because you told them a fact which supported what ever you started the petition for, and it is also good to know much about your subject because this makes people think the petition is serious.
- Do not interrupt anyone. If you see someone is talking in her/his phone, they probably won’t let themselves be interrupted, and maybe, they will even think they will never sign a petition about your subject, because they will remember that you interrupted them.