

# Slave Trade

## The Guinea Coast and the Middle Passage

The most significant part of the slave trade voyage was the purchase of slaves and provisions on the Guinea coast.

The journey across the Atlantic was known as the Middle Passage.

### On the Guinea Coast

Charles Kneal was captain of the *Lottery* in 1802 when he was instructed by his owners to barter his cargo for 290 slaves, which must be *well-made, full chested, vigorous and without bodily imperfection.*

The *Dobson* called at the Isle of Man for some cargo in 1763. A trade book exists for her 'purchases' (exchange of goods for slaves) at Old Calabar (Nigeria) in 1769-1770.

Over half the 252 men, 133 women, 96 boys and 85 girls were supplied by 15 people, including the local chieftains and their families and both African and other local dealers.

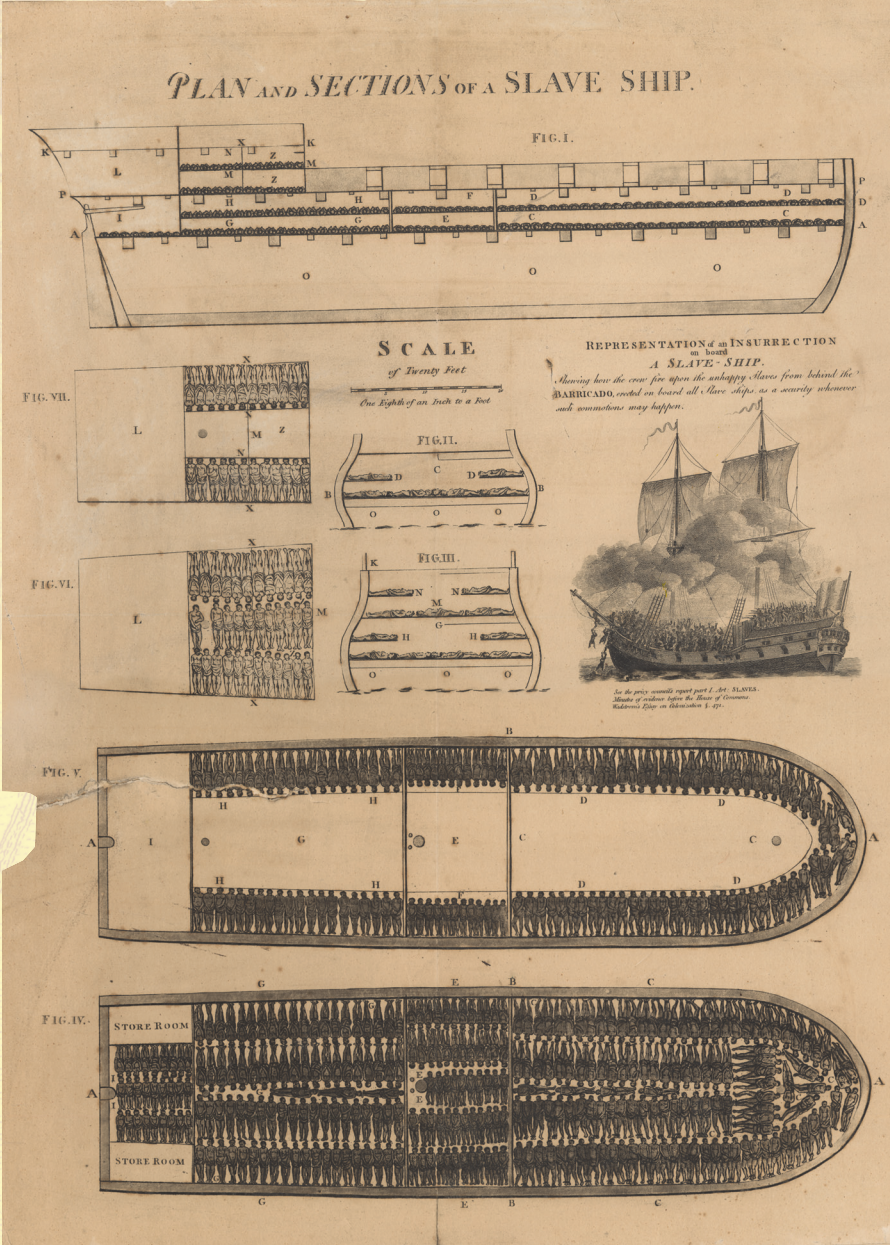
The *Dobson* also 'purchased' ivory and provisions including yams, heads of corn, plantains, limes, fish and mats for the slaves.

Purchase of slaves on board the *Dobson* in Old Calabar. The slave account records the number of men, women, boys and girls sold by individual traders to the ship, a total of 566 slaves. Duke Ephraim sold 1 adult male, 3 boys and 1 girl to the *Dobson*.

The image shows two pages of a handwritten trade book. The left page is titled 'Purchase of Slaves on board the Dobson in Old Calabar, 1769-70' and lists various items and their prices. The right page is titled 'Purchase of Provisions on board the Dobson in Old Calabar, 1769-70' and lists various food items and their prices. The entries are organized in columns with dates and descriptions.

### The Middle Passage

This has become notorious for the cramped conditions endured by the slaves. These graphic diagrams of arrangements on the slaver, *Brooks*, give a lasting impression of the way in which the slaves were accommodated.



During her 1781 voyage there were three Manxmen on board the *Brooks*: William Clucas and Thomas Kelly (both discharged with 25 others after 11 months 8 days) and John 'Brideson' who sailed on the full voyage which lasted 16 months and 18 days.

The captains were instructed to take care of the slaves, however. As Hugh Crow explained, *I took great pains to promote the health and comfort of all on board by proper diet, regularity, exercise, and cleanliness.*

Charles Kneal was to ensure *that their provisions are cooked in that way which is most agreeable to them.*

Map of Africa, 1714.

