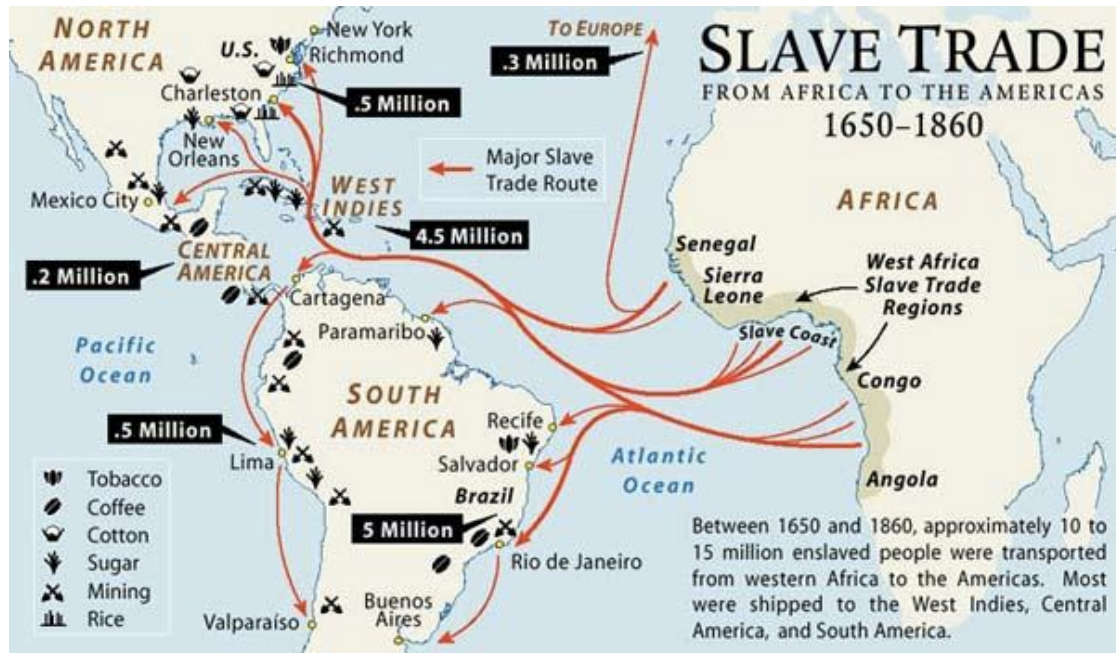


# The Atlantic Slave Trade



## The Causes of African Slavery

### Slavery in Africa

African Muslims bought and sold non-Muslim prisoners of war as slaves.



Muslims enslaved about 17 million Africans between 650 and 1600.

Most of these slaves had some legal rights and some occupied positions of influence and power.

Slaves did have the ability to escape their bondage through manumission, purchasing their freedom, or marriage.

The Portuguese were first the Europeans to explore Africa.

# The Causes of African Slavery

## The Demand for Africans

European colonists in the Americas began using enslaved Africans as cheap plantation labor after the Native American population was depleted.



Europeans saw advantages in using enslaved Africans:

Africans had some disease immunity.

Africans were experienced farmers.

Africans were less likely to escape.

Between 1500 and 1600, nearly 300,000 Africans were transported to the Americas.

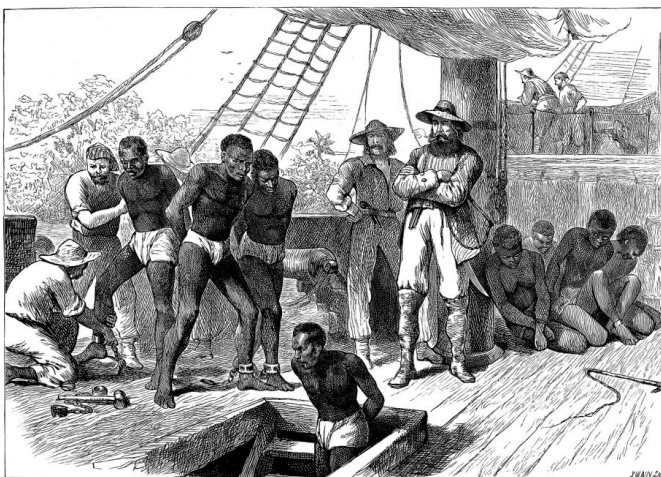
By 1700 that number climbed to almost 1.3 million.

Europeans had transported about 9.5 million Africans to the Americas by 1870.

# The Causes of African Slavery

## Spain and Portugal Lead the Way

Spain was the first to colonize the Caribbean and moved on to mainland America.



The Spanish transported Africans to the Americas as a workforce.

By 1650, nearly 300,000 Africans labored throughout Spanish America.

The Portuguese soon surpassed the Spanish in the number of Africans in the Americas.

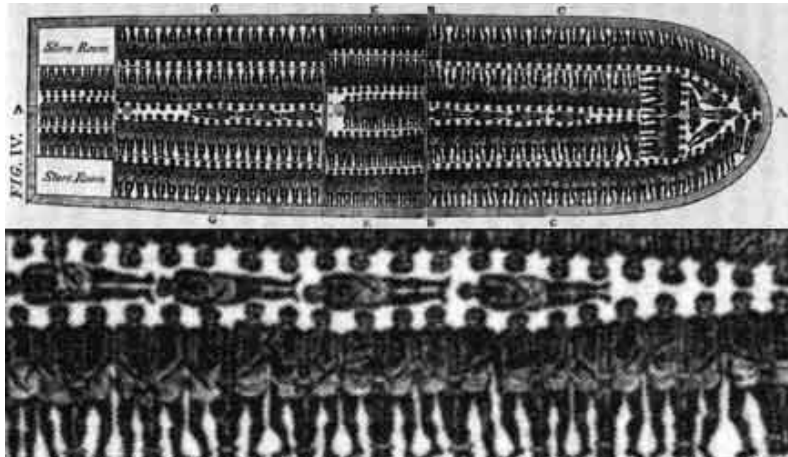
During the 1600s, more than 40% of all Africans brought to the Americas went to Brazil to work on sugar plantations.



## Slavery Spreads Throughout the Americas

### England Dominates the Slave Trade

By 1807 the English had transported nearly 1.7 million Africans to the colonies.



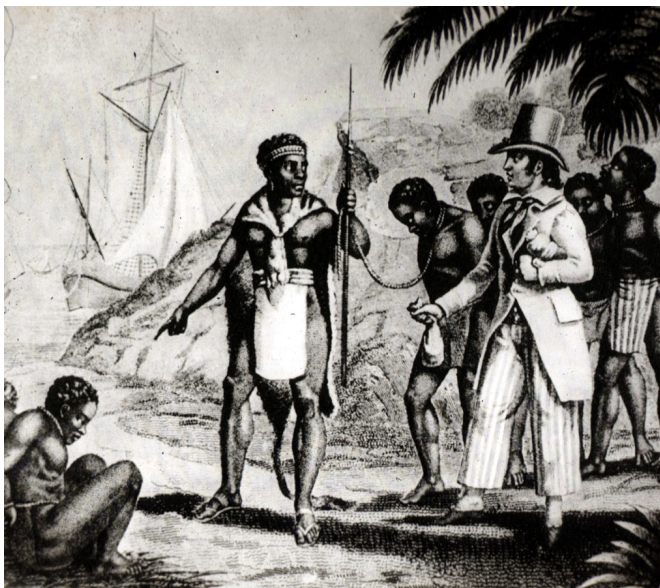
Nearly 400,000 Africans were sold to Britain's North American colonies.

By 1830, roughly 2 million slaves toiled in the United States.

## Slavery Spreads Throughout the Americas

### African Cooperation and Resistance

African merchants and local rulers captured Africans and delivered them to European traders in exchange for gold, guns, and other goods.

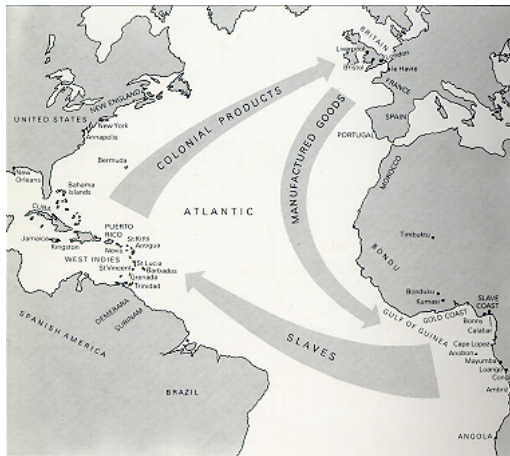


Lured by its profits, many African rulers continued to participate.

African merchants developed new trade routes to avoid rulers who refused to cooperate.

# A Forced Journey

## The Triangular Trade



After being captured, Africans were shipped to the Americas as part of a trading network known as the triangular trade.

Europeans transported manufactured goods to the west coast of Africa.

There, traders exchanged these goods for captured Africans.

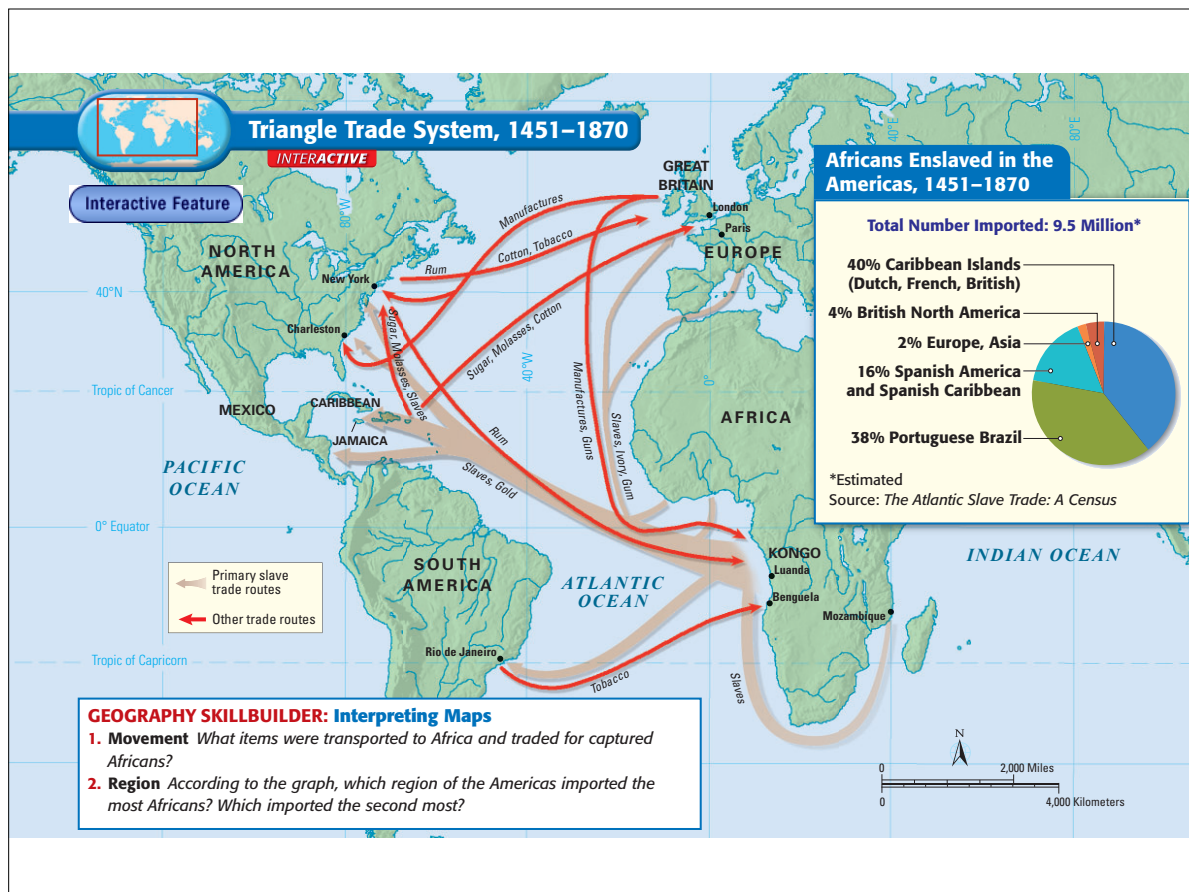
The Africans were then transported across the Atlantic and sold in the West Indies.

There merchants bought sugar, coffee, tobacco, and molasses.

They sailed up the coast of America, trading along the way.

They sold the West Indies' sugar and molasses to New England rum producers.

They sailed on to Europe.



## A Forced Journey

### The Middle Passage

The middle leg of the transatlantic trade triangle was called the middle passage.

European traders packed Africans into the dark holds of large ships.

Numerous Africans died from disease or physical abuse aboard the slave ships.

#### The Horrors of the Middle Passage

One African, Olaudah Equiano, recalled the inhumane conditions on his trip from West Africa to the West Indies at age 12 in 1762.

#### PRIMARY SOURCE

I was soon put down under the decks, and there I received such a salutation [greeting] in my nostrils as I never experienced in my life; so that, with the loathsomeness of the stench, and crying together, I became so sick and low that I was not able to eat . . . but soon, to my grief, two of the white men offered me eatables; and on my refusing to eat, one of them held me fast by the hands, and laid me across . . . the windlass, while the other flogged me severely.

OLAUDAH EQUIANO, quoted in  
*Eyewitness: The Negro in American History*



On board, Africans endured sickening cruelty, whippings, and beatings from merchants.

Many others committed suicide by drowning.

Estimates report that roughly 20% of the Africans aboard each slave ship perished during the trip.

## Slavery in the Americas

### Resistance and Rebellion

To cope with their enslavement, Africans kept their African culture alive.

Slaves would resist: slowed production, broke tools, etc.

Thousands also ran away.

Some slaves pushed their resistance to open revolt.

Revolts occurred throughout Spanish settlements during the 16th century.

Some slaves on Hispaniola attacked and killed several Spanish colonists in 1522.

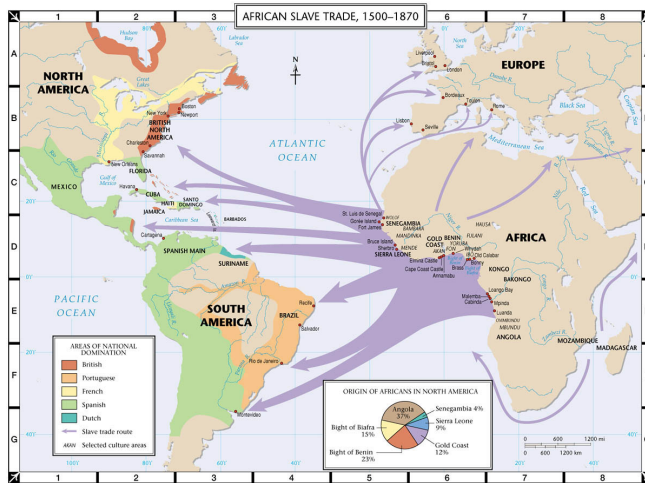
Occasional uprisings also occurred in Brazil, the West Indies, and North America.



In 1739, a group of slaves in South Carolina led an uprising known as the Stono Rebellion.



# Consequences of the Slave Trade



In Africa, numerous cultures lost generations of their young and able.

Countless African families were torn apart and never reunited.

The introduction of guns into the African continent devastated African societies.

African slaves contributed greatly to the economic and cultural development of the Americas.

Enslaved Africans' expertise in agriculture and their art, music, religion, and food continue to influence American societies.

Many of the nations from the United States to Brazil today have sizable mixed-race populations.

