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## Ethnic admixture in African American ancestry as reflected in dental patterns

Hellen Rudean Taylor  
*University of Nevada, Las Vegas*

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Taylor, Hellen Rudean, M.A.

University of Nevada, Las Vegas, 1991

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**ETHNIC ADMIXTURE IN AFRICAN AMERICAN  
ANCESTRY AS REFLECTED IN DENTAL PATTERNS**

by

**Hellen Rudean Taylor**

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirement for the degree of**

**Master of Arts**

in


**Anthropology**

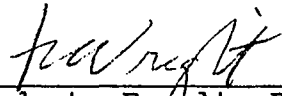
**Anthropology Department  
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December 1991**

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University of Nevada, Las Vegas  
December 1991

#### ABSTRACT

African Americans are an admixture of many groups of people who either emigrated to the Americas and surrounding islands after 1492 or who were native to this area when the slave ships arrived. Moreover, African Americans produced offspring with Asian peoples in America and elsewhere at various times in African American history. While the mixture of genes with those of European descent has been studied rather thoroughly, the African-Native-American-Asian-American admixture has not been as widely acknowledged or studied in the United States. One possible reason being that the European gene pool was infused into the African American descent on a much wider scale during slavery as well as long past the cessation of that institution. Also, scholars of the United States have not placed much academic emphasis on non-European gene pools within this group because it is generally conceded that such mixtures were few, and thus, insignificant. Yet, such acknowledgments are important if academia is to thoroughly study all of what contributed to the making of African Americans.

Since shovel shaped incisors occur more frequently among Native Americans and Asians than other populations, and Carabelli's cusps occur in higher frequencies among those of European descent, a partial thrust of this paper is to study the frequencies of these anterior dental nonmetric traits in a sample of African Americans. However, before those results are addressed ethnographical/



historical information on the following topics are discussed:  
African societies from which most African Americans  
came, the middle passage, the African diaspora once Africans  
reached the Americas, and African American relationships with  
Native Americans during and after slavery as well as African  
American interaction with Asian populations in what is now the  
United States.

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In our society where individuality is prized, lauded, and encouraged, most of us are very much aware that although this trait is a cherished cultural ideal, no one truly accomplishes anything in a vacuum. Nor do we go about our daily tasks without help in some way from others. Help may come in the form of nothing more than a kind word when we are dejected, a funny story to lift our spirits when we are disheartened, or a suggestion that gives us direction when seemingly we have none. Simple acts such as these help keep us going, and have contributed to the accomplishments of many individuals. Consequently, in social relationships as in our relationship with nature, we are interdependent. Oftentimes this interdependence is racked with conflict, but more often than not cooperation and assistance are the rules. It is through cooperation as well as aid from others that I was able to complete this large undertaking, and I am forever grateful to all who have assisted me. The list is long and seemingly legion, but if I failed to acknowledge anyone who has helped with this project in any way, do know that it is an innocent oversight rather than a deliberate slight.

I extend special thanks to my committee chairperson mentor, and benefactor, Dr. Sheilagh Brooks, who has stood behind me and encouraged me through thick and thin. To Dr. Miranda, Dr. Urioste, and Dr. Wright, I hold each of you in high regard, and I am very

grateful to you all for serving on my committee.

Further, special thanks goes to Reverend Willie Davis, minister of Second Baptist Church in Las Vegas, Nevada, who introduced me to Dr. Owen Justice, a local dentist, in order to secure volunteers for this project. Further, I am most grateful to Reverend Davis for his suggestions and encouragement with respect to securing volunteers.

With incurable sexually transmitted diseases prevalent in our society, and the world, not many individuals were willing to open themselves up to being examined in so sensitive an area as their mouths. But because Dr. Justice and his partner, Dr. Banks, examined African Americans, with these individuals' permission, for the occurrence of shovel shaped incisors, double shovel incisors, and Carabelli's cusps during routine dental services, I was able to secure data from a small sample of African Americans. Thus, I extend special thanks to Dr. Justice, Dr. Banks, and those who volunteered.

I am also grateful to Reverend Fletcher Harris, minister of Unity Baptist Church in Las Vegas, Nevada, for encouraging his congregation to volunteer for this project. Deep appreciation is extended to those members who came forward.

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**CHAPTER ONE**  
**INTRODUCTION**

People of the United States of African descent have had a long and bitter history due to slavery and its aftermath. During their history gene pools of many different populations were introduced into the African American descent, making African Americans an admixture of many varied groups. This genetic mixing did not commence on or near American shores or on slavers bound for the Western Hemisphere, but began on African soil and in European cities prior to Africans being transhipped to this hemisphere. Consequently, some individuals who were brought to the West were the issue of mixed parentage, and once in this land further miscegenation occurred.

Yet, the Atlantic slave trade was not the only successful plundering of Africa for human cargo. For hundreds of years before Europeans created the Atlantic slave trade, Arabs were enslaving East Africans and dispersing them throughout the Mediterranean, the Middle and Far East. These slaves were taken to various areas of the Iberian Peninsula (in fact, it was the Arabs from whom people of this peninsula learned of Black Africans south of the Sahara), Iraq, Persia, Saudi Arabia, India, and China. Although most Africans carried into these areas were slaves, they mixed with indigenous populations. After the Atlantic slave trade was established, a few East Africans were transhipped to the area now known as the United States. Since Arabs had already been in East

Africa for nearly a thousand years before Europe shared in slaving ventures, miscegenation took place among Arabs, native East Africans, and in some cases peoples of the Far East on east African shores. Thus, when small numbers of slaves were taken from this area by the Arabs, sold to Europeans and subsequently brought to the Western Hemisphere by Europeans, many were already an admixture of different races. This, too, contributed to the multicultural and multiracial stock who became ancestors to African Americans.

Ethnographical and historical information are discussed as support to the thesis that African Americans are an admixture of varied peoples. Moreover, the intent is to show through documentation that this admixture encompasses more than simply African/European miscegenation, even though emphasis in our society and, thus, in academia generally is on the African/European admixture of African Americans. To be sure, African and European genetic mixing has taken place for a long time on a wide scale, and continues through to the present. Recognizing this, the motive here is not to minimize or downplay this admixture, but to emphasize that nonEuropean mixtures in the African American ancestry exist in significant numbers that have largely been ignored by this society, and correspondingly by academia. Consequently, the history and broad picture of what makes up African Americans are skewed.

The course of African Americans from initial European and African contact to the present has been charted, and relations between these two groups described. Along the way, it is shown that not only did miscegenation between Europeans and Africans

occur with initial contact, but that race mixing also took place among Africans and other peoples of color on a significant level on and off American shores, and continues into modern times.

Secondarily, some information included in this paper is not generally known since historically the subject has been dealt with in a cursory and superficial manner or not at all. Consequently, even those in academia are generally lacking knowledge with respect to these aspects. Unless learned individuals have formally studied this subject or for some reason have researched the topic due to personal interest, most of academia are no more aware of these data than the average American. This is the reason why, for example, if a person of African American descent says he or she has Native American or Chinese genes in his/her family history, most will usually view that individual's claim as suspect, unless such an individual appears mixed. Lack of knowledge regarding this also hinders African Americans themselves from accepting such claims unless again an individual appears to be of mixed heritage. But this is largely because most people truly do not know the extent to which miscegenation occurred among African Americans and other peoples of color.

Since shovel shaped incisors occur in higher frequencies among Native Americans and Asians (also double shovel shaped incisors in Asians) than other populations, and Carabelli's cusps occur in higher frequencies among those of European descent, a small sample of African Americans was examined to determine the frequency of these genetic markers on their teeth. As is the focus throughout this paper, historically and biologically African Americans are an

admixture of African, Asian, European and Native American populations. Some of these racial mixings have been recent and others have occurred sometimes two, three or even four generations removed from extant African Americans. Yet, a mixed gene pool is evident in the African American descent as is attested by diverse skin colors, hair texture and body hair as well as diverse facial features so prevalent among African Americans. Shovel shaped incisors, double shovel incisors, and Carabelli's cusps have been selected as a test to determine if these particular genetic traits show up in African Americans. And if so, to what degree this is evident.

The shovel shaped incisors consist of a pronounced hollow on lingual surfaces of the teeth, bounded laterally or surrounded by a well-defined elevated enamel border. Such teeth are strong and resemble an ordinary coal shovel, in consequence of which they were named "shovel-shaped" incisors (Hrdlicka 1920:429). When well marked, they are generally present on all four incisors, but may predominate the median or lateral incisors, or may be present in either the median or lateral incisors alone. In rare instances shoveling may be marked in the two teeth of one side, or even in only one of the four teeth (Hrdlicka 1920:433). Also, shoveling gives additional strength to the incisors. They are found in higher frequencies among Native Americans and Asians. The double shovel looks like a capital "I" turned laterally and is a buttress of added strength to the teeth. This type of shoveling occurs rarely, but are found in Asian dentition in higher frequencies.

Carabelli's cusps are tubercles on the lingual surface of the

mesiolingual cusp of the maxillary first molar tooth. They were first described by Carabelli in 1842 (Kraus 1950:348). Although these cusps are most often found on the maxillary first molars, they can occur on any of the maxillary molars. This genetic marker is found in higher frequencies among those of European descent.

Further, as has already been stated, ethnographical and historical information are addressed in this paper. Mainly to portray the complicated relationships engendered during the slave trade and beyond among individuals of diverse cultural, linguistic and biological makeup. Also to emphasize how the attitudes, beliefs, and contradictory behaviors of those involved in the slave trade and slavery contributed to a high degree of race mixing that began with initial contact, occurred during the Atlantic voyage, and continued in the Western Hemisphere during slavery and its aftermath through to the present, despite laws and social customs dictating against this. Through the course of all this, varied racial genes were introduced into the African descent which contributed to creating the African American culture, and diverse African American physical types found among this group today.

With this in mind, Chapter Two covers an overview of initial European contact with West and West Central African societies, since it was this area from which most African ancestors of African Americans were removed. Detail is given on the trading practices Europeans established conjointly with African rulers or their representatives, and the alliances these groups formed to foster the slave trade. Those trading practices created independent of African rulers are also considered. Further, descriptions of the

general makeup and social workings of these societies are discussed. Old powerful and large African states have been identified as have less powerful African nations of antiquity. Additionally, some attention is given to kinship relations created by European men intermarrying with native African women.

Chapter Three deals with the plight of African slaves prior to their boarding slavers in African waters, and their physical predicament during the voyage to this hemisphere. Emphasis is placed on the general treatment of slaves en route west as well as their reaction to the loss of freedom. Conditions on slavers are graphically described as are mutinies and various forms of suicide. And finally, race mixing among the captains and crews with African female slaves aboard these ships are included.

Once slaves were settled in what is now the United States, they were concentrated in the eastern region due to the plantation system, with smaller numbers living as bondservants in northern colonies as well. Throughout the United States most Africans were slaves, though a few were free. In Chapter Four, Charleston, South Carolina as a major port of entry for slaves entering British colonies is discussed. Charleston as a dispersal point for these slaves entering surrounding colonies is also reviewed, and attention is given to the invention of the cotton gin, its relationship to European planters and their African slaves moving into virgin lands of the West and Southwest for settlement. Further, the affect of emancipation, Jim Crow Laws, and wars on African American migration to northern, midwestern, and western cities is expounded. Some attention is given to continued

miscegenation occurring wherever African Americans migrated despite laws and social customs dictating against this.

Chapter Five exclusively expounds on African miscegenation with other peoples of color such as various Native Americans and Asian Americans. Some attention is given to early contact between Africans and Native Americans on both sides of the Atlantic, with emphasis placed on African and Native American miscegenation in European cities prior to Africans being used as free labor in the Western Hemisphere. African and Asian intermixing is also discussed in detail. Particular interest is paid to the intermarrying and common law unions Chinese males entered into with African American females in Arkansas, Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi. Also, the miscegenation that occurred between African American males and Asian women during this country's military occupation of Asian soil in peace and wartime is discussed. Chapter Five is the longest since the author felt it necessary to document facts of Native American and Asian American contributions to the African American gene pool. The European contribution with respect to this admixture is well documented and emphasized at the expense of Native American and Asian contributions, so the author felt it necessary to document this information in one section as the aforementioned populations also contributed (and still do) to the genetic and cultural makeup of the African American.

#### **METHODS**

Background information from twenty-eight source books were used to collect supporting evidence for the thesis that African

Americans are an admixture of varied peoples. In addition to this, because shovel shaped incisors, double shovel incisors, and Carabelli's cusps are genetic markers which appear on specific teeth, a small sample of fifty individuals of varying ages were examined primarily by two local dentists during routine dental services to determine if those sampled possessed these traits. Less than ten individuals of the sample were examined by this writer. Each person filled out a questionnaire of four questions which had from two to three parts on half of those questions asked. The questionnaires were used to obtain information as to whether those sampled knew of any Asian American, European or Native American mixes in their family histories. After receiving responses and examining the teeth, correlations were made between what was reported, and what was actually found.

Initially the author attempted to secure a larger sample of individuals by soliciting volunteers in African American churches, but found few willing to subject themselves to a dental examination by anyone other than their dentist. Moreover, with sexually transmitted diseases so prevalent, individuals are uneasy about volunteering because people are simply fearful of taking such a risk. Under these circumstances this writer is grateful to have had the volunteers who did come forward agree to participate in this study. Yet, even though the sample itself is small, it is hoped that the overall content of this work will not only spur others to completing more exhaustive studies of this kind, but will prove to be helpful as a foundation for future broad and in depth research in this area.

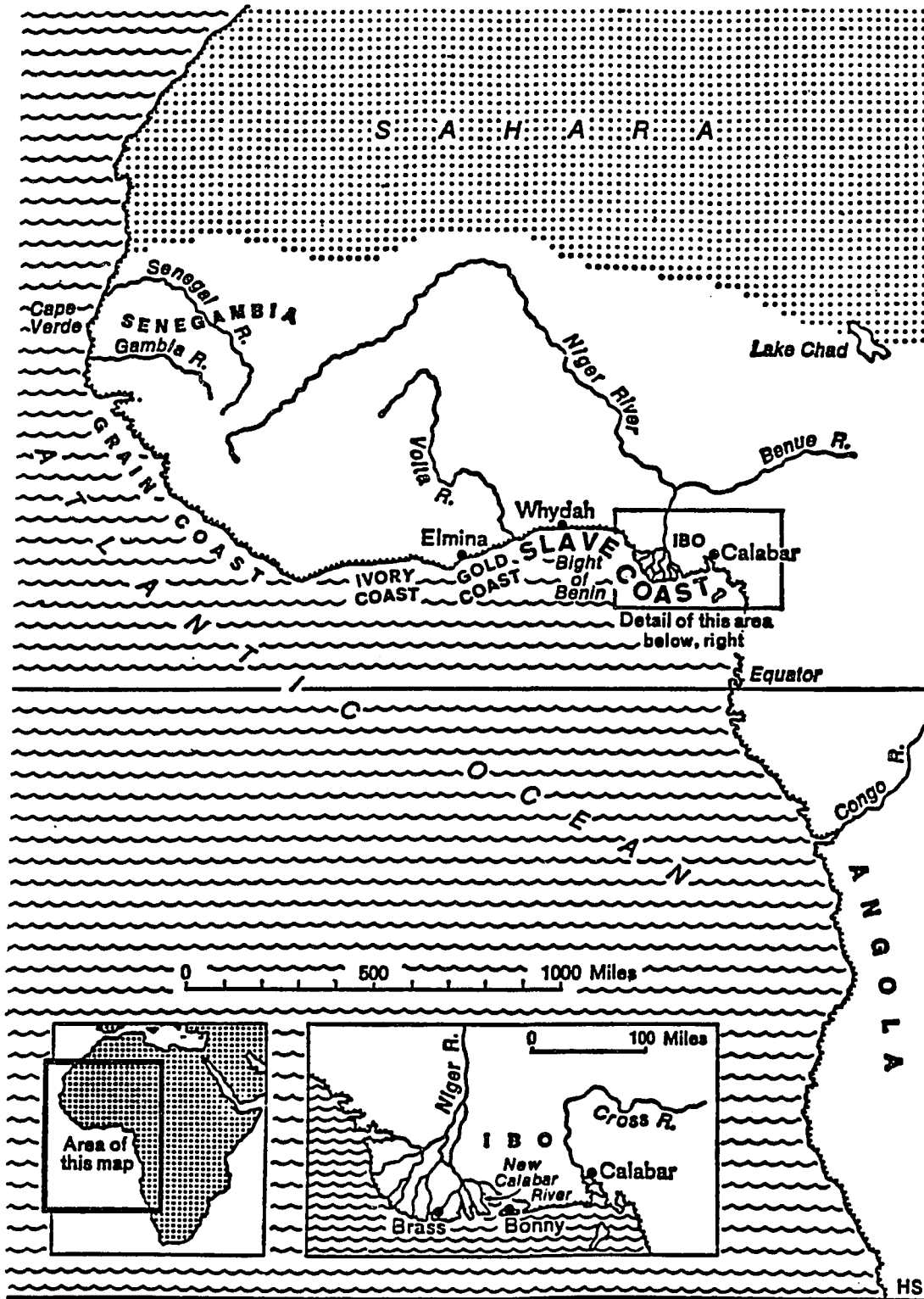


## CHAPTER TWO

### EUROPEANS IN WEST AND WEST CENTRAL AFRICA

The West African slave trade commenced by accident as it was not Europe's initial intention to explore West Africa for that purpose. Rather, Europeans were searching for gold, ivory, pepper, and a quick route to India. While searching for those desirables, the slave trade came into being along the West and West Central African Coast. Slaving flourished in that area, but a scant number of slaves came from Mozambique and Madagascar in East Africa. However, few were brought from Eastern Africa because it was difficult as well as dangerous to reach the Cape, and the voyage itself was lengthy. Many barriers made it nearly impossible for Europeans to penetrate interior Africa before the mid nineteenth century. Obstructions such as indigenous diseases, West Africa's lack of natural harbors along the coast, thick forests, the Europeans' inability to travel Africa's rivers, and the Africans themselves hindered Europe's ability to exploit interior Africa earlier. Even after Europeans were able to penetrate farther inland towards the late nineteenth century, most Africans were transported primarily from the area drained by the Senegal, Gambia, Volta, Niger and Congo Rivers which lie between Senegal and Angola.

It was the Portuguese who were the first Europeans to commence this sale of African flesh, and to benefit from this venture. After taking the Moroccan Port of Ceuta in 1415, the Portuguese began traveling further down the West African coast primarily in



The Slave Coast

search of gold and a quick route to India. Initially the Portuguese procured slaves in a rather haphazard fashion. That is, more often than not, slaves were kidnapped or merchants bargained for them with Africans in villages along the coast. By the mid fifteenth century the Portuguese government had recognized the value of African slaves, and was cognizant that a steady supply of slaves could not be acquired through violent means; consequently, the Portuguese government decreed that slaves were only to be purchased, not kidnapped. Kidnapping by no means ended with this proclamation, but the order did encourage merchants to develop more systematic and organized means for securing slaves.

Other European nations jealously witnessed the profits being made by the Portuguese in their slaving enterprises, and wanted to share in this venture. Consequently, about mid sixteenth century other European states such as France, England, Holland, Sweden (briefly), Denmark, and Prussia challenged Portugal's control of this trade. They accomplished this by establishing their own trade relations with West African peoples, and fought among themselves for control of the West African slave trade. States such as Russia, Italy, Austria and Poland did not join in these wars or slaving ventures primarily because they had no colonies. Yet, despite fighting among European states, the slave trade flourished from the beginning, and eventually England became the most prolific and successful trader in slaves of all the European nations.

As plantation agriculture became more widespread in the Western Hemisphere, a demand for cheap and plentiful labor abounded. Europeans as indentured servants and Native Americans

as slaves initially satisfied this demand, but it was African labor that became entrenched in plantation society as a major source of free labor. Since kidnapping and chance purchases proved too slow as a means of procuring slaves, slave trading companies were organized. And from these companies "slaving forts" or "slaving factories" were created along the West African coast or on offshore islands from the Senegal River to Angola. The factories served as holding and processing facilities to prepare slaves for the Atlantic voyage. Each fort had a "factor" or commander, and it was the factor's responsibility to negotiate with Africans and to encourage them to organize slave-hunting expeditions (Dow 1969:2).

Slaving forts, factories or castles were built by Europeans to facilitate slave trade, but these forts were built only after local chiefs agreed to this construction. In most cases Africans owned the land on which these facilities were built, and their ownership was recognized by the Europeans. The exception being Angola and the Congo where the Portuguese took control as masters and colonizers of these indigenous peoples. But generally Europeans did not build these forts after conquest. In fact, African armies were so formidable that Europeans usually were unable to conquer these peoples and take over their lands until the late nineteenth century. Davidson (1961) writes that one outstanding fact about the old states of Africa, well understood in earlier times but afterwards forgotten, is that they were seldom or never conquered from outside the continent. They resisted invasion. They remained inviolate. Only here and there along the coast could European men-at-arms gain foothold even when they tried



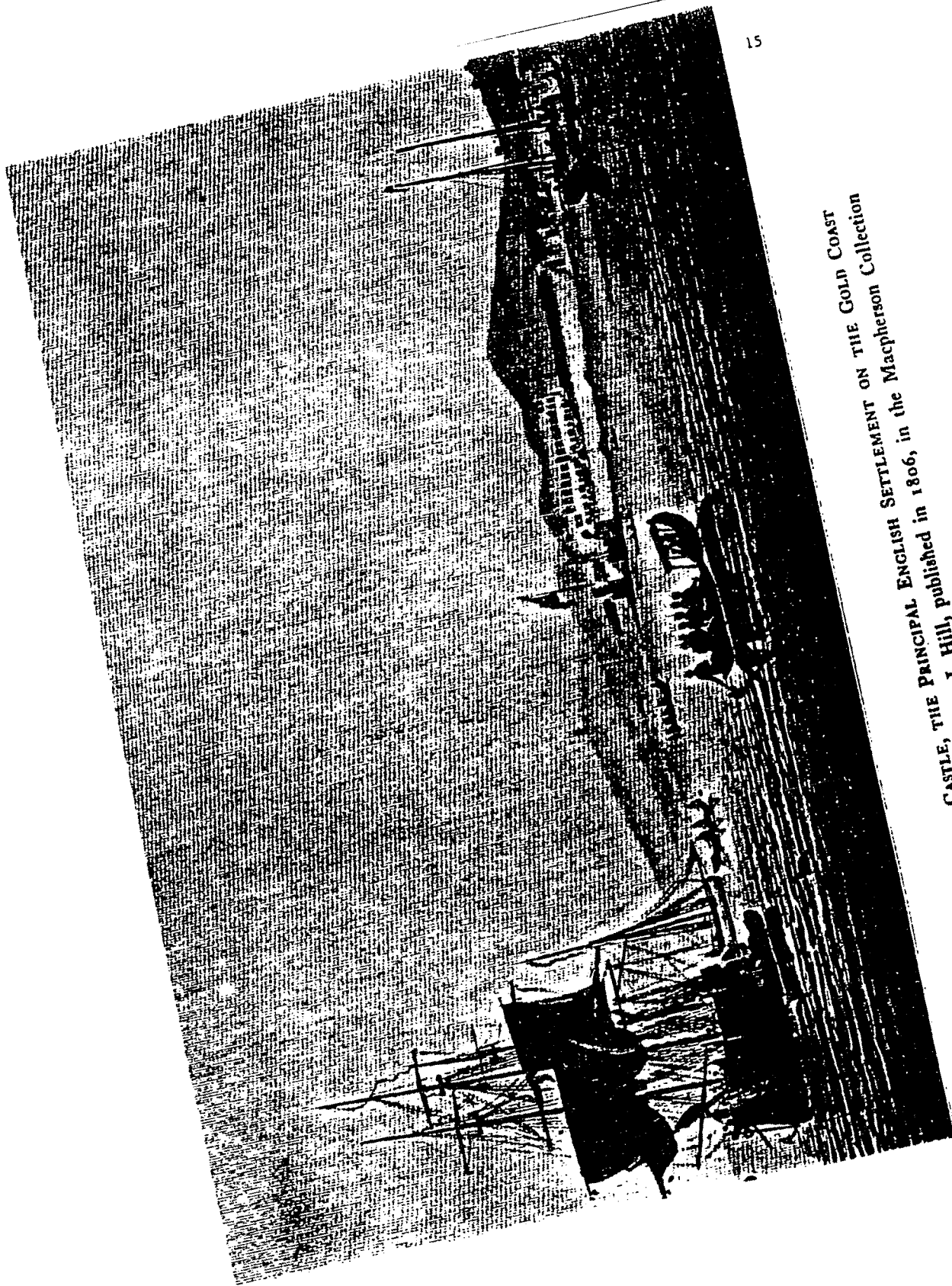
DUTCH SHIPS TRADING ON THE GUINEA COAST. FROM DE BRY'S "VOYAGES," 1601

- (A) Ship. (B) Negro merchants. (C) How goods are passed from the canoes to the shore.  
(D) Where the merchants have to pay a tax to the chief. (E) Canoe being carried up the beach.

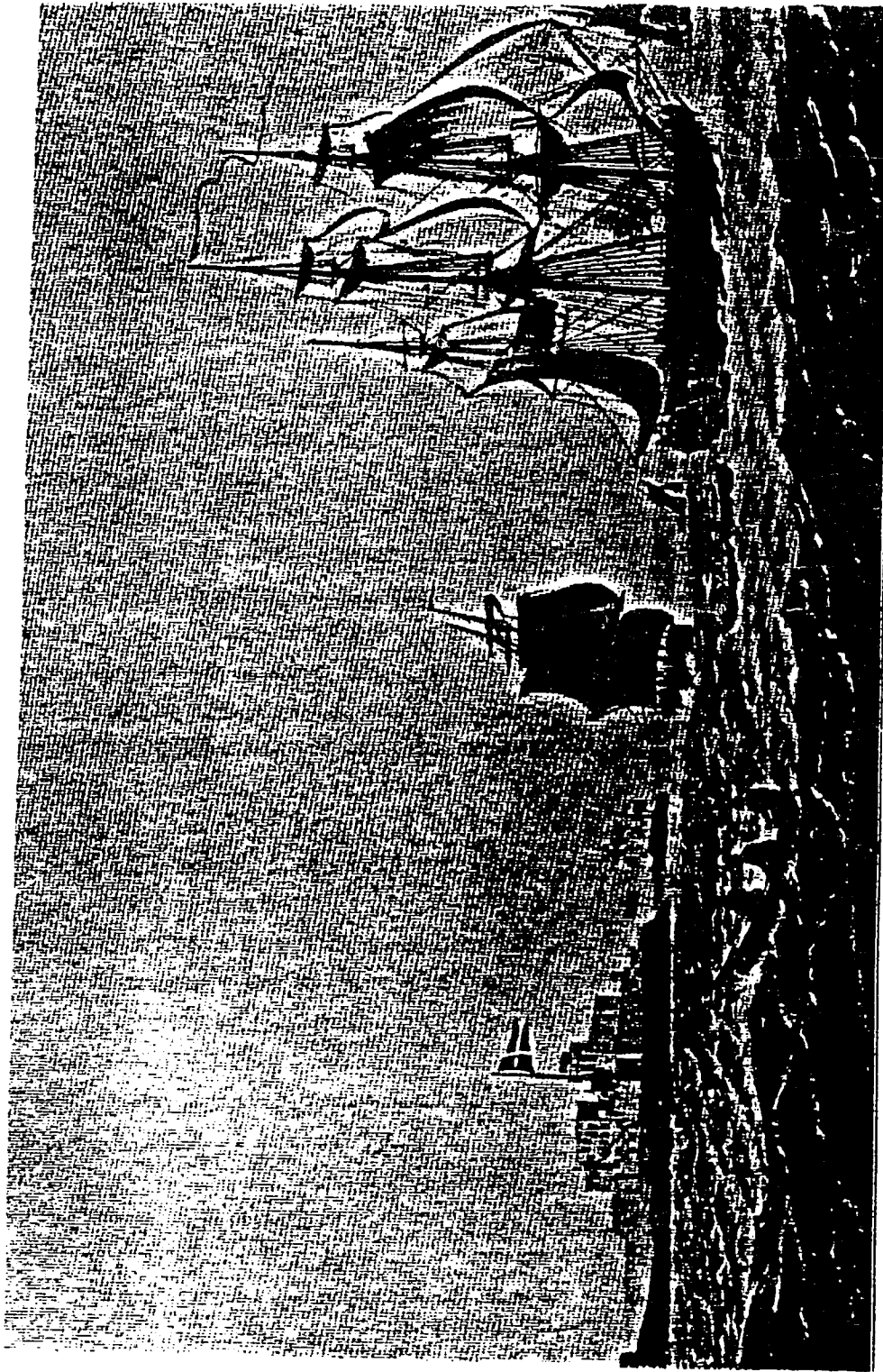


THE DUTCH CASTLE CORMANTINE, NEAR ANAMABOE ON THE GOLD COAST

From an engraving in *Ogilby's Africa*, London, 1670



CAPE COAST CASTLE, THE PRINCIPAL ENGLISH SETTLEMENT ON THE GOLD COAST  
From a colored aquatint by J. Hill, published in 1806, in the Macpherson Collection



CHRISTIANSBORG, THE DANISH SETTLEMENT ON THE GOLD COAST  
From the engraving by J. Hill, published in 1806, in the Macpherson Collection



to win more.

In order to procure slaves and other commodities from indigenous rulers, Europeans often formed alliances with these men. Terms of these alliances were that it was mandatory for Europeans to give a dash (gift) to local kings or kings' officials. Further, Europeans were required to buy the kings' slaves at very high prices before being allowed to trade with African merchants. Along with this, the king charged a tax on all slaves and other goods Europeans purchased from African traders. Europeans, then, did not, as is often thought, barge in and take what they wanted because the Africans were too strong militarily to allow this.

The Portuguese knew of rulers beyond the shores whose alliances were needed. "The King", wrote De Barros, 'began cautiously to send agents with messages to important chiefs, and to involve himself as a close and powerful friend in their affairs and their wars'. In the last quarter of the fifteenth century the King sent 'Pedro de Evora and Consalo Eannes to the prince of Takrur' - in land from the coast of Senegal - 'and to the lord of Timbuktu'. From further to the south, the Portuguese also dispatched a mission up the Gambia river 'to Mansa Mundi, one of the most powerful chiefs of the province of the Mandingo', who also was, in fact, the lord of the extensive empire of Mali (Davidson 1961:28). Moreover, since West African societies were generally polygynous, European men formed additional alliances by marrying native women even when they had European wives at home. Children born to these unions often joined their fathers in the slave trade. Thus, European men reinforced their business ties with their

suppliers through kinship as well.

The Portuguese built their first fort on the Gold Coast in 1482 at a place they named El Mina, "the mine" believing that from here they could best tap the sources of African gold. But this fort was built only after the local ruler agreed. At the close of a long plea by Diogo de Azambuja, who commanded the Portuguese expedition, the chief in question consented to the building of a fort, but only on condition that "peace and truth must be kept" (Davidson 1961:28). One of the earliest actions that followed on the building of the castle at El Mina was not a military expedition to 'the mines' of the interior, but a diplomatic mission of friendship and alliance. Messengers had come from Mamadu, Lord of Mali. King John of Portugal ordered that these messengers should be accompanied back to their country by eight Portuguese emissaries, including two knights of the royal court, 'with gifts of horses, mules, arms and other things prized in that country' (Davidson 1961:28).

El Mina produced great quantities of African gold for many years. But neither the Portuguese nor the Dutch nor any other European power ever secured access to the "land of gold" until the British fought their way into Ashanti at the end of the nineteenth century. Forts were built, but they were never secure. Garrisons were placed in them and repeatedly replenished from Europe; time and time again they were besieged and overwhelmed. Governors were obliged to live in close agreement with their African neighbors or else lose their power (Davidson 1961:28).

Even so, opinion in Europe none the less grew common that

European power held sway over the interior. 'There is no small number of men in Europe', a Dutch factor on the Gold Coast wrote back to his employers in 1700, 'who believe that the gold mines are in our power; that we... have no more to do but to work them by our slaves: though you perfectly know we have no manner of access to these treasures.' By this time men in Europe were accustomed to seeing Africans only as men in chains, captives without power, and they transferred their impressions to Africa and the states from which these slaves came. The belief in African inferiority was already in full bloom (Davidson 1961:29).

This idea of African inferiority became a major basis for European rationalizations used to vindicate enslaving Africans. Other reasons related to this belief became firmly entrenched in the European psyche. Those justifying the slave trade argued that individuals brought to the Western Hemisphere in chains, were already slaves, prisoners of war or sold into slavery as punishment for crime. It was further argued that those sold into slavery were the weaker and most servile individuals of their tribe. To some small degree this was true; however, an examination of the writings of men who manned the European forts on the coast, as well as the evidence that appears in various records of the period, leads rather to the conclusion that the persons carried out as slaves represented a fair cross-section of native life in the areas into which slave trails extended (Brown 1936:5). The wealthy and powerful often escaped being sold into slavery, but those that were weak were generally captured and died en route to slaving forts, on the ships to the Western Hemisphere or on the breaking-in

grounds once reaching the Americas.

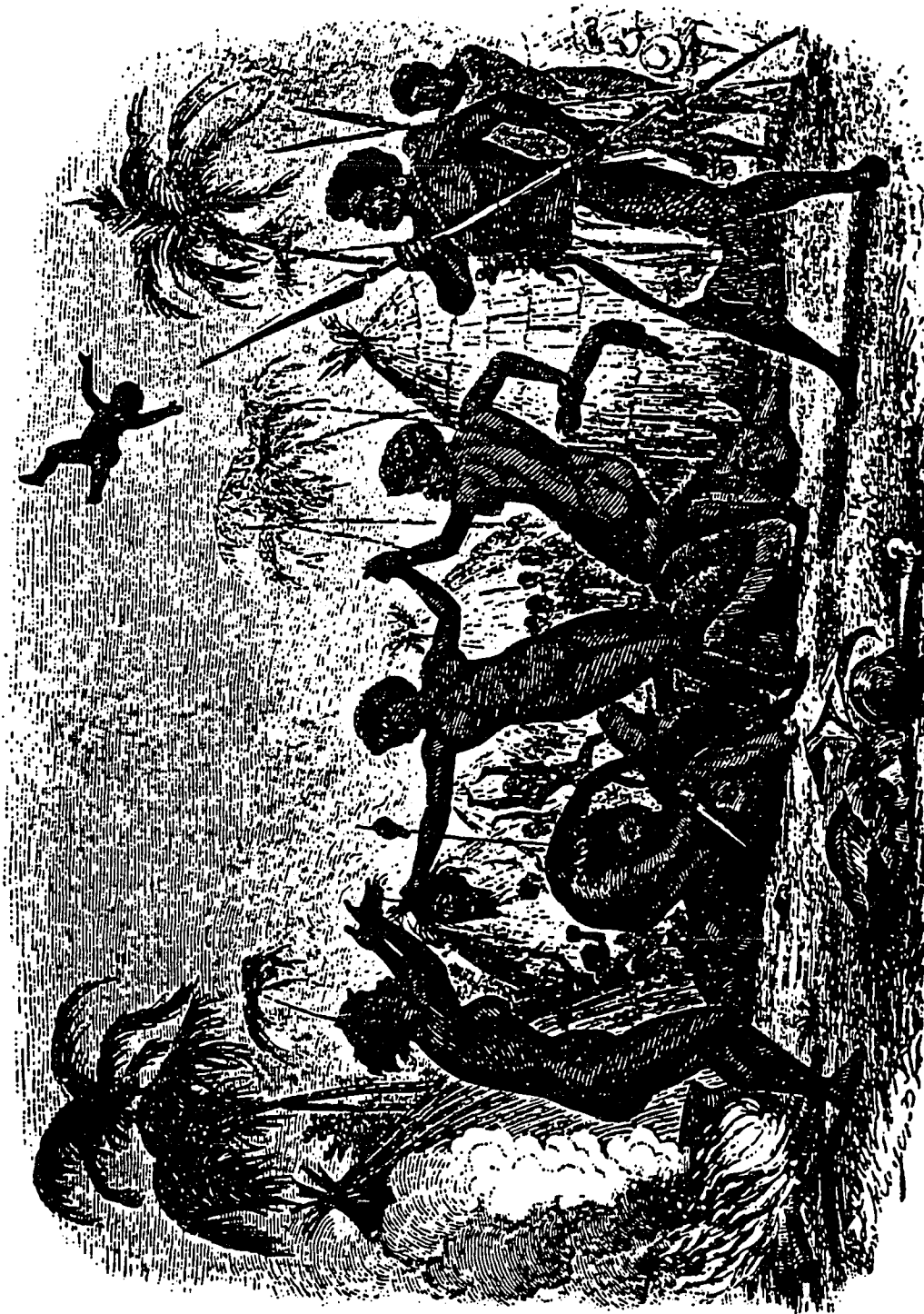
According to Brown (1936), further indication that slaves were not always criminals or merely refuse of the continent lies in the fact that there was a tendency to buy only the young and vigorous. The usual range for adults was twelve to forty years old, though some traders demanded that they be under twenty-five, and there are numerous records of children sold at seven, eight, and nine years of age. One slave factor wrote that "an abundance of little Blacks" were kidnapped from the millet fields when they were sent to scare the birds from the grain, and a West Indian writer complained of a slave ship in which he said a third of the cargo were not men and women but "such pitiful children" (Brown 1936:7).

As slave trafficking grew all manner of duplicity was used to secure slaves. The interlopers, ten-per-centers, or independent traders as they were called at various times, had no scruples at all. There are records of Africans of high rank who were kidnapped or captured by them and sold as slaves, and no African person within their range was really safe (Donnan, II 1931:330, 490, 618-620; and Calridge 1915:I, 67 as cited in Brown 1936:6). African rulers themselves resorted to duplicity to increase their possession of those sold into slavery. Villages were raided while the men were away at war; other individuals were sold into slavery for minor offenses. Powerful rulers not only made slave raids on their enemies, but often sold political offenders and sometimes their own families "without regard to rank or possession" (Atkins in Donnan, II, 270-290 as cited in Brown 1936:6).

### SLAVERY IN WEST AFRICA

Proponents of the Atlantic slave trade often pointed to the fact that African societies had slavery before the Europeans arrived. In arguing against those of the eighteenth century who wanted to abolish the trade, defenders often claimed that the slave trade substituted American slavery for African slavery. While it is true that African societies had slavery, it was a far cry from the type of slavery that was practiced by Western Europe and the United States. Slavery in traditional African societies was really a system of serfdom. That is, individuals serving as slaves were household or "domestic slaves". The exception was the use of slaves as plantation laborers on vast estates of Dahomean Kings, and those slaves in Dahomey and Ashanti cultures who were sacrificed to powerful royal ancestors (Meirer/Rudwick 1966:27). An individual might become a slave by being a war captive, during times of famine to save other family members from starvation, for committing such crimes as murder and witchcraft, or from acquiring debts.

Slaves in traditional African societies were generally treated much more humanely than those in European societies and Europe's colonies. More often than not, slaves in Africa were members of their master's household. They had their own plot of land and/or rights to a proportion of the fruits of their labors; they could marry; their children had rights of inheritance, and if born of one free parent often acquired a new status. Such individuals could rise to positions of great trust, including that of a chief (Rodney 1970:143 as cited in Amadi 1977:25). Among the Dahomeans, Kings



**SLAVE HUNTERS ATTACKING A NEGRO TOWN**

From a wood engraving in *Canot's Twenty Years of an African Slaver*, New York, 1854

sometimes selected the son of a favorite slave wife to succeed on the throne (Meirer/Rudwick 1966:27).

Among the Serer people, domestic or agricultural slaves were divided into two classes; those captured in wars and those born into the service of their master. The latter were regarded as members of their master's family and could own personal property (Stride and Ifeka 1971:28 as cited in Amadi 1977:25). Slaves were a means through which "many tribes augmented their numbers and strength" (Samkange 1971:184 as cited in Amadi 1977:25). Indigenous societies assimilated slaves and allowed them to rise to positions of power. Sometimes slaves had even led revolutions that over-threw existing dynasties (Rotberg 1965:135 as cited in Amadi 1977:25). The following account of a former slave throws more light into the conditions of slaves in his homeland, Africa.

With us they do no more work than the other members of the community, even their master. Their food, clothing, and lodging were nearly the same as ours, except that they were not permitted to eat with those who were freeborn: and there were scarcely any other difference between them than a superior degree of importance which the head of a family possesses in our state, and that authority which, as such, he exercises over every part of his household, (Equiano 1794: 17-18 as cited in Amadi 1977:25).

Amadi (1977) postures that some hold the view that the trafficking of human beings for material gains was introduced into Africa by Europe. According to him, Robert Rotberg contends that in Africa:

Where there had been little contact with aliens, the buying and selling of humans was virtually unknown. In Angola, as late as the seventeenth century, the Portuguese learned to their astonishment that the Ndombe were unaccustomed to sell each other (Rotberg 1965:134 as cited in Amadi 1977:27).

The Spanish and Portuguese interest in slaving was only limited to domestic slavery not much different from that existing in Africa (Davidson 1961:42 as cited in Amadi 1977:27). This later changed because of economic changes in Europe and international economic conspiracy promoted by greed. However, when some of the African chiefs heard that slaves were no longer being used as domestic slaves, they began to take steps to stop the human traffic (Amadi 1977:27). For example, the Oba of Benin imposed a royal ban on the export of male slaves from Benin at the beginning of the sixteenth century (Fage 1970:397 as cited in Amadi 1977:27).

According to Amadi (1977) religion was a means of adjusting to normal life in Africa. Slaves in communities with similar beliefs and customs lived relatively normal lives in the community. Also, in many African societies the former condition of servitude did not have lingering stigma. In many cases those returned to ancestral homes were given heroic welcomes and reassumed status



and their role in the communities (Amadi 1977:25).

The reason members of most - not all - African tribes could be enslaved might lie precisely in their having attained a relatively advanced culture. "There is no record", says an English anthropologist quoted by Arnold Toynbee, "of what we may perhaps call truly primitive societies, that is pure 'food-gatherers', being successfully brought within the orbit of a civilization, whereas so-called primitive peoples who have passed through the agricultural revolution often so have been. Food-gatherers find the strain of such forcible integration in an alien society too great, and die out, like the West Indian islanders and most of the North American Indians; while African slaves are successfully from the invaders point of view - introduced to replace them" (Mannix/Cowley 1962:6). The anthropologist is wrong about North American Indians; most of those in Mexico had passed through the agricultural revolution and were indeed reduced to serfdom by the Spanish invaders; while most of those in the United States were primarily hunters rather than food-gatherers like the Haitians (Mannix/Cowley 1962:6). But hunting and fishing tribes are also difficult to enslave, because of the value they place on personal courage, and this seems to be true of Africa as well as America. The Krumen, for example, were primarily fishermen and they refused to be subjugated, although a few were sometimes procured as "captains" over the other slaves. On the east coast the Kikuyu, an agrarian tribe, could be enslaved, but not their neighbors, the Wacamba, who were a tribe of hunters. As for food-gathering tribes, some of those in the Gaboon, for example, died off in

slavery almost as fast as the Haitian Indians. (Mannix/Cowley 1962:6).

#### **OLD AFRICAN STATES**

Aside from the fact that most West Africans who were agrarian seemed to have been successfully enslaved, much instability generally pervaded these old states when Europeans first arrived. African kingdoms were in decline and this left them vulnerable to Moorish invasions from the north as well as attacks from peoples of the south. In addition to this, smaller states were perpetually at war with each other. Europeans capitalized on this confused and dangerous state of affairs by encouraging groups to fight one another. They supplied firearms to Africans on the condition that slaves be brought back from the war and sold to them at cheap prices.

Nevertheless a vast majority of the west-coast nations were far from being "naked savages" living in primitive squalor. (Mannix/Cowley 1962:11-12). Several towns near the west coast were more populous, at the time, than any but the largest European cities. There were Kingdoms and commonwealths comparable in size with many European nations, and even the smaller tribes had definite and often complex cultures. The West Africans had invented their own forms of architecture and their own methods of weaving. Many of them possessed flocks of donkeys and great herds of cattle, sheep, and goats. They were skilled workers in wood, brass, and iron, which last they had learned to smelt long before the Europeans came. Many of their communities had highly involved

religions, well-organized economic systems, efficient agricultural practices, and admirable codes of law (Mannix/Cowley 1962:11-12).

They did not have a written language that became widely known although the Vai of Sierra Leone, a branch of the Mandingo family, devised a written form for their spoken language towards the end of the eighteenth century. Africans did not invent the wheel or the plow and technologically the more advanced states were little removed from the early iron age. Thus, African craftsmen were able to fashion muskets after European models, but only a few of the northernmost nations had learned to make their own gunpowder (Mannix/Cowley 1962:12).

Even so, not having a written language, or knowledge of the wheel and plow did not hinder or prevent these peoples from developing powerful states. When the Europeans arrived, West African societies in the slave trade area ranged from small tribes to large kingdoms of a million or more; from small groups where kinship ties were the source of all authority to large states with complex institutions. These societies were characterized by economic specialization and a monetary system based on the cowrie shell to facilitate trade. The larger ones had a system of social classes and a hierarchical territorial political organization. Interlacing and underpinning these political, economic, and social class arrangements were a deeply rooted and intricate kinship system extending from family to clan, and an elaborate web of religious belief involving the individual, the kinship groupings, and the entire society. Although these societies, such as the Dehomeans, the Ashanti, the Mossi, and the Yoruba, differed widely

among themselves, their many basic cultural similarities make it possible to form some valid generalizations about the cultural background of African Americans (Meirer/Rudwick 1966:10-11).

In general, the West African economy was agrarian with some fishing along the coast and poultry was raised inland. The hoe was used to farm. In the Ashanti society both men and women worked the crops; the Dahomean women grew vegetables while the Yoruban men performed most of the heavy farming duties. When heavy tasks such as clearing fields and building houses were necessary the men completed these co-operatively. These societies possessed economic specialization in a number of crafts such as ironworking, bronze and brass castings, wood carving, basket weaving and pottery making. Craftsmen in most West African societies belonged to organized craft guilds usually along kinship lines. These organizations set prices and were often mutual-aid societies.

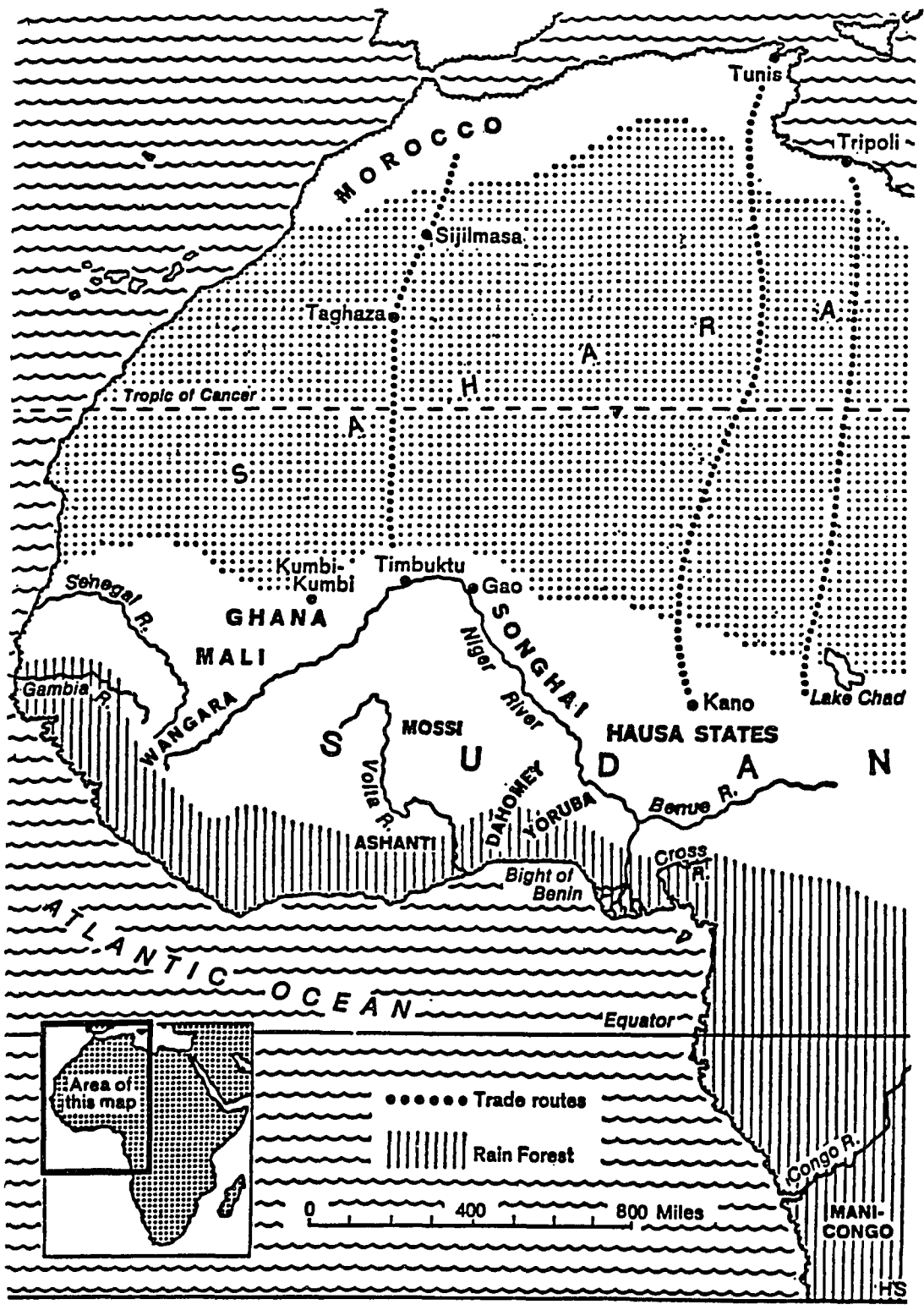
Among the Yoruba the guilds of craftsmen and women traders exercised considerable political influence on the town councils (Meirer/Rudwick 1966:12). Women controlled much of West Africa's internal commerce. Some of them were producer-traders, while other women were nonproducing middlemen. In most West African societies local and interregional trade was facilitated by the existence of a complex system of markets, held daily or periodically, in villages and towns. External trade was controlled by the royal heads of state. Among the Ashanti and in Dahomey the right to trade in certain items - notably slaves, gold and European imports - required personal authorization of the King, who levied fees for granting such privileges. The West African societies thus had an

unusually elaborate economic organization for nonliterate peoples, an economic organization comparable for example, to those of the Inca and Aztec empires in the Americas (Meirer/Rudwick 1966:12).

Individuals in West African societies specialized in other areas as well to such a degree that a class structure existed. For example, in Dahomey slaves (primarily war captives) were at the bottom of the hierarchy. Children of slaves except for those on the King's estates where a kind of hereditary serfdom existed—were absorbed into the families of their owners. The backbone of the society was a class of free farmers and artisans. Ordinary temple priests and diviners were on the same approximate social level. The upper class consisted of higher elements in the priesthood and King's officials. Members of the royal clan were not permitted to hold office; thus, freemen performed those duties. At the top was the royal clan who did no work and the King was at the very top (Meirer/Rudwick 1966:12).

Other larger West African states such as Ghana, Mali, and Songhay existed; however, when the Portuguese arrived Mali was declining and Songhay had overtaken Mali as the great empire of West Africa. These large African kingdoms acquired their wealth and power from mining (primarily gold) and international trade in gold, salt, leather products, cloth, ivory, slaves, and agricultural raw materials. Great cities of these states such as Timbuctu, Gao, Kumbi Kumbi, Jenne, and Walata were located on or near rivers and along trans-Saharan trade routes to North Africa. It was their prime locations which facilitated their becoming leading commercial and intellectual centers of West Africa. These,

then, were the types of societies existing when Africans were brought to the Western Hemisphere as slaves.



West Africa

CHAPTER III  
THE MIDDLE PASSAGE

The term "middle passage" is so called because it referred to the second or middle leg of the triangular voyage which transported Africans to the Western Hemisphere. After slaves were brought from inland by African traders, they were all placed together naked in prisons or booths near the beach, and here they stayed until they were received by Europeans for purchase. African traders sent up smoke signals to notify slaving ships that Africans were available for trading. Before slaves were bought, a surgeon thoroughly examined every part of each man, woman, and child. Those deemed to be past thirty-five, defective in limbs, eyes, teeth, grown grey, possessing a venereal disease or any other imperfection were rejected, and were called Mackrons. If a slave was discarded by the European for any reason, many African traders would beat that slave unmercifully for not being acceptable for sale. Suitable slaves were branded on the breast with a red hot iron to imprint the mark of the French, English, or Dutch companies. This was done to prevent African traders from slipping rejected slaves in with the acceptable ones, and to identify the purchasing agent. Slaves were then rowed in canoes out to slave ships to embark on the difficult middle passage. Many slaves who managed to survive slave coffles from the interior would not live to set foot in the Americas because they would not outlast the horrors of the "middle passage".

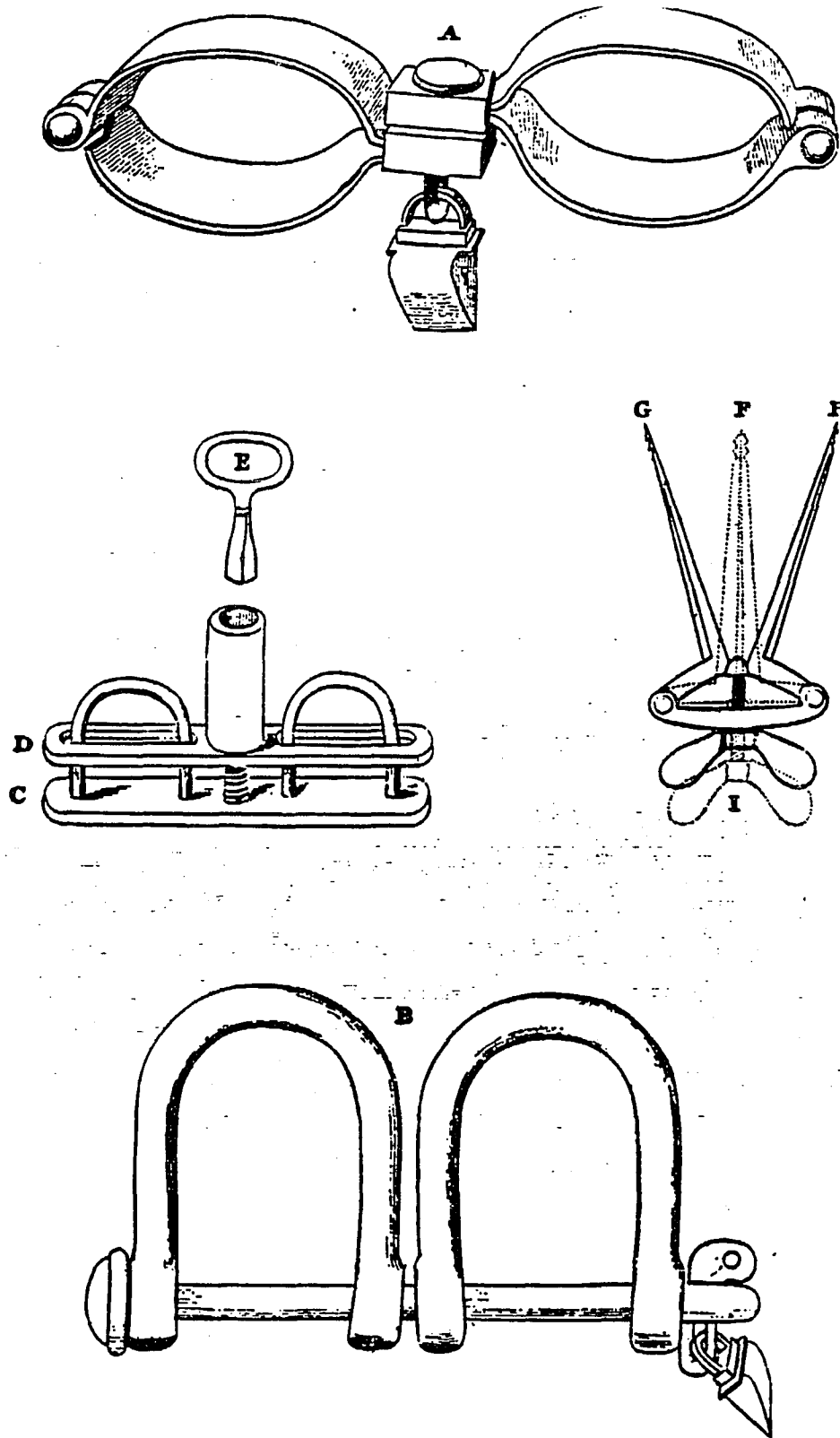
Once on the Vessels, men were shackled two by two, the right





BRANDING A NEGRESS AT THE RIO PONGO

From a wood engraving in Canot's *Twenty Years of an African Slaver*,  
New York, 1854



(A) HAND-CUFFS FOR SLAVES. (B) LEG SHACKLES. (C-E) THUMB SCREWS.  
 (F-H) "SPECULUM ORIS," TO OPEN CLOSED JAWS.

From Clarkson's *Abolition of the Slave Trade*, London, 1808

wrist and ankle of one to the left wrist and ankle of another. They were sent to a hold and were segregated from the women. Children were allowed free reign and could wander all over the ship by day, but at night they were placed between decks in rooms separate from the adult slaves. All slept on wooden bare floors. During stormy weather the skin would be torn away to the bare bones on the elbows, shoulder blades, and sometimes the back.

Two schools of thought prevailed among ship captains regarding packing cargo. One called the "loose packers" felt that if slaves were not packed so tightly in the ship, received better food, and generally treated a little more humanely more slaves survived, and one received a better price for each slave in the West Indies. The "tight packers" admitted that mortality rates were higher in their tightly packed ships, but argued that a large cargo would bring more money. They further argued that if many slaves were alive but weak and emaciated, they could be fattened up in a West Indian slave yard before sale. This difference of orientation went on for as long as there was a slave trade, but after the mid eighteenth century most captains operated on the "tight packer" concept. John Newton who was a ship captain and a minister wrote from personal observation:

The cargo of a vessel of a hundred tons or a little more is calculated to purchase from two hundred twenty to two hundred fifty slaves. Their lodging rooms below the deck which are three (for the men, the boys and the women) besides a place for the sick, are sometimes more than five feet high and sometimes less; and this height is

divided toward the middle for the slaves lie in two rows, one above the other, on each side of the ship, close to each other like books upon a shelf. I have known them so close that the shelf would not easily contain one more.

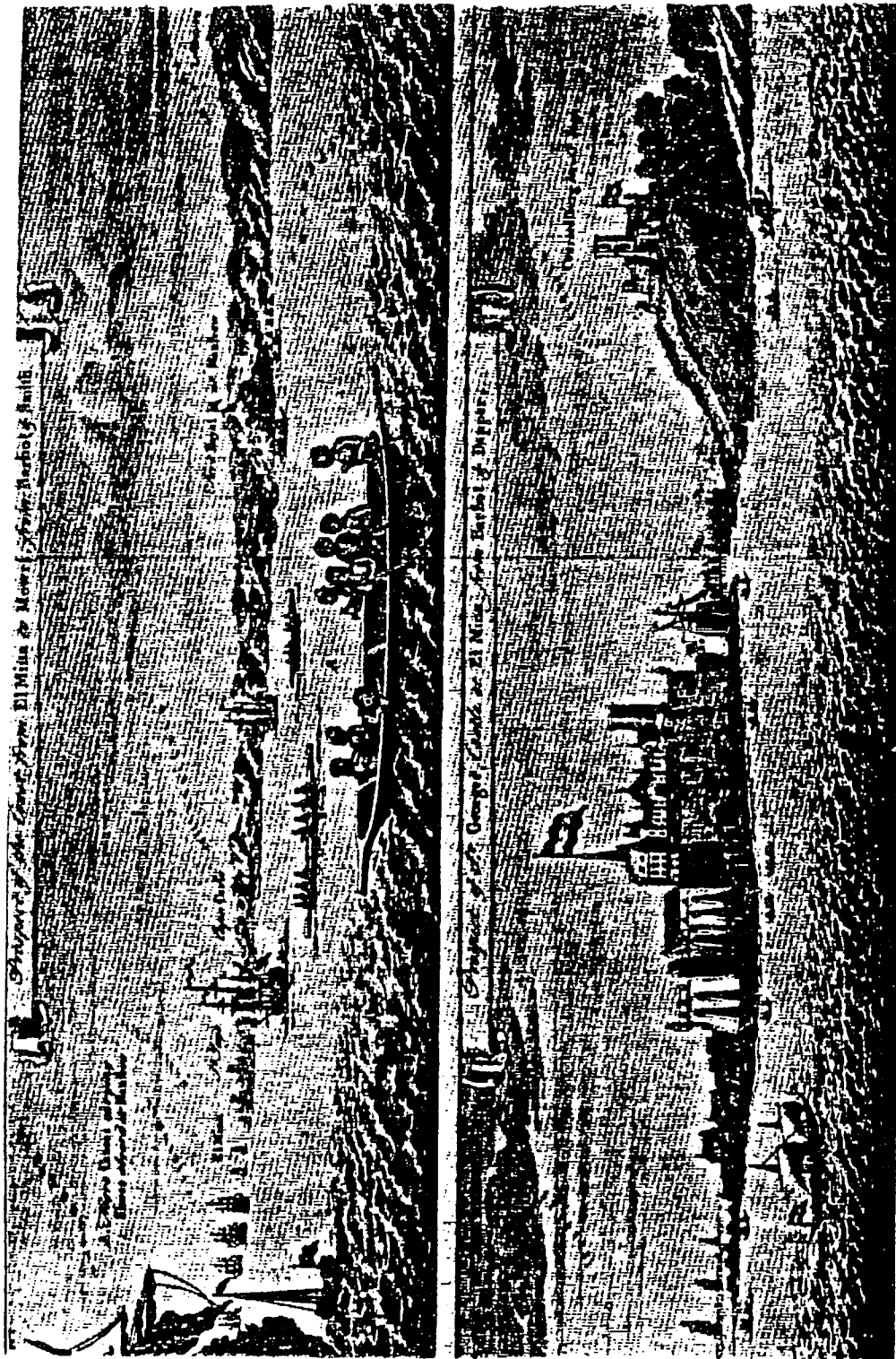
The poor creatures, thus cramped, are likewise in irons for the most part which makes it difficult for them to turn or move or attempt to rise or lie down without hurting themselves or each other. Every morning, perhaps, more instances than one are found of the living and the dead fastened together (Mannix/Cowley 1962:106).

The length of time spent collecting slaves from various points on the West African Coast depended on where the ships were located. In Bonny or Luanda, obtaining a descent cargo might only take a month or two. But on the Gold Coast slaves were less plentiful; thus the purchasing process might take six months to a year or more. The time spent on the coast making purchases was the most dangerous leg of the triangular voyage. This was due to the ship crew being exposed to African fevers, the revenge of angry natives, being overtaken by pirates, and the constant threat of a slave mutiny.

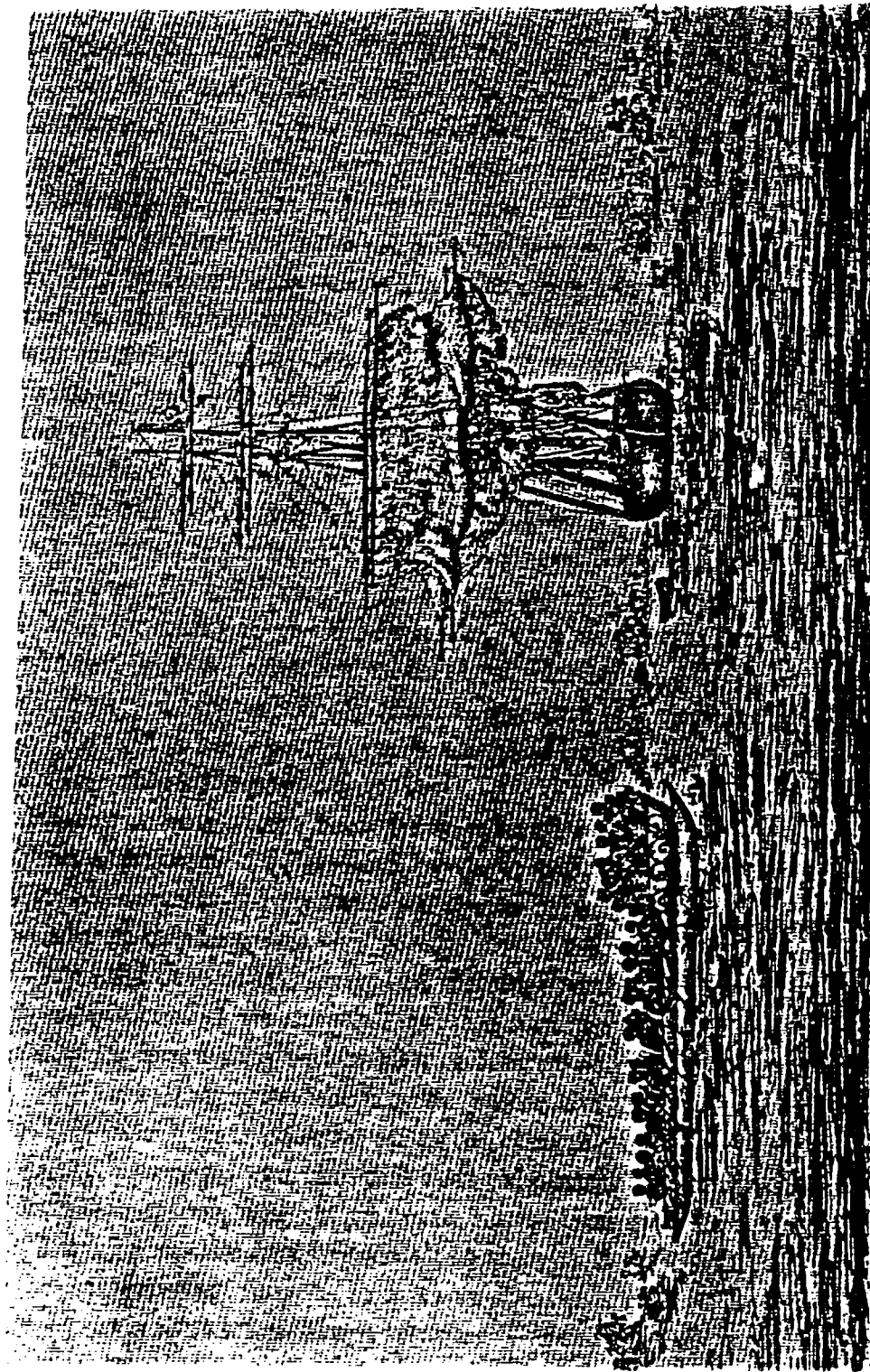
#### **MUTINIES**

Captain Thomas Phillips says in his account of a voyage made in 1693-1694:

When our slaves were aboard we shackle the men two and two, while we lie in port, and in

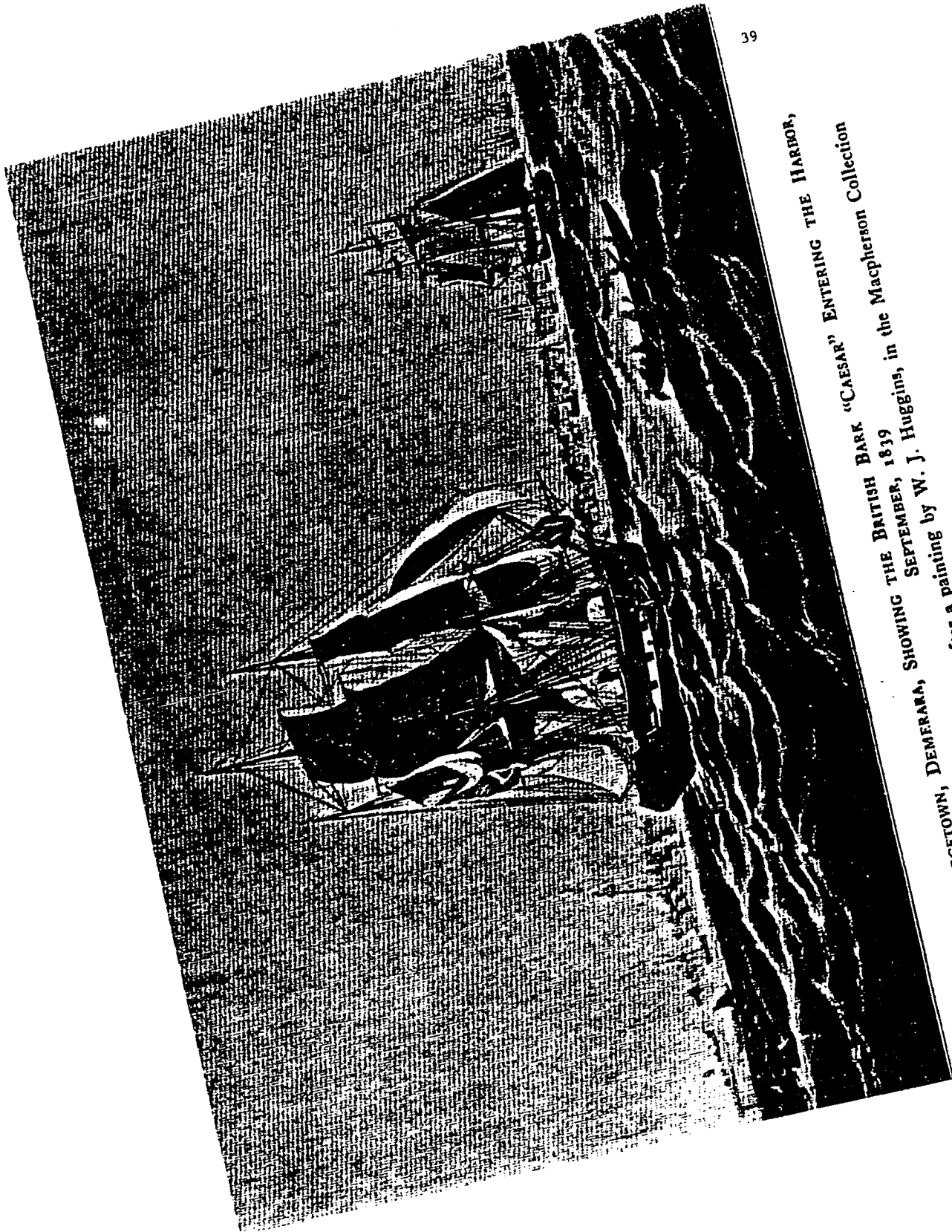


NEGROES BEING CARRIED OUT TO A SLAVE SHIP; AND CASTLES ON THE GOLD COAST  
From an engraving in Churchill's *Collection of Voyages*, London, 1756



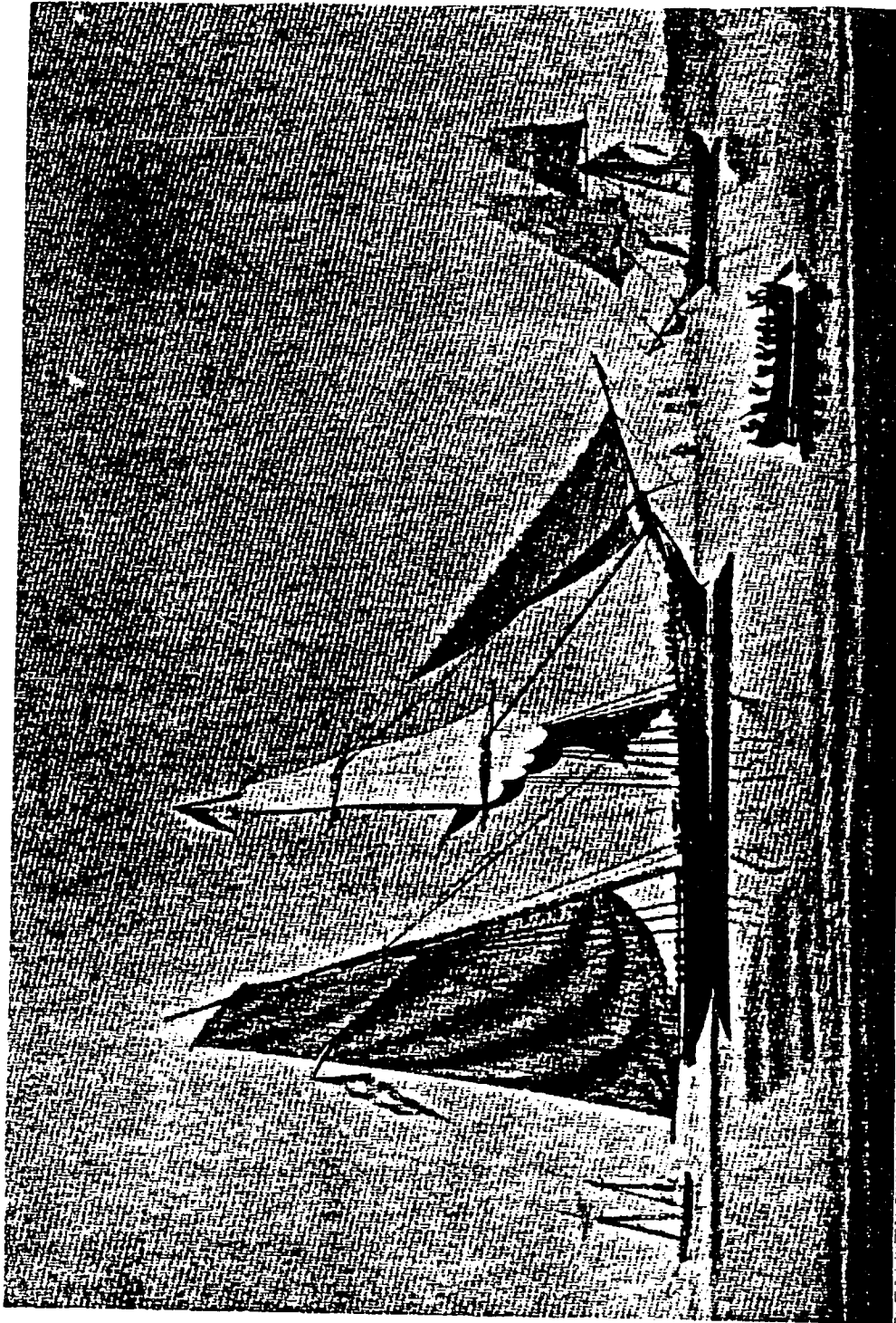
CARRYING SLAVES TO A PORTUGUESE SLAVE BRIG LYING IN BONNY RIVER

From a drawing by T. F. Birch, made in January, 1837, in the Macpherson Collection



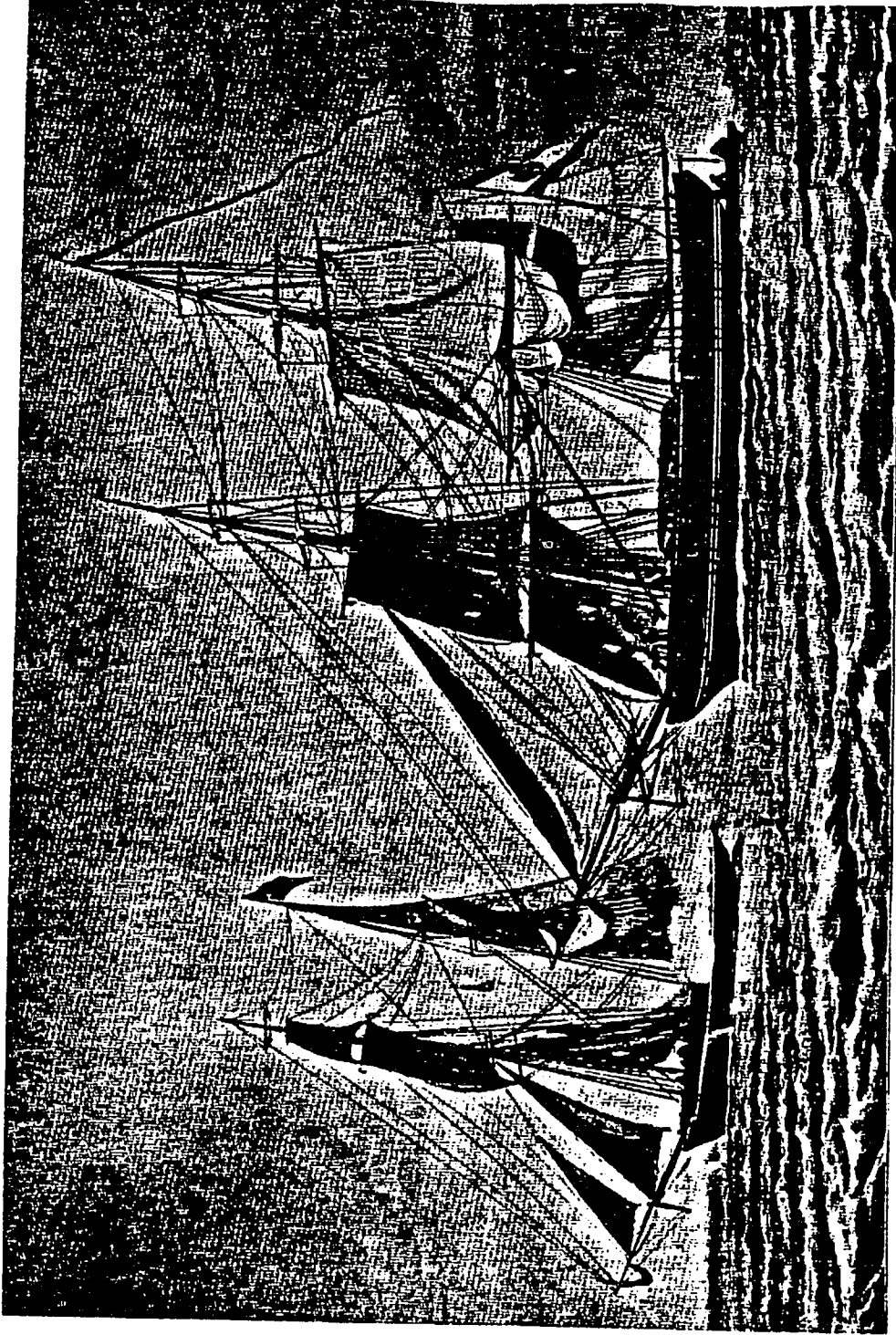
GEORGETOWN, DEMERARA, SHOWING THE BRITISH BARK "CAESAR" ENTERING THE HARBOR, SEPTEMBER, 1839

in the Macpherson Collection  
From a colored aquatint, after a painting by W. J. Huggins



**THE SLAVER "L'ANTONIO," WITH OTHER BLACK CRAFT, LYING IN BONNY RIVER**  
From a colored lithograph published in London, in 1841, in the Macpherson Collection

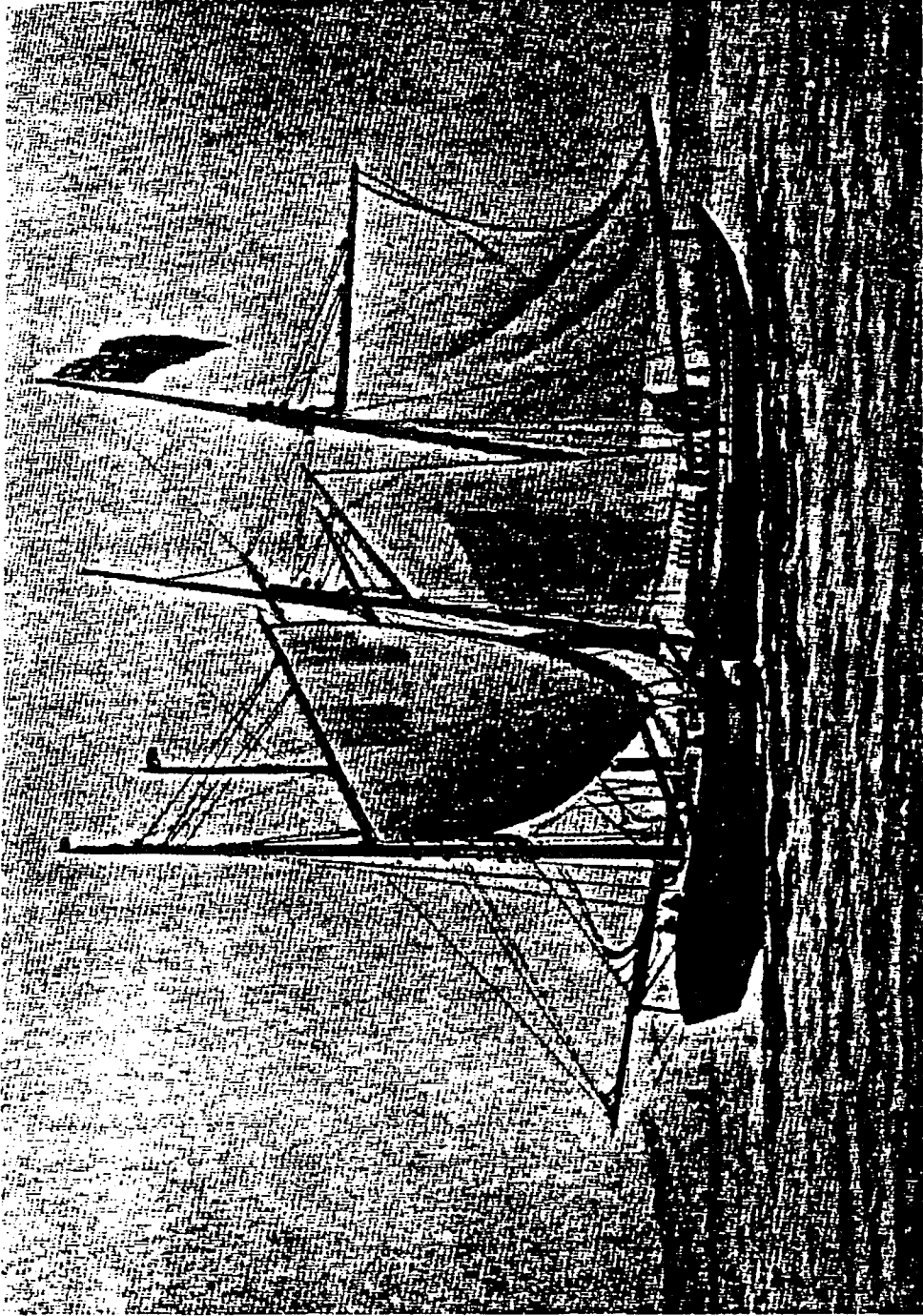




**BRITISH PRIZE BRIGANTINE "NETUNA," BEATING OFF THE SPANISH SLAYER "CAROLINE,"**

**MAR. 20, 1826, IN THE BIGHT OF BENIN**

The *Netuna* carried 1 gun and 5 men; the *Caroline*, 10 guns and 90 men. From a colored aquatint, after the painting by W. Joy. in the Marchesson Collection

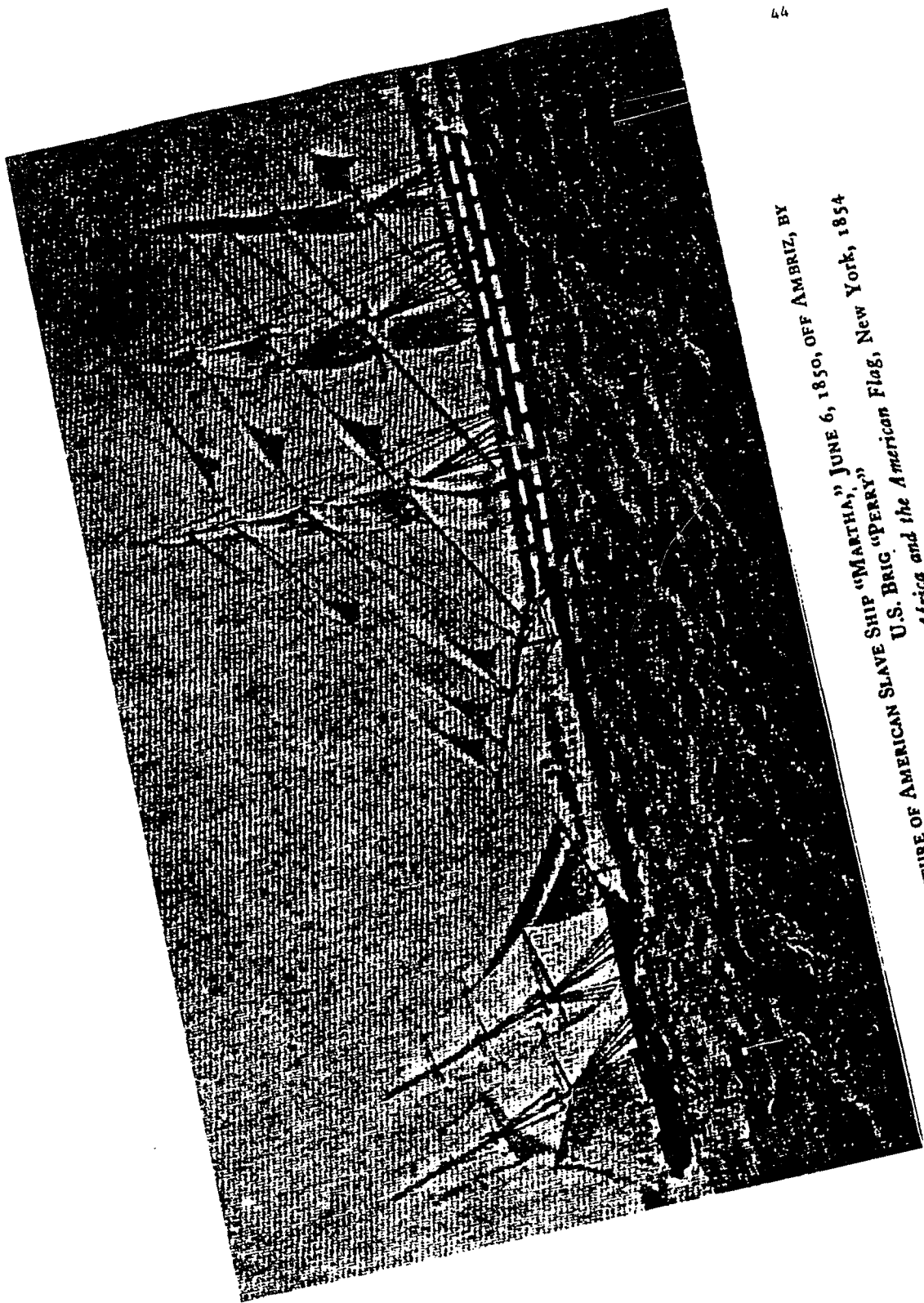


**CAPTURE OF THE SLAYER "HENNA," OCT. 26, 1843, OFF MERCURY ISLAND, S. W. COAST OF AFRICA, BY H.M. SCHOONER "ARIEL"**

From a water color in the Macpherson Collection



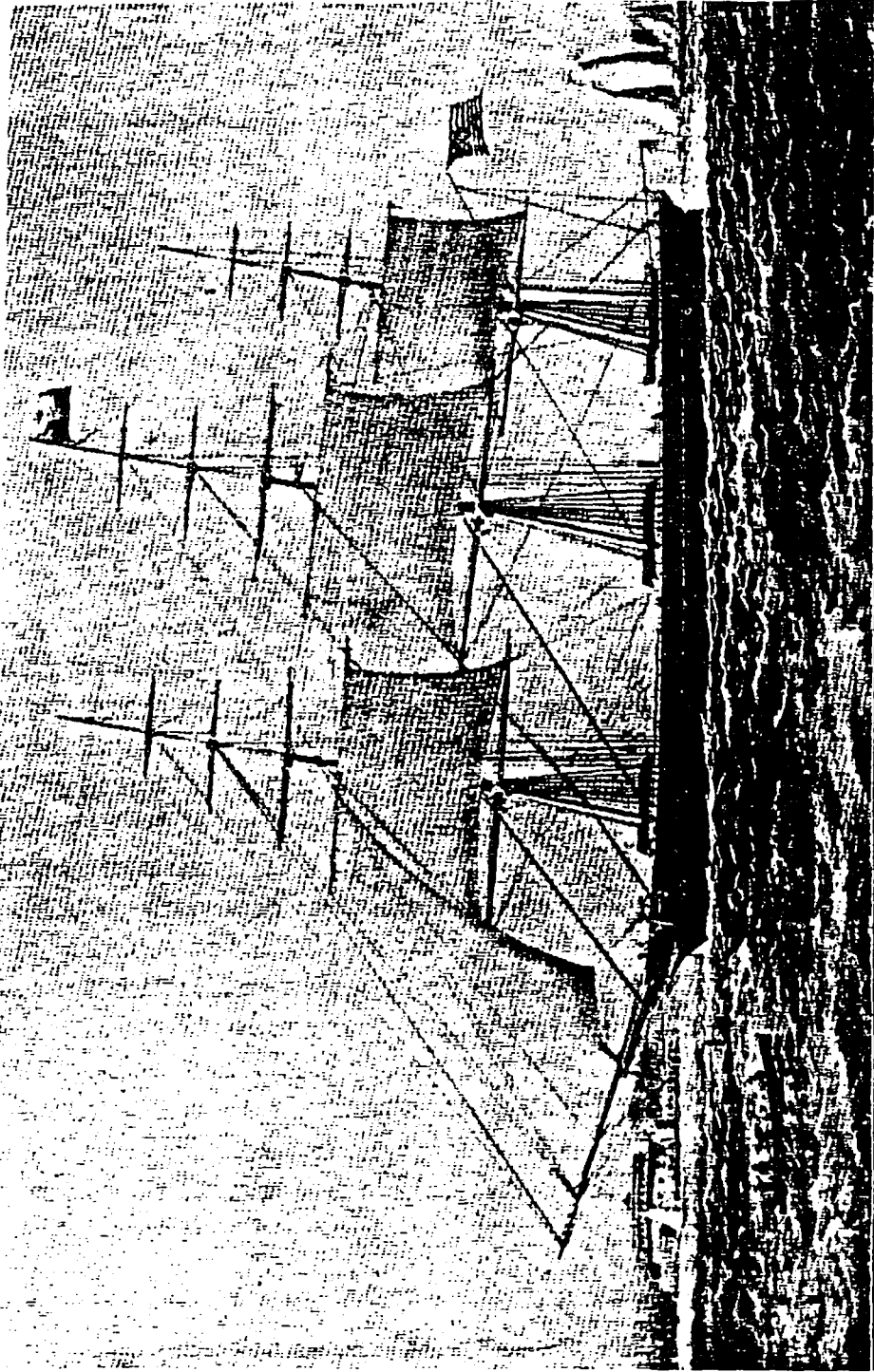
CAPTURE OF THE SLAVER "BORBOLETA," MAY 26, 1845, BY THE BOATS OF H.M. BRIG  
"PANTALOON," AFTER A TWO DAYS' CHASE OFF LAGOS, WEST AFRICA  
From a colored lithograph, after a drawing by H. John Vernon, in the Macpherson Collection



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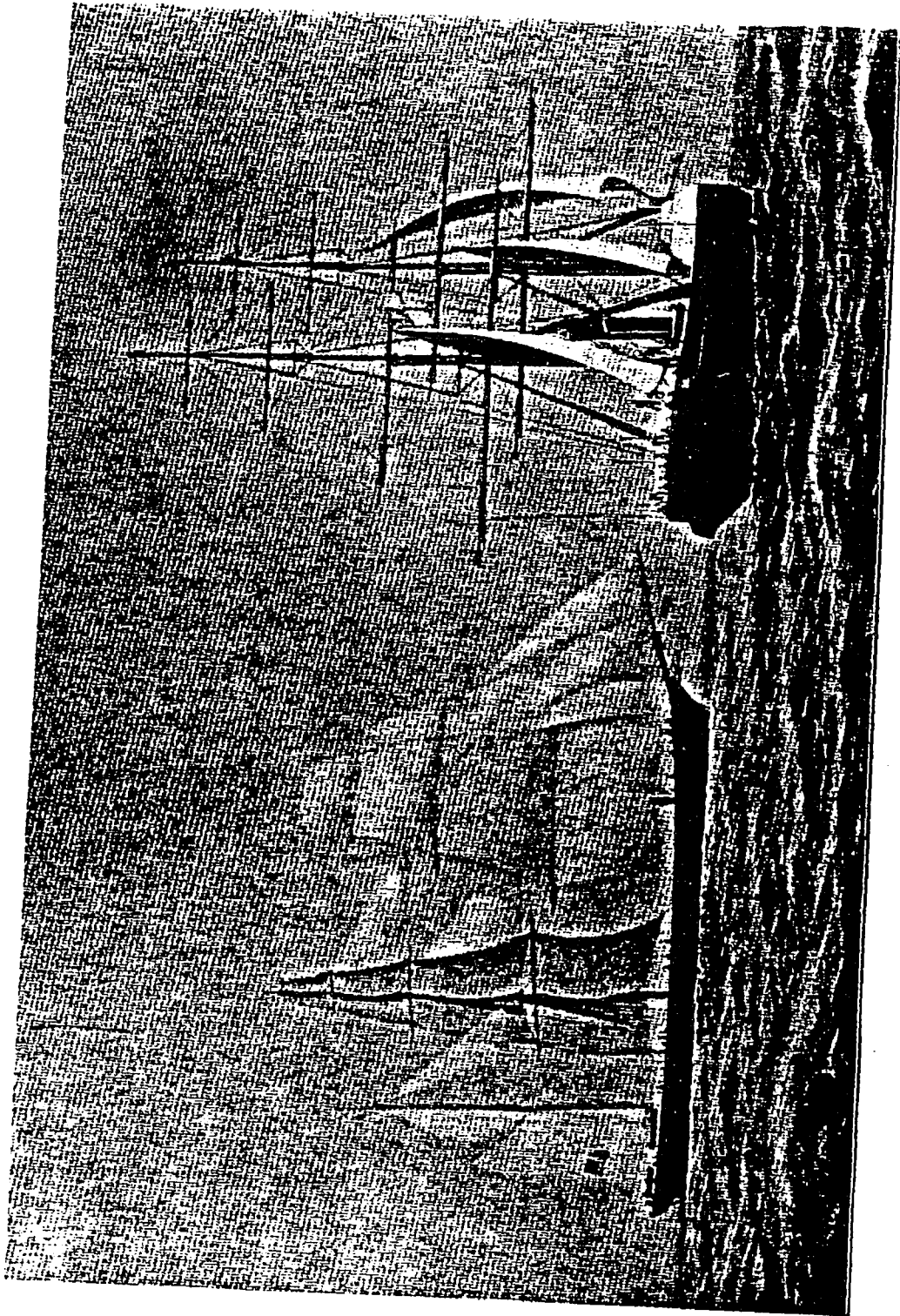
CAPTURE OF AMERICAN SLAVE SHIP "MARTHA," JUNE 6, 1850, OFF AMBRIZ, BY  
U.S. BRIG. "PERRY"  
New York, 1854

From a lithograph in Foot's *Africa and the American Flag*, New York, 1854



**"NIGHTINGALE," 1060 TONS, BUILT AT PORTSMOUTH, N. H., IN 1851**

**From a lithograph by N. Currier, after the drawing by C. Parsons made in 1854.**

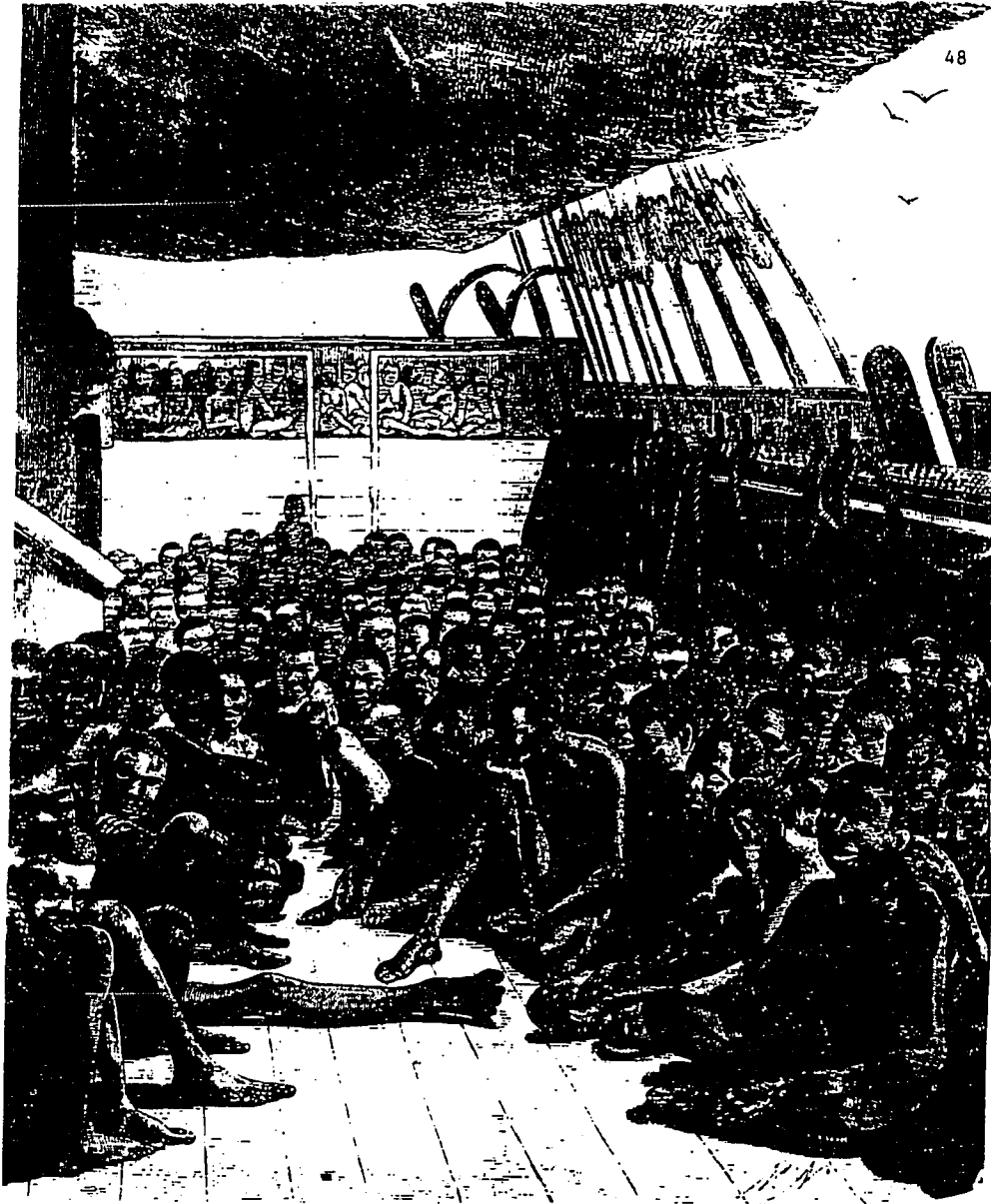


**CAPTURE OF THE AMERICAN SLAYER "ORION," NOV. 30, 1859, WITH 888 SLAVES, BY  
H.M. SLOOP-OF-WAR "PLUTO"**

**From a water color by J. Taylor (1876) in the Macpherson Collection**

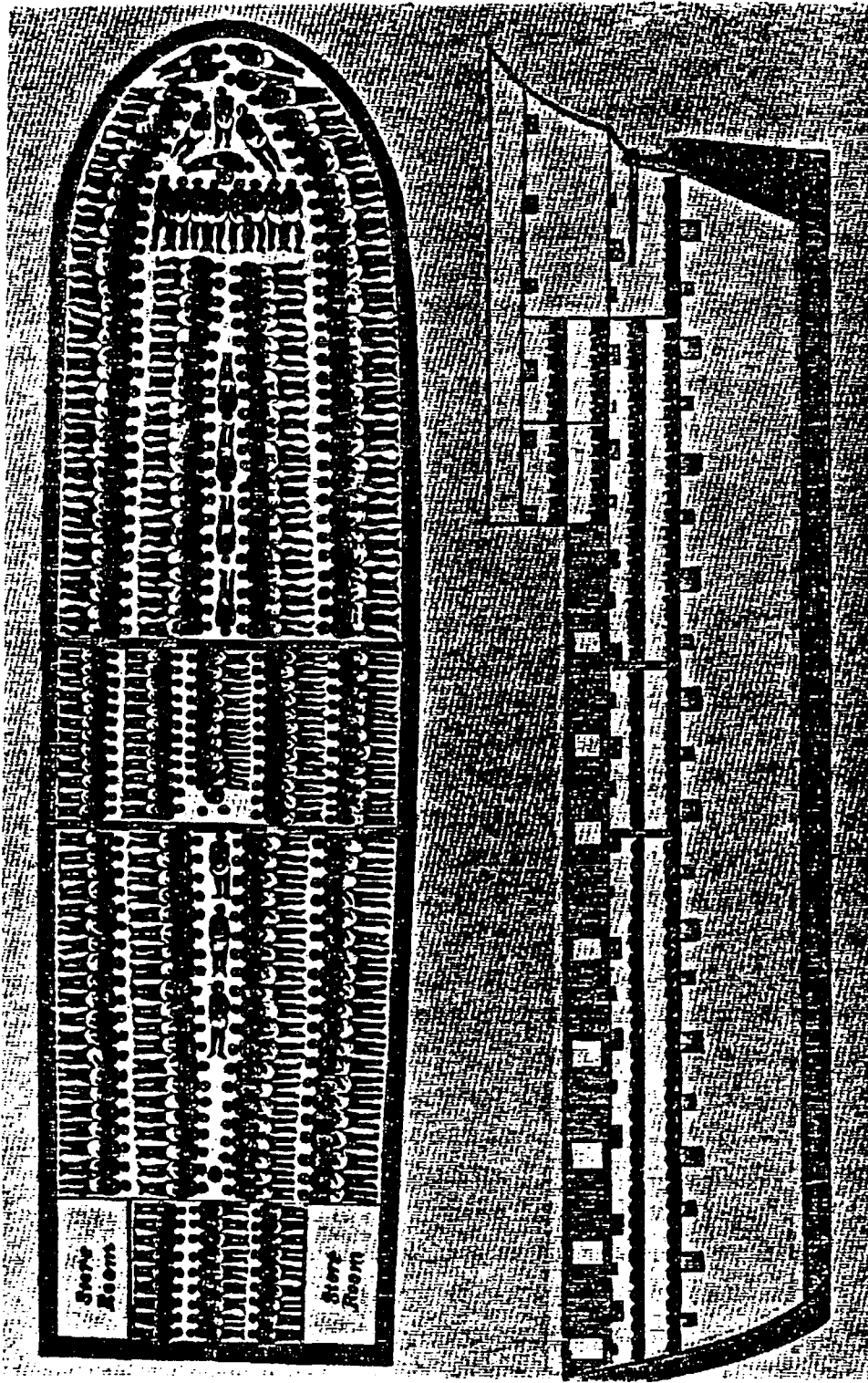
sight of their own country, for tis' then they attempt to make their escape, and mutiny; to prevent which we always keep centennials upon the hatchways, and have a chest full of small arms, ready loaden and prim'd, constantly being at hand upon the quarter-deck, together with some grenada shells; and two of our quarter-deck guns, pointing on the deck thence, and two more out of the steerage, the door of which is always kept shut, and well barr'd; they are fed twice a day, at ten in the morning, and four in the evening which is the time they are aptest [SIC] to mutiny, being all upon deck; therefore all that time, what of our men are not employ'd in distributing their victuals to them, and settling them, stand to their arms; and some with lighted matches at the great guns that yaun upon them, loaden with cartridge, till they have done and gone down to their kennels between decks.

The slavers were aware that mutiny was highly likely to occur if all slaves on board belonged to the same tribe. This was especially true of warlike tribes of the Gold Coast. The captain and crew were especially vigilant when this was true. But whatever precautions were taken mutinies did occur. Some were successful, but most were not. Even though a mutiny may have been unsuccessful large numbers of slaves and sailors usually lost their lives when



"Walking skeletons covered over with a piece of tanned leather." Slaves on the deck of the bark *Wildfire*, captured and brought into Key West, April 30, 1860. (Engraved from a daguerreotype and published in *Harper's Weekly*)





SECTION SHOWING METHOD OF STOWING SLAVES, IN 1786, ON THE SHIP "BROOKES"  
OF LIVERPOOL

From Clarkson's *Abolition of the Slave Trade*, London, 1808

the captain and crew attempted to regain control. From 1750 until 1788 mutinies frequently took place because Liverpool merchants cut the size of their crews in order to save money. Small crews were unable to contain slaves especially if the sailors were weakened by fever, and had to deal with simultaneous attacks from shore. There are fairly detailed accounts of fifty-five mutinies on slavers from 1699 to 1845, not to mention passing references to more than a hundred others. The list of ships "cut off" by natives often in revenge for kidnapping of freemen - is almost as long (Mannix/Cowley 1962:111).

The captain and crew had to be very vigilant and careful because slaves were always looking for a chance to overtake them whether the slaves' chances of success looked promising or not. Captain William Snelgrave, an early eighteenth century slaving captain, said this of a mutiny led by Coromantees against hopeless odds:

This mutiny began at Midnight... Two men that stood centry at the Forehatch way... permitted four [slaves] to go to that place, but neglected to lay the Gratings again, as they should have done; whereupon four more Negroes came on Deck... and all eight fell on the two centries who immediately called out for help. The Negroes endeavoured to get their cutlaces from them, but the Linewards (that is the Lines by which the Handles of the Cutlaces were fastened to the men's wrists) were so twisted in the scuffle, that they could not get them off before we came to their assistance. The Negroes

perceiving several white men coming towards them, with arms in their hands, quitted the centries and jumped over the ship's side into the sea...

After we had secured these people, I called the linguists, and ordered them to bid the Men-Negroes between Decks be quiet; (for there was a great noise amongst them). On their being silent, I asked, "What had induced them to Mutiny?" They answered, "I was a great Rogue to buy them, in order to carry them away from their own country, and that they were resolved to regain their liberty if possible." I replied, "That they had forfeited their Freedom before I bought them, either by crimes or by being taken in war..." Then I observed to them, "That if they should gain their point and escape to the shore, it would be of no advantage to them, because their countrymen would catch them, and sell them to other ships." This served my purpose, and they seemed to be convinced of their fault (Mannix/Cowley 1962:109).

Mutinies were common when ships were anchored near the slaves homeland because apparently they reasoned that they had a better chance of regaining their freedom when still near their country than other times. If they killed the crew, and this happened in approximately one out of ten mutinies, they could cut the anchor cables and drift ashore. But once on the high seas escape was unlikely to be successful for them primarily because they generally lacked knowledge of navigation. And while they could force a

captain to sail a ship under duress, a navigator could by night guide a ship in whatever direction he so chose as happened in 1839 when the Armistad was brought into New York harbor full of slaves who had mutinied. Yet, their desire for freedom was so strong that they mutinied on or off the high seas. Although their attempts to gain freedom usually failed, they often chose to die rather than surrender. Some were frequently of the opinion that if slaves were treated well they were less likely to mutiny, but writings of those who had first hand experience with slaves on ships were well aware that treatment did not generally deter slave mutinies, since Africans like many other peoples had a strong desire to be free.

Other times slaves may not have mutinied but a deep sorrowful melancholy would come over them, and they died in large numbers even though they may have been a few of the fortunate ones who were well fed, treated kindly under the circumstances, and kept under relatively sanitary conditions; they would often die one after another for what Europeans thought were no discernable reason. The Ibo and food-gathering tribes were particularly prone to this behavior, although others were not unknown to choose death in this way rather than remain a slave.

#### **TREATMENT ON THE SHIPS**

Those who continued to survive the ship voyage were usually fed some food items to which they were accustomed. For example, if slaves were from the Windward Coast their victuals consisted of boiled rice, millet, or cornmeal which might be cooked with small pieces of salt beef. Those from the Bight of Biafra were given

stewed yams, and those of the Congo and Angola manioc or plantains. They all were given a half pint of water served in a pannikin (Mannix/Cowley 1962:114). There were times that the slaves were given European horse beans, but the slaves hated this food. If not carefully watched they would pick the pulp up by handfuls and throw it in each others faces.

The slaves were generally brought on deck at eight in the morning and three or four in the afternoon if the weather was good. The men were fastened by their leg irons to the chains on the sides of the ship, but the women and boys were allowed to wander freely over the deck. After being fed about nine in the morning, the slaves were required to perform a ceremony called "dancing the slaves." According to Dr. Thomas Trotter, surgeon of the "Brookes" in 1783:

"Those who were in irons were ordered to stand up and make what motions they could, leaving a passage for such as were out of irons to dance around the deck." Dancing was prescribed as a therapeutic measure, a specific against suicidal melancholy, and also against scurvy - although in the latter case it was a useless torture for men with swollen limbs. While sailors paraded the deck, each with a cat-o'-nine-tails in his right hand, the men slaves "jumped in their irons" until their ankles were bleeding flesh. One sailor told Parliament, "I was employed to dance the men, while another person danced the women." Music was provided by

a slave thumping on a broken drum or an upturned kettle, or by an African banjo, if there was one aboard, or perhaps by a sailor with a bagpipe or fiddle. Slaving captains sometimes advertised for "A person that can play on the Bagpipes, for a Guinea ship." The slaves were also told to sing. Said Dr. Claxton after his voyage in the *Young Hero*, "They sing, but not for their amusement. The captain ordered them to sing, and they sang songs of sorrow. Their sickness, fear of being eaten, their hunger, and the memory of their country are the usual subjects" (Mannix/Cowley 1962:114).

While some crew members were dancing the slaves, others were in the hold cleaning the sleeping area. This was not usually done well unless the ship captain required it to be as this was a job that made many ill. During rainy weather the slaves were not brought up at all. Their two meals were served in the hold where the air became noxious and unbearably hot. During bad weather all the ship air conveyances and gratings were also closed. With no fresh air circulating hundreds of slaves breathed the same air; and in a brief time the air became poisonous. This environment precipitated fevers amongst the slaves, and many died (Mannix/Cowley 1962:119).

Some slaves went mad; this was particularly true of female slaves. Falconbridge, a slaving ship surgeon, stated that one female on the "*Emilia*" became so crazed that she had to be chained to the deck. She alternated between lucid moments and bouts of

insanity, and it was during one of her lucid bouts that she was sold to a planter in Jamaica. If men went insane they were usually flogged to death to make sure they were not pretending, while others were clubbed in the head and thrown overboard (Mannix/Cowley 1962:116).

The slaves were watched closely on deck to prevent mutinies, but were also watched to prevent them from committing suicide by jumping overboard, or starving themselves to death. Large numbers of them believed that when they died, they returned to their own people. Africans of various regions believed this, but the Ibo of eastern Nigeria are said to have believed this on a wider scale. However, at times captains dismembered slaves' heads who had committed suicide as a deterrent to other slaves because Africans also believed that an individual would not return home if decapitated; this tactic usually worked among them.

Bondsmen who refused to eat were forced to ingest food by various means. Dr. Falconbridge reported to Parliament that he witnessed hot glowing coals on a shovel placed so close to slaves' lips, that they were scorched and burned. He also testified that slaves were told if they persisted in refusing to eat that they would be made to eat the coals. Usually this induced them to eat, but if not, slaves were flogged daily. If this too did not succeed, an instrument called a "speculum oris", or mouth opener was used to force the slaves' mouths open. This device enabled food to be poured into their mouths through a funnel. Dr Falconbridge further stated that even this device failed if slaves were determined to die. There was a sizable number of slaves who

thought they were being taken from their homelands to be eaten by Europeans; consequently, many preferred to commit suicide at the first opportunity to avoid being eaten (Mannix/Cowley 1962:119).

Female slaves were not as highly desired as male slaves; thus, they usually made up only a third or less of human cargoes transported to the Americas. With so few women on slavers, and only females who were slaves aboard those vessels, captains and crews alike sexually exploited them. Whether they acquiesced to sexual advances or not, they were fair game for captains and their crews. When these women refused to grant sexual privileges, they were flogged unmercifully, and raped if they persisted in their refusal. Not only were European men mating with native women aboard slavers, but they mated with them on African soil as well. Untold numbers of female slaves left Africa and slavers pregnant with mulatto offspring fathered by European men; consequently, miscegenation between Europeans and Africans commenced before Africans of the Atlantic slave trade set foot in the Americas.

#### **NATURAL SELECTION**

During the Atlantic slave trade Africans perished in large numbers en route to the Americas through to the first three years of plantation life. Some estimate that twelve to fifteen million individuals were transhipped across the Atlantic. Others posit that as many as twenty million Africans were brought to the Western Hemisphere as slaves. While still others say that these estimates only reflect the number of individuals who managed to survive the ordeal, and does not include the millions who lost their lives



during slavery.

Even so, it is said that about 25 percent of the captives died en route to the coast. Twelve percent of those held in hot crowded barracoons waiting to be purchased expired. Five percent died when merchants traveled the West African coast for months purchasing slaves in order to obtain a full cargo. Ten percent lost their lives during the Middle Passage across the Atlantic. Another 5 percent expired while awaiting purchase after reaching the Western Hemisphere, and 12 percent departed while being marched or transported from the auction yard to the plantations. Between 10 and 40 percent perished within the first three years of plantation life during the breaking-in or seasoning period. By that time, about 70 percent of the slaves initially captured were dead, leaving 30 percent as seasoned survivors (Diamond 1991:26).

According to Diamond (1991), Grim and Wilson examined accounts of slave mortality and argue that death was selective as much of it was related to unbalanced salt loss, which quickly brings on collapse. The slaves sustained salt loss when they worked, marched, or were confined in unventilated barracoons or ships' holds. More body salt was probably effused when they vomited from seasickness (Diamond 1991:26). But the biggest salt loss was from diarrhea due to crowding and lack of sanitation - ideal conditions for the spread of gastrointestinal infections. Cholera and other bacterial diarrheas kill by causing sudden massive loss of salt and water (Diamond 1991:26). Diamond goes on to say that all contemporary accounts of slave ships and plantation life emphasized diarrhea, or "fluxes" in eighteenth-century terminology, as one of

the leading killers of slaves.

Diamond stated that Grim and Wilson posited that slavery selected for superefficient kidneys surpassing the efficient kidneys already selected by thousands of years in West African history. Only those slaves who were best able to retain salt could survive the periodic risk of high salt loss to which they were exposed. Salt survivors would have the further advantage of build up, under normal conditions, more of salt reserve in their body fluids and bones, thereby enabling them to survive longer or more frequent bouts of diarrhea. Those superkidneys became a disadvantage only when modern medicine began to reduce diarrhea's lethal impact, thereby transforming a blessing into a curse (Diamond 1991:27).

If Grim and Wilson's hypothesis is valid, to combat massive salt loss, nature selected for highly efficient kidneys that could retain salt under the life threatening conditions of slavery, thereby enabling slaves to survive. While a natural protection against massive salt loss allowed many slaves to survive and was an advantage during slavery, it now is a disadvantage for African Americans since retention of salt due to African Americans possessing superefficient kidneys may make them genetically predisposed to hypertension at higher frequencies than Euro-Americans.

Further, according to Diamond (1991), the example of African American hypertension that Grim and Wilson discuss opens the door to considering other possible selective effects of the slave experience. They note that occasional periods of starvation might

have selected slaves for superefficient sugar metabolism, leading African Americans under modern conditions to a propensity for diabetes. Thus, not only has slavery influenced the African American subculture, but may possibly have affected the genetic predisposition of African Americans to certain types of diseases at higher frequencies than other ethnic groups in the Western Hemisphere.

**CHAPTER IV**  
**THE AFRICAN DIASPORA**

Before Africans were transported to the Western Hemisphere, sizable numbers of them were shipped as slaves to labor in Europe and on offshore African Islands. Although African slaves were sent to the Caribbean in small numbers when labor shortages were acute before 1510, it was not until this year that the slavery of Africans in its massive form had begun. Royal orders authorized the shipment of fifty such slaves, then two hundred for sale in the West Indies. And for every year afterwards this practice increased until in 1518 the first cargo of slaves were shipped directly from Africa to Hispaniola in the Caribbean.

In Europe and among African royalty as well, the right to collect and sell slaves was a royal property. Since European royalty did not themselves take direct part in slaving, the right to do so was sold to wealthy merchants and mariners. By doing this, they created royal permits or licenses called "asientos" that authorized individuals or companies to buy slaves in Africa and sell them in the Americas. Asientos were created on a wide scale for every kind of business European monarchies could imagine. But the issuance of slaving asientos commenced to exceed all others. In regards to slaving, the asiento only referred to slaves taken from the West African Coast because the sale of Christian slaves was forbidden. North African slaves were undesirable as it was feared that Muslim bondsmen from that region would proselytize

among Guinea slaves taken to the Americas.

The asiento system became more valuable in 1592. Before that, the King had generally granted licenses for small numbers of captives and on few occasions (Davidson 1961:66). But in 1592, trying to meet a demand of slaves that was rendered practically inexhaustible by the holocausts of those who died, the court created a monster of an asiento. No longer was it a question of delivering a few hundred African captives to the Americas: the new license was for the transport of 38,250 slaves. Gomes Reynal, who bought the license, was to deliver his captives over nine years at a rate of 4,250 a year: of these, it was stipulated, at least 3,500 a year must be landed alive. Reynal had to pay nearly a million ducats for this concession and agreed to forfeit ten ducats for every slave short of 3,500 a year. The captives were to be fresh from the Guinea Coast and were to include no Mulattoes, Mestizos, Turks or Moors' (Davidson 1961:66).

It is not known how successful Reynal was in honoring his contract, but this huge asiento paved the way for such permits to be granted to others in large numbers. For over a hundred years Portugal and Spain dominated the Atlantic slave trade partly through the asiento; however, the Dutch, then the English led by John Hawkins commenced challenging their dominance by committing acts of piracy in order to share in slave profits. In 1702 the French received the coveted Spanish asiento and Britain acquired it in 1713. As other European nations gained a foothold in the slaving business, each carried on trade for their respective colonies. Thus, slaves were brought to the Caribbean Islands,

Mexico, Central, South and North America. Three thousand five hundred African loyalists to the British Crown, during the revolutionary war were sent to Nova Scotia to settle there at the end of the war. Other African loyalists were transported to the West Indies, East Florida, and London for settlement. But for purposes here the focus is on African dispersion in what is now the United States.

Generally, it has been posited in academia that British colonies along the eastern seaboard were supplied with slaves from the West Indies after they had become experienced. To a degree this was true, but large numbers of slaves were also shipped directly from Africa. The preeminent port of entry for slaves brought into British North America was in Charleston, South Carolina, while lesser ports were located in Beaufort and Georgetown, South Carolina. Other ports of entry that developed during the colonial period to handle slaving cargoes were Boston, Newport, New York, and Philadelphia. Although Boston took part in the slave trade, slaving activity in this city was negligible. In spite of the calumny heaped upon Newport for its share in the importation of slaves, recent studies have shown that African trade of the greatest merchants of Rhode Island was similarly small (Virginia Bever Platt unpublished, unnumbered as cited in Kilson/Rotberg 1976:116). Although the settlement patterns of New York were more similar to those of the plantation colonies and more African slaves were employed in that area, the trade in Africans through the port of New York was of no great significance (James G. Lydon, unpublished paper, Table I as cited in Kilson/Rotberg

1976:116). Philadelphia was the largest merchant port of the British mainland colonies and handled volumes of overall trade, but its slaving activities were also small. Those slaves who did enter the port of Philadelphia arrived from other British locations rather than direct from Africa.

While Virginia was the oldest British colony along the Eastern seaboard and Africans were first enslaved by law there, the demand for new African slaves as laborers was never exceedingly large. In the 1830's demand for African slaves in Virginia reached an apex, but steadily declined throughout the later colonial period. Charleston, South Carolina, then, was the only metropolis south of Philadelphia, and was the only southern port in existence at that time. Despite Carolina's initial hindrances such as a delay in settlement, an unhealthy climate, a small European population, and government instability this colony managed to become one of the most successful British colonies of the British Empire. Carolina settlers were able to make their colony flourish because they successfully cultivated rice and indigo through the widespread use of African slaves (Kilson/Rotberg 1976:117).

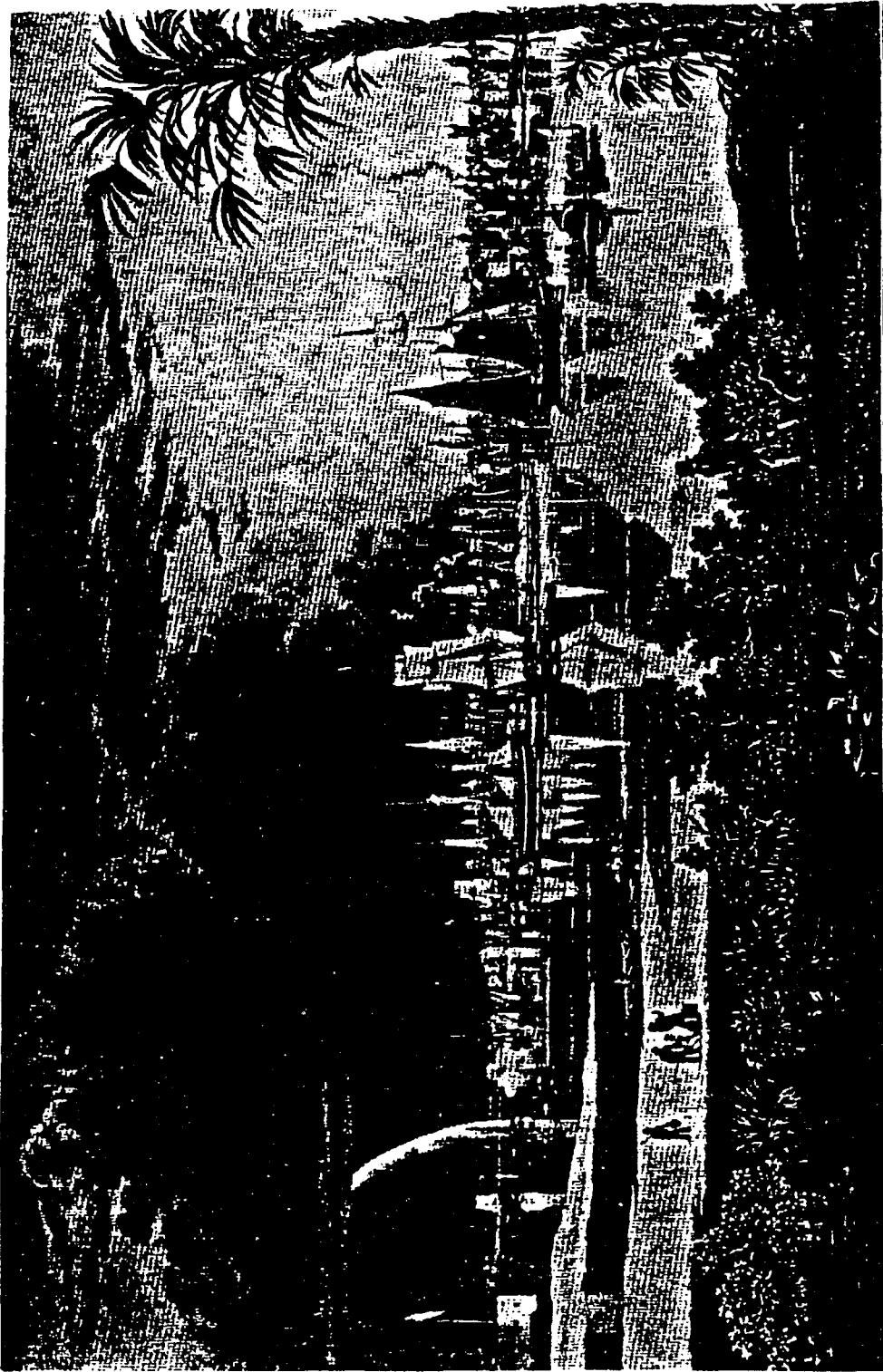
#### **CHARLESTON AS A MAJOR ENTREPOT**

The first English settlers came to Carolina in 1670, and traveled from the sugar islands of the West Indies. A third of these passengers on those first three ships traveling to Carolina were from Barbados, and when they came they brought their slaves with them. Thus, South Carolina was the only British colony where Europeans and Africans arrived at the same time. All other



**A VIEW OF CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA**  
From a line engraving after a painting by T. Mellish, published about 1750, by John Bowles,  
London, in the Macpherson Collection





**VIEW OF CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA**  
From a colored aquatint, published in 1841, after a painting by William J. Bennett, in the Macpherson Collection

colonies were first populated by Europeans, then African slaves were later brought in. Once in Carolina, slave owners continued to purchase slave laborers from the West Indies, but less than two years after settlement, planters received their first cargo of slaves directly from Africa. Slave records show that from 1672 until 1775 close to 90,000 African slaves were processed through Charleston or one of the lesser ports in South Carolina. Consequently, in just over one hundred years Carolina merchants imported and sold more than one quarter of slaves brought into the colonies between 1619 and 1807. One in every four African ancestors of the current African American population of the United States, therefore, passed through the colonial port of Charleston (Kilson/Rotberg 1976:118).

This is not to say that Carolina planters did not obtain slaves from the West Indies, Europe, and neighboring colonies because they did, but the vast majority of them came direct from Africa. Slaves from the east coast of Africa entered North America during the eighteenth century; however, Virginia was the only southern province to receive any (Virginia Bever Platt, William and Mary Quarterly, XVII 1969, 548-577 as cited in Kilson/Rotberg 1976:118).

Carolina planters decided what type of slaves entered Charleston by being selective as to the appearance of slaves they accepted. The age, sex, size, and origin were important to the colonist in general, but in Charleston for males the ideal age was between sixteen and twenty-five, and from fourteen to twenty-one for females (Kilson/Rotberg 1976:118). Older slaves and children

were not acceptable since the Carolinian planters wanted laborers in their prime ready to be put directly to work. Older slaves would have to be cared for in their declining years, thus, planters were generally unwilling to shoulder this expense. Children would later prove to be productive but until they reached their prime, they too were an economic expense.

Carolinians were particular about the size of slaves whom they purchased. Tall Africans were most sought after, and in many cases a prospective purchaser would avoid buying new labor if all slaves in a cargo were small in size. For example, in 1756 Commodore Thomas Frankland sent to Charleston a number of slaves who had been captured from the French. They were clearly not what the colonists wanted. "They were much too small a people for the business of this Country and on this account many purchasers went away from the auction empty handed that would otherwise have purchased (Henry Laurens, *The Papers of Henry Laurens* (Columbia, S.C., 1970), II, 83 as cited in Kilson/Rotberg 1976:119). Henry Laurens, one of the greatest slave merchants in colonial Charleston, wrote to a correspondent: "A tall able people tempt many of our folks to buy when they are in no real want of them" (Elizabeth Donnan, "The Slave Trade into South Carolina Before the Revolution." *American Historical Review*, XXXIII (1928), 818 as cited in Kilson/Rotberg 1976:119).

Planters in South Carolina were equally selective about where their slaves came from even though often slaves would be advertised as being from an area totally different from where they actually originated. Even though these planters had no direct knowledge of

Africa, they preferred Africans from Gambia and the Gold Coast. Among them it was thought that Africans from those two areas were industrious docile workers. If they could not get slaves from those areas, then they accepted slaves from Angola. If Gambian and Gold Coast Africans were available at the same time that a cargo of tall Angolans was ready for sale, Africans from the southern extremity of the slaving coast would be considered as suitable, because of their height, as the most preferred slaves (Laurens, Papers, I, 258 as cited in Kilson/Rotberg 1976:120).

Slaves from Calabar (in what is now Nigeria) were acquired by the Carolina planters and employed successfully in the rice and indigo fields, but they were the least desired of all West African peoples (Robert Higgins in Kilson/Rotberg 1976:120). In the first decade of the eighteenth century, Calabar slaves were described as "those poor wretches... a strange sort of brutish creatures, very weak and slothful; but cruel and bloody in their temper, always quarreling, biting and fighting, and some of the times choaking [SIC] and murdering one another, without any mercy (Donnan, Documents, II, 15 as cited by W. Robert Higgins in Kilson/Rotberg 1976:120). Fifty years later, in the middle decade of the century, Laurens wrote to Peter Furnell, his associate in Jamaica: "... Calabar ... slaves are quite out of repute from numbers in every cargo that have been sold with us destroying themselves (Laurens, Papers, I, 331 as cited by W. Robert Higgins in Kilson/Rotberg 1976:120). Slaves from other areas of Africa were sold in Charleston with some success, and merchants did attempt to persuade Carolina planters to purchase Africans from other areas along

Africa's slaving coast, but were not successful as the planters remained resolute in what they desired and would accept.

Not only were Carolina planters stubborn regarding areas they desired their slaves to originate, but they wanted to know if the cargo came direct from Africa or made intermediate stops before reaching Charleston. They preferred shipments direct from Africa because in their minds such slaves made far better workers. It was their opinion that slaves who had passed through another American colony and especially the sugar islands were contaminated and more difficult to control. Therefore, a colonial purchaser in Charleston would buy a new slave directly from one of the less desirable locations on the west coast of Africa in preference to buying a Gambian or Gold Coast slave from another colony (For this aversion of the Carolina planters, see the letters of Henry Laurens and the correspondence of Robert Pringle, *passim*: as cited by W. Robert Higgins in Kilson/Rotberg, 1976:121).

Carolina planters purchased more males than females because the males, being on the average bigger and stronger, could perform heavier physical labor. However, these planters did not buy female slaves in smaller numbers to the degree that English planters in the sugar islands did; consequently, the ratio of males to females in Carolina were closer to an even balance than in the West Indies.

South Carolina received the majority of slaves from Gambia, the Gold Coast, Sierre Leone, and Calabar West Africa. but a significant number came from the West Indian Islands of Barbados, Antigua and Jamaica. There were times when slaves transhipped to Jamaica were redirected to South Carolina. Moreover, other English

North American colonies sent slaves to South Carolina too. However, compared to trade in human cargo from Africa the slaves received from these other areas were not as numerous.

The slaves coming into Charleston not only served as a source of labor for the Carolina planters, but they also satisfied the labor demand of adjoining colonies. Georgia received the greatest number of slaves from Charleston. About one half of the slaves brought to Charleston went to Savannah or Sunbury, Georgia. Even though it was illegal to import slaves into Georgia, this southernmost colony received a cargo of slaves within six years of the settlement of Savannah. Since Georgia did not develop a transatlantic trade market, this colony depended on South Carolina to supply its imported labor. North Carolina also received a large number of those slaves brought into Charleston as North Carolina's coastline was inaccessible to Atlantic trade. Moreover, this colony did not possess a major crop for imperial trade; thus, there was little incentive for North Carolinians to develop a lucrative system of Atlantic trade.

Limited numbers of slaves were sent from South Carolina to the other English colonies along the eastern seaboard of North America, to the Spanish settlements in Florida, to the French colonists in Mobile and New Orleans, and to the West Indian and Caribbean plantations of all of the European nations. In many cases the use of Charleston as an entrepot of the Atlantic slave trade did not conform to the pattern of African workers being shipped from the tropical colonies to the temperate provinces of the Americas. The two-way trade in new African slaves was obviously profitable,

however, for it continued throughout the colonial period (Kilson/Rotberg 1976: 130-131).

Charleston was the largest port in colonial British North America which handled large cargoes of African slaves. Yet, slaves for the northern colonies did not normally come through the Charleston entrepot, but were received in the northern colonies in a more haphazard fashion. A slaving schooner would be sent to the West Indies laden with pine lumber and salt fish. On the voyage back from the West Indies a ship might carry molasses, but might also carry six or seven slaves. Most of the small slave population of the Northern colonies was brought from the West Indies in this casual fashion, instead of being imported directly from Africa (Mannix/Cowley, 1962:159).

#### **DISPERSION FROM THE COLONIAL SOUTH**

After the invention of the cotton gin in 1793 short-staple cotton seeds could more easily be separated from the lint. Previous to this invention planters experimented with varieties of West Indian cotton and produced a long-staple or "sea-island" cotton. The long-staple cotton was of high quality but could only be successfully grown in low lying coastal areas as well as the Sea Islands of South Carolina and Georgia. But with widespread use of the cotton gin, planters could plant short-staple cotton in varied areas. Thus, as land in the old colonies depleted every ten to twenty years planters simply moved onto new lands. These lands were often in other states, and planters carried their slaves with them.

Almost at once cotton became the staple crop in the Georgia and Carolina piedmont between the coastal plains and the Appalachians. Cotton lent itself to cultivation on small farms, though large plantations were more profitable. Coastal plantation owners staked new lands in the piedmont, while yeoman farmers bought slaves and tried to rise into the large-scale planter class. More slave importations naturally followed - it has been estimated that in 1803 alone over 20,000 Blacks were brought from Africa into South Carolina and Georgia. After 1800 cotton cultivation spread to North Carolina, Southwestern Virginia, and over the mountains into Tennessee. Then planters realized that the fertile alluvial soil of Mississippi and Alabama, and the bottom lands in Louisiana and Arkansas were superior to the upland soils, and they streamed southwestward bringing their slaves with them (Meirer/Rudwick 1966:52).

After crossing the Mississippi, the cotton growers advanced into Mexico and played a crucial role in the events leading to the acquisition of Texas. This westward expansion of slavery and the cotton kingdom provided the principal focus for the sectional political controversies - the Missouri Compromise, the compromise of 1850, the Mexican War, the Kansas-Nebraska Act and the Dred Scott decision - that eventually reached a climax in the Civil War (Meirer/Rudwick 1966:54).

The area which later became the states of Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas and Texas had about 60,000 slaves in 1820, but forty years later this area had 600,000 of them. This increase was due in part to the slave birth rate, but this rapid



growth was largely due to slaves being brought in to satisfy the planters insatiable demand for slaves.

After emancipation and the South's defeat in the Civil War, ex-slaves remained in that area in large numbers. Reconstruction and the Freedmen's bureau administered relief services for former slaves and poor Euro-Americans alike. Briefly it looked as if progress and social upliftment would finally come to those once enslaved. But Jim Crow Laws, disenfranchisement, and a general lack of opportunities were hindrances to the social, economic and political advancement of African Americans. Consequently, by the early twentieth century Southern African Americans were ripe for moves to the North, Midwest, and West.

When the United States joined World War I, European immigrants decreased, and many who were already here returned to their native lands for military service. The northern labor supply decreased while an increased production of goods prevailed. Northern industries turned to African Americans to satisfy this labor demand, and sent labor agents south to recruit African Americans to fill vacancies in factories. Carloads of laborers were sent north. They came into St. Louis, Cleveland, Cincinnati, and Detroit. Those leaving the Southwest went to Chicago; from the Southeast they went to New York, Philadelphia, Boston, and New Jersey. They left their homes due to low wages, the unfair tenant and sharecropping system, the boll weevil, crop failures through droughts, lynching, poor schools and segregation. Some migrated from the country to Southern cities since cities in the South like urban areas most places offered opportunities not available in

rural areas.

Once in urban cities in the North, African Americans wrote home to families and friends extolling Northern opportunities and the money to be made. Migrations then became a hysterical mass movement as single people, families, the old and young alike migrated to those cities. From that decade until the 1960's, African Americans continued to leave the South in large numbers or migrate to Southern cities; thus, they became primarily urban dwellers rather than rural inhabitants.

It was not long before African Americans who had migrated North began experiencing the type of race problems heretofore thought to be peculiar to the South. They were segregated in crowded neighborhoods which soon became run down or were already impoverished when African Americans moved in. Labor difficulties between African Americans and Euro-Americans became acute. Vice as well as crime increased, but police arrested African Americans, particularly males, for the smallest provocation so that in African American communities there was never an accurate or near accurate count of vices and crimes actually committed. Inadequate schools and insufficient numbers of schools abounded. African Americans were subjected to brutality and death due to Euro-American mob activity. And social intercourse between the races was discouraged and frowned upon all over the North.

Yet, despite this, miscegenation occurred between African Americans and Euro-Americans in modern times as it did in the era of slavery and its aftermath. The South generally continued with its antimiscegenation laws well into the twentieth century and the

North, for the most part, no longer had legal bars against interracial marriages, but social custom dictated against such relationships. The situation was no different in the West and other parts of the United States. Even so, some interracial couples in the North married and this occurred in more recent decades in the South as well; interracial couples gravitated towards each other and intermarried in other parts of the country also. Others did not marry but mated and produced offspring of mixed parentage. Consequently, despite the laws and social dictates regarding African American/Euro-American marriages and race mixing, the European gene pool never ceased becoming a part of African Americans in modern times.

**CHAPTER V**  
**AFRICAN AMERICANS, NATIVE AMERICANS, AND**  
**ASIAN AMERICANS**

There are some who posture that contact between Africans and Native Americans in both directions occurred prior to 1492. Those believing that Africans reached the Americas before Europeans arrived, emphasize the Olmec stone heads of Mexico as evidence of this contact. According to Peter Martyr, Balboa found Blacks in Darien in 1513, some of whom were in bondage to the Indians while others had established a colony from which they waged war on neighboring tribes. It was believed that these Africans were Ethiopian pirates, shipwrecked on the coast (Porter 1971:9). Others, such as Jean Merrien believe that the first documented case of a single Native American navigator is in evidence by the following:

In the Middle Ages there arrived one day on the coast of Spain a man "red and strange" in a craft described as a hollow tree. From the recorded description, which specifically states that he was not a Negro, he might well have been a native of America in a piragua—a dug-out canoe... the unfortunate man, ill and enfeebled, died before he had been taught to make himself understood (Merrien 1958:35 as cited in Porter 1971:9).

While Spain is certainly not Africa, one can reason that if a Native American could navigate to Spain from somewhere in the Western Hemisphere, he could certainly reach Africa by that same method. However, the greatest known intensive initial contact between Native Americans and Africans took place in European cities such as Seville, Lisbon, and Valencia. These Native American slaves were brought into Portugal and Spain where Africans and Europeans were also enslaved. Here the Native American, the African, and the European carried on their duties in bondage and mated or married other slaves as well as free persons. Native Americans were taken from Newfoundland, the Caribbean, islands off the coast of South America, Meso America and the Florida-Carolina area of Southeastern United States after 1500. Prior to 1500 Columbus transhipped the bulk of Native American slaves from the Western Hemisphere. He was responsible for the shipment of three thousand to six thousand Native American slaves to Europe and nearby islands. Further, as early as the mid 1490's he planned to sell Native Americans to the African islands controlled by Spain and Portugal.

Yet, not all Native Americans were sent to Spain as slaves. Some went as interpreters, entertainers and for general display as curiosities. Others were taken there to be educated and baptized in the Catholic faith. Curiously, the Jesuits took a Native American named Juan Santos Atahualpa from Peru to Spain and Angola. After later returning to Peru, Atahualpa led a major Peruvian rebellion with Black Africans as his allies. Due to this uprising the Campa area of Peru was independent of European control for many

years (Forbes 1988:34-35).

Native Americans were also present in West Africa as the Dutch used Native American auxiliary troops to conquer Angola, Ghana, and the Portuguese Islands in the Gulf of Guinea. As in any war, it is probably safe to say that these Native Americans are likely to have mated and produced offspring with African women at least to some extent.

#### **AFRICAN AND NATIVE AMERICAN EARLY CONTACT IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE**

Native Americans subsequently had contact with Africans on a broader scale through the exploration and settlements of Europeans in their early contact in the Western Hemisphere. Balboa had thirty-one Africans with him when he discovered the Pacific Ocean, and Cortez had Africans with him when he went into Mexico. Two came with Velas in 1520. Alvarado had two hundred Africans when he went into Quito, and Pizarro's Africans carried him to the cathedral when he was murdered. Africans were also members of Almagro and Valdivia's expeditions in 1525. Africans not only assisted in the Central and South American expeditions, but they accompanied the Portuguese and Spanish explorers when these Europeans moved into the interior of North America. Thus, Africans assisted Alarcon and Coronado in conquering New Mexico, and Narvaez had Africans with him in 1527. They also accompanied Cabeza de Vaca when he explored the southwestern part of the United States. Estevanico, an African, was killed by Native Americans because they were suspicious of his claims of being an emissary for the Europeans. In effect, they did not believe he was. Though he was

murdered, Estevanico opened up passage to the Southwest for the Spaniards who later conquered Native Americans of this area.

The first Spanish settlement which contained slaves was established in 1526 at or near the mouth of the Pee Dee River in the state now known as South Carolina. This area became home to five hundred Spanish settlers from Haiti and one hundred of their slaves. Lucas Vasquez de Ayllon founded this establishment, but less than six months after colonizing, Ayllon became ill and died as did many other settlers. Disagreements within the colony coupled with suspicious and hostile Native Americans led to several slaves rebelling and fleeing to the Native Americans. By December of that year, only one hundred and fifty settlers were alive, and these individuals returned to Haiti leaving the renegade Africans with Native Americans.

The French also included Africans in their explorations and settlements of the Americas as Jesuit Missionaries carried Africans with them in their Canadian expeditions. Further, Africans made up a fairly large proportion of those individuals who settled in the Mississippi Valley when the French overtook this area in the 1600's. Du Sable, a French-speaking African, built the first structure in the last decade of the eighteenth century in what is now Chicago.

Although the English did not include Africans in their explorations and initial settlements, slaves were present in Virginia as early as 1619. That year the captain of a Dutch man-of-war ship sold twenty Africans to the Virginia colonists for rations. Some few years later there were records of free Africans

in Virginia because this initial group of Africans were treated as indentured servants, and upon completion of their term of indenture were granted their freedom.

When English colonies were established, and African slaves became the primary source of free labor, Africans at every opportunity fled to Native American settlements. Fleeing to Native Americans not only occurred in English colonies, but also took place in other European colonies established in the Western Hemisphere as well. Often if Africans did not voluntarily flee to Native American settlements, they were stolen during Indian raids on Euro-Americans settlers, and taken to Native American villages. Here they usually continued as individuals in bondage, but were generally treated much more humanely among Native Americans than among Europeans. Hence, this factor served as a catalyst for Africans to flee to Native Americans in substantial numbers.

This phenomena occurred all over the present limits of the United States, but was particularly pervasive in the south for two reasons. One, the south had larger numbers of African slaves serving as a source of free labor. And two, for varied reasons Southern Euro-Americans generally treated slaves harshly and cared little for these individuals as human beings. Many even said that Africans were not human. Consequently, years before planters began breeding African Americans for profit, it was widely thought and echoed that, "It's cheaper to buy than to breed." With this kind of attitude the health, welfare, and mortality rate of slaves did not concern most Europeans. Thus, slaves worked under deplorable back breaking conditions from "sun up" to "sun down", and were



poorly provided for in food, clothing as well as shelter. Little or no leisure time was allowed, and the laws were skewed in favor of Euro-American society. Consequently, Africans had no way of redressing grievances through the law or through social custom.

Once on Indian lands, although usually still slaves among Native Americans, their lot was generally far better. Yet, there were times when runaway slaves were killed, treated badly (especially among the Choctaw, Chickasaw and Cherokee) or returned to their Euro-American masters, but generally among Indian nations this seems to have been unusual rather than the norm. North and South, runaway slaves sought and usually received protection from Native Americans. This occurred on a rather widespread basis as settlers consistently included provisions in treaties with Native Americans that Native Americans would return run-away slaves to their masters. The Indians always agreed to do this, but when settlers actually requested that slaves be returned, Native Americans usually denied that they were among them. It was no wonder, then, that African slaves cohabitated with Native Americans when they could.

The most well known account of relations between African slaves and Native Americans are those narratives regarding the familiarity of Cherokees, Creeks, Choctaws, Chickasaws and Seminoles with Africans during slavery and its aftermath. Slaves interacted on a large scale with all the aforementioned groups, but had a particularly unusual relationship with the Seminoles.

Seminole is a Muskogee word meaning "wild" or "runaway". It was during the eighteenth and early part of the nineteenth century

that Creeks left their towns and migrated to Florida; civil strife, political intrigue, and warfare were the primary reasons the Creeks migrated. In Florida they became isolated from their previous kin and friends. This isolation led to these Creeks slowly withdrawing from the Creek Federation and in the 1780's and 1790's they became known as "Seminoles".

African slaves were already among the Creeks as bondsmen when Creeks were dubbed Seminoles; however, life among them was almost as if Africans were not slaves. European travelers described the Seminoles as indulgent towards African slaves, and it is said that they did not require them to labor much. If one offered to buy them even at high prices, the Seminoles refused. Observers reported that Africans lived in separate towns from Native Americans and planted their own fields as a group the same as the Seminoles did. They also had their own large herds of cattle, sheep, and pigs, and their masters only required them to pay an annual tax in produce and livestock. Generally African slaves lived the way their Native American masters did. That is, they dressed and built their houses the Seminole way. Male slaves were allowed to own guns; something they were never permitted to do among the Europeans, and they supplemented their diet with game they hunted with these weapons. Most slaves spoke Spanish, English and Native American languages; thus, they were used by the Seminoles as interpreters and intermediaries with Europeans. By 1822, for example, Whan (or Juan), a former slave of King Payne, had already emerged in importance by making use of his interpretive services, in their dealings with Euro-Americans (Mahon 1967: 203-

204 as cited in Littlefield 1977:8). Euro-American planters did not at all appreciate the Seminole brand of slavery; consequently, there was constant conflict between planters and Seminoles over African slaves. More than a few times, planters would attempt to steal Africans from Native Americans. Thus, while the Spanish had taught Seminoles and Africans to distrust English planters, more enmity grew between the Seminoles, Africans, and Euro-American settlers because of Euro-American attempts to retrieve slaves from Native American lands.

As contact with Euro-Americans increased, the Seminoles grew more dependent on their African slaves. Their common distrust of the Americans, the Africans' greater agricultural skill, the resulting economic advantage, and their ability to speak English contributed to the dependency as well as to a tendency by the Seminoles to view the Africans in many instances as allies, if not as equals (Porter 1871:47 as cited in Littlefield 1977:9).

Hostilities between Euro-American planters, the Seminoles, and African slaves among them led to two battles known as the Seminole Wars. The first occurred in 1812 when Euro-Americans attempted to annex East Florida to the United States, and the second took place from 1835 until 1842 because the American government wanted to remove the Seminoles from Florida. More specifically, the government desired to separate the Seminoles and their African slaves because of the laxity of the Seminole slavery system, and because the slaves had become allies to the Seminoles.

The seven year Seminole War ended, and Native Americans were removed from their lands into Creek territory. Although the

Seminoles attempted to maintain the same type of relationship with Africans among them that they had in Florida, out of political expediency and to save themselves, they gave in to pressures from the Creeks. Additionally, proslavery officials and Euro-American settlers who wanted the Seminole African slaves for themselves resorted to all manner of duplicity to get them. Some claimed that the slaves were legally theirs prior to their fleeing to the Seminoles. In some cases this was true; however, many settlers made false legal claims, and even went to the extreme of creating false legal documents laying claims to slaves in order to obtain them without paying for them.

After removal amid this political wrangling, Africans who remained with the Seminoles continued to play a major role in Seminole affairs in order to try to regain the liberties they had in Florida. But pressure on the Seminoles from the Creeks and proslavery Euro-American officials succeeded in destroying the former closeness between Africans and Seminoles. In only two decades their formerly friendly and cooperative relationship, which more often than not resulted in intermarriage, deteriorated into a prejudicial view among many Seminoles that Africans were racially inferior. Gradually the Seminoles denounced intermarriage and matings, and took away all liberties the African slaves among them enjoyed in Florida. No longer were chiefs of mixed Indian and African genes allowed to preside over meetings of large or small matters. Africans no longer had the honor of acting as principal counsellors or war-captains, although after removal war-captains were no longer necessary. Yet if there was, most assuredly African

slaves would not have been allowed to hold such a position at that point in Seminole history. Eventually the Seminoles came to commence practicing the same type of slavery as the Europeans did.

Even though the American government played its part in breaking up the Seminole African alliance, it was primarily pressure from Creek and Cherokee slaveholders that succeeded in destroying this formerly close relationship between Africans and Seminoles.

All other Indian nations of the South such as the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creeks, and scores of other Native Americans located in what is now the southern United States had slaves, but none practiced the type of slavery the Seminoles did prior to their removal to Creek territory.

Although Indian Nations North and South copied Europeans by developing condescending and prejudicial attitudes toward African Americans, Native Americans continued to mate with them. Antimiscegenation laws prohibiting these marriages were created by Euro-Americans and later by Native Americans alike, but this too did not eliminate matings. Prior to the enactment of these laws, intermarriage between Native Americans and Africans occurred frequently. Most such marriages were entered into by African males (slave and free) and Native American women although intermarriage between Native American males and African women (slaves and freepersons) occurred also. Reasons for these marriages varied, but a critical shortage of African women contributed to African males marrying outside their race in high numbers. Moreover, African male slaves did not want their offspring born into slavery

and since a child born to a freewoman was automatically free, many married free Native American women for this reason. Others followed their heart, and married Native Americans free or slave simply because they loved them. But whatever the reasons, interracial marriages between African Americans and Native Americans were contracted, and children were born to these unions.

According to Porter (1971), a traveler of the early nineteenth century remarked that "while slavery was supposed to be maintainable by law in Massachusetts, there was a particular temptation for taking Indian wives, the children of Indian women being acknowledged to be free (Kendall 1809 Vol.ii, p179 as cited in Porter 1971:31). He goes on to say that the great factor in amalgamation of Africans and Native Americans was intermarriage between freed Africans and reservation Native Americans. This intermixture, Porter says, began under slavery and was greatly speeded up by emancipation; consequently, it was most conspicuous in the North, where slavery was abolished early, and the position of Africans higher in the social scale.

In 1890 N.S. Shaler expressed the opinion that "any descendants of Africans who were in New England in the last century... have become co-mingled with the remnants of the Indians of Gay Head and Mashpee. Persons of African Indian descent, while they might be classed as Indians so long as they remained a part of what was technically an Indian community, became Blacks as soon as that contact was lost. Thus, the result of African-Indian intermixture in New England has been to Africanize those few descendants of the aboriginal inhabitants who still cling at least

to the tradition of Indian blood, and at the same time to divert a stream of Indian blood into the veins of the African American population of that region (Porter 1971:34).

In other states the result was similar. In 1889 the one hundred fifty Shinnacook Indians living on the southern shore of Long Island were "nearly all mixed with Black blood, dating back from the times of slavery in the northern states" (Gatschet 1889:390 as cited in Porter 1971:34). In the same year the Montauk Indians, also of Long Island, represented a similar mixture (Tooker: 1889 Vol. IV, pp. i-ix, p. iv as cited in Porter 1971:34). In 1872 it was said that "there are no full-blooded aborigines on the Eastern shore of Maryland, although many of the free-born Blacks show Indian traces (Townsend 1872 vol. iii, pp. 518-519, as cited in Porter 1971:34).

In Virginia the results of this intercourse were similar to those which ensued under similar conditions in Massachusetts. Thomas Jefferson noted that the remnants of the Mattaponies had "more Black than Indian blood in them". (Jefferson, vol. iii, pp. 497-498 as cited in Porter 1971:35). Further, Blacks resorted to the Indian reservations in such numbers that by 1787 the population of the Gingaskin reservation was asserted to be nearly all Black. The same was said in 1821 of the reservation of the Nottaways and in 1843 concerning that of the Pamunkeys (Porter 1971:35). A recent writer on the Black casually mentions a number of modern instances of Blacks from Virginia who were of Cherokee blood (Embree 1931 as cited in Porter 1971:35). Moreover, as the coast tribes dwindled they were compelled to associate and intermarry

with Blacks until they finally lost their identity and were classified with that race, so that a considerable proportion of the blood of the southern Blacks is unquestionably Indian (Nineteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, 1897:98 as cited in Porter 1971:35).

African Americans migrated to Kansas after the Civil War when Native Americans were still there in large numbers. Some of these Blacks were descendants of Union Soldiers. In Kansas as in Oklahoma Blacks mingled with Native Americans and produced offspring. Often African Americans of Oklahoma bear as surnames tribal designations of the Indians from whom they derive part of their blood, e.g. "Kiowa" (Porter 1971:87). In more recent times another Indian element was brought into contact with the Blacks of Kansas. Mexican peons immigrated to Kansas to work on sugar-beet plantations, in the salt mines, and on the railroad. More often than not they did not bring their womenfolk with them, and the only important social contacts that were open to them were with Blacks; consequently, intermarriage was not uncommon (Porter 1971: 87-88).

A peculiarity regarding admixed persons is the isolated communities established in the mountains of various regions of the United States that were formed by those of Native American, African American and Euro-American heritage. These individuals did not identify with any one of these races, and they were not pigeonholed in any one of these groups by their neighbors. Thus, they became isolated and inbred among themselves. With no new genes being introduced among them, and not being exposed to outside contact along with low education, these groups stagnated. Such communities



are located in New Jersey, Delaware and Maryland, but others are primarily located in the southern states of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee.

Native Americans and African Americans did not limit their co-mingling to the Eastern seaboard. The gulf states or Indian territories of the East and surrounding areas have their share of Native American and African American co-mingling as well. However, as might be surmised, not many individuals of African or mixed African descent migrated to the Old Northwest, the Rocky Mountain region or the Pacific Coast before the Civil War. Those who did usually came as servants of Indian agents, army officers or fur traders or were free persons who were themselves Indian Agents and fur traders. Some of the latter settled among Native Americans of the region. One such African who established a family among the Ojibwas and Chippewas was Joas Bonga. He was the slave of Captain Daniel Robertson, a British officer in command at Mackinac from 1782 to 1787. Bonga married a female African slave of Robertson's household, and they had two daughters. After Captain Robertson's death his slaves were freed (Porter 1971:81). Descendants of these two offspring married into the Ojibway tribe, and children of these unions were born. George Bonga was one of these descendants, who was of African-Indian heritage. By 1900 the Bonga family had about a hundred descendants around Leech Lake in Minnesota, many of whom made their living as fur traders or other occupations associated with the trade.

Further, Edward Rose and James Beckwourth, two men of mixed African and Native American descent were leaders in the Crow Nation

for many years. Beckwourth was originally from Virginia, but in 1824 he joined a fur trading expedition and went to the Rockies with that outfit. Later, he was adopted into the Crow Nation, and lived as a Crow with several Native American wives. York, an individual of African descent initially went west as a slave with Captain Clark, but returned to Missouri and became a free man. After gaining his freedom, he traveled up the Missouri River in 1820 with a trader, and settled among the Crow Indians.

Apparently during this period (before the Civil War) most Indian Nations of the West did not practice discrimination against those of African descent. They usually welcomed them in their lodges just as they did Euro-Americans, but did consider the coarse curly hair of Africans to be mysterious. Although this was only to them a curiosity, and was not used as a reason to degradate people of African descent.

Native Americans of the Pacific Northwest also came in contact with small numbers of Africans. In 1844, Saul, an African, in the Tualatin district, married to an Indian, threatened to stir up the Natives against Euro-Americans. There is also mention of a quarrel in 1847 between a couple of free African settlers and an Indian employee (Sherman "The Negro in the History of the Pacific Northwest", *Journal of Negro History* (1928) Vol. xiii, pp. 262-262 as cited in Porter 1971:86).

Often African Americans were welcome among Native Americans of the West, but not all relations between Africans and Native Americans of that area were without conflict. At Fort McKenzie in 1843 due to a misunderstanding, the Blackfeet killed a Black

Servant who belonged to Francis A. Chardon (Porter 1971:85). Moreover, Black troops were used to fight Indians in the West after the Civil War, and Natives called them "buffalo soldiers" because their hair resembled the fur of that animal. The Tenth United States Cavalry was an all Black regiment, and a detachment from it relieved a party of Kansas scouts besieged by the Cheyenne's on Beechers Island in 1868 (Porter 1971:86).

Isaiah, a Black, was a Sioux interpreter for the Seventh Cavalry, and was killed with Custer at the Battle of the Little Big Horn in 1876. A Cheyenne who took part in the battle said: "I saw by the river, on the west side, a dead Black man. He was a big man. All his clothing was gone when I saw him, but he had not been scalped nor cut up like the White men had been. Some Sioux told me he belonged to their people but was with the soldiers". Evidently it was Isaiah's adoptive membership in the Sioux tribe which, though it did not preserve his life, kept his body from mutilation, since Crow and Shoshone scouts killed with Custer were not exempted from the operations of the scalping-knife (Marquis, 1931:261).

#### **AFRICAN AMERICAN AND ASIAN RELATIONS**

Not only did African Americans mate with Native Americans in significant numbers, but some genetic mingling occurred between African Americans and Asians as well. It was during Reconstruction that Euro-American planters in Mississippi attempted to displace the newly freed voting African Americans of the Mississippi Delta. Euro-American feelings were purely ones of anger and disgust that

African Americans now could come and go as they pleased, and most of all they were galled that their former bondservants could now vote on equal footing with them. In effect, to teach them a lesson, attempts were made to bring in European immigrants and Yankees to labor on the plantations. Some did come into the area, but this campaign was not very successful because Europeans were generally opposed to working on the sharecropping system as African Americans were doing during that era. Now being free, African Americans had some say in the course their lives took. If planters did not treat them to their liking, they moved around frequently to avoid the most odious planters. This galled Euro-Americans that they could no longer control African American life to the degree they once did. Thus, conventions were held in the South to address this problem of African Americans being a political enemy, but an economic necessity. In 1869 an immigration convention met in Memphis, Tennessee. The problem was boldly stated by William M. Burwell in an article in De Bow's Review, the leading Journal of commerce in the South in July of that year"

"We will state the problem for consideration.

It is: To retain in the hands of the Whites the control and direction of social and political action, without impairing the content of the labor capacity of the colored race." We assume that the effort to restrain the political influence of the colored race in the South... has failed" (William M. Burwell, "Science and the Mechanic Arts against Collies", p. 558 of

De Bow's Review (July 1869) as cited in Loewen 1988:22).

Because Delta planters were unsuccessful in recruiting enough Euro-American labor to work the plantations and African Americans were troublesome to them, they enthusiastically advocated bringing in Chinese to satisfy their labor demand. The editor of the Vicksburg Times stated:

"Emancipation has spoiled the negro [sic], and carried him away from fields of agriculture. Our prosperity depends entirely upon the recovery of lost ground, and we therefore say let the Coolies come, and we will take the chance of Christianizing them" (Vicksburg Times, June 30, 1869, "The Coming Laborer" as cited in Loewen 1988:22).

Newspapers went on the rampage and published letters and editorials in support of bringing the Chinese into the Mississippi-Alabama-Arkansas-Louisiana agricultural areas. They also organized and held conventions to bring these laborers in. This clamor for Chinese labor occurred during Reconstruction, and again in 1879 when African Americans left Mississippi in large numbers bound for Kansas.

With public support galvanized through editorials and letters in newspapers as well as from conventions, the first Chinese were brought into this area sometime in 1870 to labor on plantations. Bringing this population in was considered especially desirable because Euro-Americans did not expect the Chinese to vote just as

the Chinese had not done in California, and since they were not citizens, Euro-Americans felt that they could control these immigrants more easily than they could African Americans. Coming into a polarized segregation system, and being used as pawns to displace African Americans, the Chinese were to find themselves in a precarious predicament.

They came, but in 1876 Republicans who were a Reconstruction government were overthrown through violence and fraud by White supremacist Democrats. This resulted in African American Mississippians losing their political gains that year. They also lost social as well as economic rights during succeeding decades. Euro-Americans were then able to exploit African American labor and African Americans in general without any concern for reprisals. Because they were able to cheat and intimidate African Americans as they liked since African Americans had no way to redress grievances and were hard workers, Euro-Americans came to prefer African American labor to the exclusion of all other groups. Although in the early twentieth century, they used Italian labor, and Mexican immigrant labor in subsequent years. But no new clamors to bring in other populations as laborers were heard.

Yet, the Chinese of the Reconstruction era were there. And those who were shipped direct from China came from the four counties southwest of Canton (Sze Yap) in South China; they spoke Cantonese Chinese and were primarily from rural villages. Their intent was to come to the United States to work, and make money so they could return home. This was true even though they were not from the poorest classes in China; nor were they of the landed

gentry either.

Although they may have had spouses in China, most came to this country without their families. Upon arrival they were classed as Black by Euro-Americans, and were not permitted to associate with Euro-Americans except in the course of their duties as plantation laborers. Located in a strange hostile land, and forced to live in a different way from how they were accustomed could not have been easy for these individuals, but they did adjust. Most Chinese started out working as plantation laborers, and later became independent grocerers catering to African Americans in African American communities. Chinese women were not allowed to emigrate in the early years, and until about 1940 the Chinese were classed as Black by Euro-Americans. With no social intercourse permitted with any other group except African Americans, some of these men married African American women even though they may have had wives and children in China. Many others set up common law relationships with African American women because there were antimiscegenation laws enacted making it illegal for these groups to intermarry. Those couples who did marry obviously ignored this legal ban, and married anyway. Yet despite the laws, Euro-American society tolerated this behavior because Euro-Americans generally subscribed to the belief that "What Chinamen did in nigger town was none of their business".

Intermarrying and extralegal conjugal relationships between African Americans and the Chinese went on for about seventy (70) years. But after 1943 immigration restrictions on Chinese women coming into the United States relaxed; Chinese men of this era

could bring their wives into the country or could secure a wife from China. Once substantial Chinese families (Chinese wives and children) were established in this area, the Chinese took deliberate and slow steps to be accepted as White. To be successful in this, it became necessary for the Chinese to distance themselves from African Americans socially. The larger Chinese community pressured others of their group to cease intermarrying and setting up common law relationships with African Americans. Some caved into this pressure by extricating themselves from African American marriages and relationships, although most continued contact by financially supporting their children born into these unions. Others would not leave their African American spouses and children regardless. These were the Chinese who were ostracized and called "poor dirty Chinese" by the majority of Chinese seeking to be accepted and classed as Whites among Euro-Americans. Many of this immigrant group seeking to be accepted as White commenced behaving towards African Americans in the same condescending way as Euro-Americans. After 1946, African American/Chinese marriages and common law relationships were rare, but illicit matings outside marriage (common law or otherwise) were never totally eradicated despite sanctions against such unions.

Moreover, Asian genes were further infused into the African American descent during the United States military presence in Asian countries as African American troops, like American troops in general, mated with indigenous females and often produced children. Most of these children were left behind as were their mothers, but some troops, including African American men, married



their Asian paramours and brought them home along with the children they fathered. In other cases, African American troops simply married Asian women, and later established their families in the United States.

There are also those Asian Americans born in this country who met African Americans in school, at work, and by various other social means who married them. More often than not, these unions also produced offspring, and their children like others of mixed African American heritage are socially categorized as African American in the United States even though biologically they are an admixture of both groups.

Yet, greater emphasis has been placed on African American/Euro-American marriages and matings in academia as well as in our larger society. But, historical data documents that African Americans and other peoples of color have also produced children in significant numbers. This has added to the infusion of a more varied gene pool in the African American descent, making the African American an admixture of varied peoples.

**CHAPTER SIX**  
**RESULTS OF THE STUDY**

A small sample of fifty African Americans were examined by Dr. Owen Justice, Dr. Michael Banks, and the author to determine if shovel shaped incisors, double shovel shaped incisors, and Carabelli's cusps were present. Thirty-five individuals are adults ranging from ages twenty to sixty-five, and fifteen children from ages seven to seventeen participated in this study.

Each individual was asked four questions as part of a questionnaire to obtain their ages, birth origins, the birth origins of their parents, and whether or not they knew of any Asian, European or Native American ancestry in their family histories. If positive responses were given regarding racial intermixtures in their families, they were further queried to determine the ethnicity of those ancestors.

Since most individuals participating in the study are regular patients of Dr. Justice's and Dr. Banks', some data regarding the children's parents' ethnicity was already known to the doctors. However, when information was not known, both dentists queried each volunteer or, in the case of child volunteers, their parents to elicit necessary information. The individuals examined by this writer were all adults, except one thirteen year old. Before checking for the aforementioned traits, each individual was asked to fill out the questionnaire already referred to above. Once

TABLE 1. AGES OF ADULT VOLUNTEERS

AGE	QUANTITY
65	01
57	01
55	01
54	01
51	02
43	03
42	02
36	01
35	01
34	03
33	01
32	02
29	02
28	02
27	02
26	03
24	01
23	02
22	01
21	01
20	01
AGE NOT GIVEN	01
TOTAL	35

TABLE 2. AGES OF CHILD VOLUNTEERS

AGE	QUANTITY
17	02
15	01
14	01
13	01
12	04
10	02
9	01
8	01
7	02
TOTAL	15

obtaining the data, correlations were made between information reported by the volunteers, and the observations of the examiners.

Among the adults, no one claimed Asian ancestors, and no double shovel or shovel shaped incisors were found in this group. However, among the children two claimed part Asian ancestry, as their mothers are Japanese. Double shovel incisors were recorded for both of them. Although their fathers were from Mississippi, both children are Nevadans. Two other minors claimed Asian ancestry also, but no shovel shaped or double shovel incisors were evident. These children and their parents are also from Nevada.

Further, three adults reported Cherokee, Seminole, and Shawnee Native American ancestry, and all three had shovel shaped incisors present. These individuals and their parents were originally from the states of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida and Illinois. Two other individuals from Arizona (as were their parents) stated that they have Native American ancestors in their family histories, but did not know which ethnic group. No shovel shaped incisors were present, but Carabelli's cusps were evident. Another volunteer, who is from Mississippi, as are her parents, stated that she did not know if there is any intermixture in her family because this was never discussed; however, she had shovel shaped incisors. Five individuals claimed Native American ancestry with one of this group naming Choctaw as the Nation to which he has ancestral ties. None of these individuals had shovel shaped incisors and all, including their parents, were originally from Alabama, Arizona, California, Louisiana, North Carolina, New York, Oklahoma and Texas. Three others reported no Native American ancestry, but

shovel shaped incisors were found among all three. These persons as well as their parents are from Florida, Louisiana, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Virginia.

Of the children, two reported Native American ancestry, and both had shovel shaped incisors present. The children were born in Nevada, but their parents are from Iran, Louisiana, and South Carolina. Three other youngsters claimed Native American ancestry in their family histories, but no shovel shaped incisors were present. Two of these children are native Nevadans and one is from California. Their parents came from California, Colorado, Mexico, Mississippi, and Virginia. Two claimed no Native American ancestry, but each child had shovel shaped incisors present. The children are from Nevada, and their parents originated from California, Louisiana, Michigan and Virginia. One child made no claim to Native American ancestry, and no shovel shaped incisors were evident.

Additionally, three adult volunteers claimed Canadian, French, German, and Irish ancestry; all three had Carabelli's cusps. These individuals and their parents came from Canada, Michigan, and North Carolina. One other individual from Arizona (parents are too) claimed no European ancestry, but did have the Carabelli's cusps. Another individual who originated from Arizona, and so does his parents, reported European ancestry, but no Carabelli's cusps were present; instead shovel shaped incisors were present. Two others claimed European ancestry, and no Carabelli's cusps were evident. One family originated from Mississippi and the other is from Oklahoma.

Among the children, one reported European ancestry and did possess the Carabelli's cusps. This child is a native Nevadan and the parents are from Louisiana. Three others claimed European descent, but no Carabelli's cusps were evident. These youngsters are also Nevadans; however, their parents are from Colorado, Iran, Mississippi and South Carolina. Four children claimed no European heritage and no Carabelli's cusps or any other genetic markers were present. The four children originate from Nevada, and their parents came from Alabama, California, Mexico, Mississippi, Nevada, New York, and Texas.

A total of thirteen individuals had shovel shaped incisor penetration, and two had double shovel incisors; however, Carabelli's cusps were present in only six persons. Consequently, nineteen individuals of the fifty who participated in the study possessed at least one of the above genetic traits.

Volunteers for this study were from the North, South, and West, but most were from the South with heavy concentrations of individuals (as well as their parents) from the states of Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi. This is not surprising since southern Nevada has a large population of African Americans from those states as they migrated to this area during World War II to work in the magnesium plant. After the initial group arrived, and was successful their relatives and friends followed, so many African Americans in southern Nevada came from that four state area.

**OTHER STUDIES**

Ales Hrdlicka completed a study of maxillary shovel shaped incisors on extant populations of Euro-Americans, African Americans, Native Americans, Chinese and Japanese in 1919. The sample consisted of three hundred to five hundred individuals in most of these ethnic categories. He found that shovel shaped incisors rarely occurred in Euro-Americans as they were present in less than one percent of those individuals. In comparison to Euro-Americans four times as many African Americans possessed this trait. Nearly a third of the Hawaiian had well developed shovel shaped incisors, and shoveling was found in roughly 96 percent of the Chinese and Japanese subjects.

Hrdlicka concluded that the proportion of well developed shovel shaped upper incisors in Euro-Americans is almost insignificant, and that the proportion rises perceptibly, yet not greatly in African Americans. Among Native Americans and Asians shovel shaped incisors were present in very high frequencies (Hrdlicka 1920:456-457).

Bertram Kraus published a study of Carabelli's cusps in Southwest ethnic groups of Arizona. His data was gathered from prehistoric, historic, and modern populations. Plaster casts and dental impressions were made of each subject; however, no casts were done on the crania (Kraus 1959:118).

Three hundred Euro-American and two hundred seventy-four African American school children in Tucson were a part of the sample. Two hundred and eighty Papago school children were examined at Sells, forty-eight Apache school children were studied

at White River and forty Yaqui Native American children are included. Forty-five Prehistoric Arizona Native Americans and nineteen historic Native Americans from the San Jose site in Tucson were observed (Krause 1959:118).

Kraus used his own 4-fold classification system to record various expressions of Carabelli's cusps among these populations. According to him, his method affords the easiest basis for comparison of the data with other recorded distributions in the literature. However, in using his method Euro-Americans and African Americans cannot be distinguished as populations by Carabelli's traits (Kraus 1959:118).

He observed that the frequency of slight tubercle groups African Americans, Papagoes, and Yaquis together. He found this observation interesting in light of what he calls speculations that have been made about African American admixture in both Papago and Yaqui populations. He cited Seltzer (1936) as noting a number of African features present in the Yaquis. These include: thick lips, dark skin color, jet-black hair, black eyes, heavy development of brow ridges, preponderance of flaring nasal wings, high degree of frontal visibility of nostrils, broad nasal bridges, and retrogressive chin. He quoted Seltzer as concluding: "It does seem evident that there is an element in Yaqui populations with a strong suggestion of certain African features."

Kraus concluded that generally there was agreement with the data collected throughout the world on the basis of frequency distributions of the variable Carabelli expressions for Europeans and Asians. But there is insufficient data on the African American



population (Kraus 1959:123).

#### **CONCLUSION**

The focus of this thesis has been to show that African Americans are an admixture of varied peoples. Ethnographical and historical information have been included to document their relationships and intermixtures with peoples other than those of European descent. In addition, a small sample was obtained to determine if specific genetic markers on the teeth are evident among African Americans as possible traits acquired by this group through miscegenation with those of European, Native American, and Asian peoples. Admittedly, the sample is small, and larger studies would have to be undertaken to draw more accurate conclusions from the data collected. Though small, this study gives some idea as to possible proportions of African Americans who do have shovel shaped incisors, double shovel shaped incisors, and Carabelli's cusps present. Yet, in whatever proportions these genetic markers maybe found in larger samples of African Americans, other peoples of color have mingled genetically with African Americans in significant numbers as is apparent by the ethnographical and historical evidence presented.

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