

The middle passage

[History](#), [Middle Ages](#)



The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African, Written by Myself" Is a traumatic narrative of the horrors suffered by the Africans slaves of the 18th century, which has touched my heart. No human beings should ever have to endure what the African slaves and their families endured during slavery and voyage through the " The Middle Passage". The Middle Passage was called the route of the triangular trade through the Atlantic

Ocean in which millions of people from Africa were shipped to the New World as part of the Atlantic slave trade. The author starts by giving details of the terrible conditions that he encounters on board of a slave ship. An example of the terrible condition in which the slaves lived is narrated by Equiano (2013) as: " The stench of the hold while we were on the coast was so Intolerably loathsome, that it was dangerous to remain there for any time... " (1388) " The closeness of the place, and the heat of the climate, added to the number in the ship, which was so crowded that each had scarcely room to turn himself, almost suffocated us" (p. 388). The conditions the African slaves endured during the Middle Passage were horrific; no human being should be forced to live in such deplorable conditions. The lack of freedom on the slave ships caused great distress to the enslaved Africans. They were treated as cargo, chained one with the other and had to perform their bodily functions while chained. They were also forced to sleep cramped together few of them barely escaped without their limbs atrophying. They rarely had enough to eat or drink, and would grow sick in droves, than many of them wanted to die instead of living a life full of cruelties.

The slaves were so tired of the detrimental conditions in which they have been forced to live in slave ships, under the most abominable and hellish hygienic conditions that they preferred to die, as Olaudah Equiano (2013) writes, "two of my wearied countrymen who were chained together (I was near them at the time), preferring death to such a life of misery, somehow made through the nettles and jumped into the sea; immediately another quite dejected fellow, who, on account of his illness, was suffered to be out of iron, also followed their example" (p. 388). Some slaves did everything in their power to end their life; some tried to throw themselves into the Atlantic Ocean, but many were prevented from doing so by the crew and then they were nearly beaten to death to serve as an example, to prevent other slaves from doing the same.

Most of the slave encountered white men for the first time when they were brought to the ship, to them those white men with red faces and long loose hair were a strange creature speaking a language they could not understand. They were suddenly separated from their families and forced to live with strangers whose languages they could not understand. I cannot even imagine the turmoil these families went through. For most of the African slaves the Middle Passage marked the beginning of their misery, a life of detrimental treatment, torture and horrible living conditions.

For others the journey through the Atlantic Ocean marked the end of their lives. Those of them that survived, however, were faced with the agony of a long horrendous journey to an unknown land where an unknown future awaited them.