Africans captured to be sold into slavery crossed the Atlantic Ocean lying pressed together in crowded ships’ holds. The city of Savannah served as a major port for the Atlantic slave trade from 1750, when the Georgia colony repealed its ban on slavery, until 1798, when the state outlawed the importation of slaves. The illustration of the slave ship Wildfire, docked in Key West, Florida, circa 1860, depicts Africans being imported for sale into slavery. Although Georgia banned the importation of African slaves in 1798, the waters near Savannah were used for the illegal trafficking of slaves well into the nineteenth century.

Many European countries participated in the Transatlantic slave trade. Portugal was the main contributor of all the countries involved. They took the most slaves from Africa to the Caribbean. It is estimated that they took 5,843,286 slaves from Africa. Great Britain was the second highest taking 3,259,441 slaves from Africa. Spain, Uruguay, The netherlands, France, Denmark/Baltic states, and the U.S. also contributed in taking slaves from Africa. Slavery was abolished at different times in every country that participated in this slave trade. Britain led the Charge in the world and abolished slavery first in 1807. Spain then abolishes slavery in 1811. The Netherlands abolish slavery in 1814. France abolished slavery in 1817. In 1819 Portugal is the last main transatlantic slave trade european country to abolish slavery. All though the slave trade had been abolished, doesn’t mean it still didn’t happen. People still illegally did this act. The U.S. did not ban slavery until 1863 becoming the last Country to participate in the Transatlantic slave trade to officially end it.

The demographics found for the ships in the slave database voyage were disturbing, to say the least. Page upon page of captain logs detailed ships full of enslaved children. These were only the ships that were condemned, so you could only imagine the number not found. On some ships, such as the Amelia, the enslaved were 100% children. This exhibit exists to memorialize and remember those who were too young to grasp the horrors that they experienced.

While looking at the research of Gender on the different ships, it completely changed the way and perspective I look at the slaves in the Atlantic Slave Trade. When learning about history in high school, I mostly thought most of the slaves were men, but by looking and researching the gender on many ships, the results were shocking. There were six different ships that had 100% women and 0% men. These statistics really show how books, journals and articles don’t tell us the whole story of slaves in the Trans-Atlantic Slave trade. Some boats did not even have 50% men and 50% women. This was probably because of the they way slaves were counted when they were in these ships. Europeans only did their count in the beginning and the endings of their voyages.

The Slave Ship Museum & Memorial

Our museum functions as both a memorial and a recreation of the horrors that the enslaved encountered on their journey to America. The ship is located in Savannah, GA on River Street and takes Guests on a ride down the Savannah river while they can tour the historically accurate ship and see everything an enslaved person encountered. The bottom floor features a memorial with the names of many enslaved who died at sea. This is their story.

Western Powers exhibit

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Age Exhibit

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Gender Exhibit

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Sutton Smith
Dakota Grossman
Ankush Singh
Carlos G Vincenti Perez

Sources-
Slaves Voyage Database