

TRANSATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE

THINKING about PLACE: A CITY of SLAVES

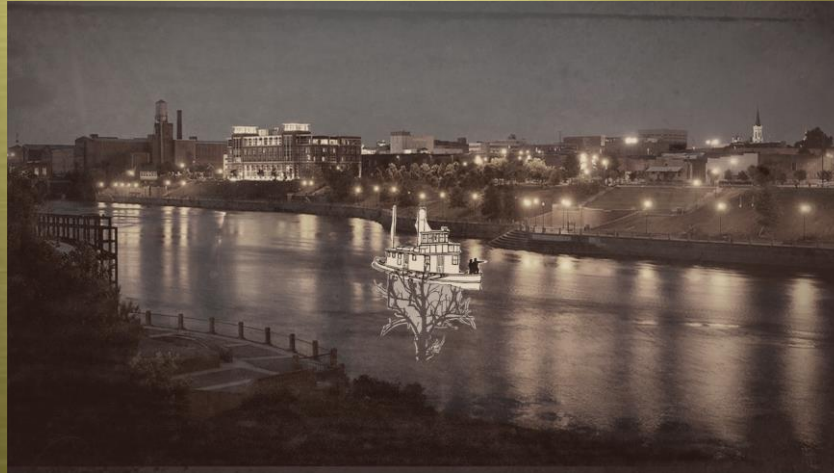
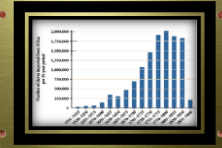
By 1860—when Columbus had “reached its apogee”—approximately 4,600 enslaved or formerly-enslaved African American people lived in the area, totaling almost half of the city’s population. Originally, 17,325 enslaved Africans had disembarked in the State of Georgia, but, by 1860, the population of enslaved African Americans in Georgia had grown to 462,198. A little under 1% of all enslaved African Americans in Georgia lived in Columbus and its surrounding areas, so why ought Columbus be memorialized? It is evident that the City of Columbus—so named for the man whose legacy fundamentally changed the course of world history by facilitating the trade of enslaved human beings—was built upon the labor of enslaved people, who totaled half of its population, and without whom the City of Columbus would not exist. In these times, most especially, there is an increasing necessity to memorialize the abject horrors of the trans-Atlantic trade of enslaved African people. The time has come for Columbus to properly recognize its legacy in this generation and abominable practice. The issue of memorializing the trans-Atlantic slave trade is—at its core—an eternal struggle for human dignity—or, rather, a representation of human indignity—and a testament to the fact that humans can commit almost unspeakable acts of evil, but those evils need to be spoken, and they need to be spoken loudly, and they need to be transmitted unto future generations in hopes that those same evils are not repeated. It is our earnest hope that Columbus—a city over which there looms the black specter of slavery—may come to memorialize the black backs upon whom it is built and the present fruits of our vibrant culture which were planted by them so long ago.

SOURCES:
Lupold, John S. “Columbus.” *New Georgia Encyclopedia*. Georgia Humanities and the University of Georgia Press, March 30, 2014.
<https://www.newgeorgiaencyclopedia.org/entries/columbus>
“Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade - Database.” *Slave Voyages*. Emory University, n.d.
<https://www.slavevoyages.org/voyage/database/home>

EUROPEAN POWERS

- European powers such as Spain, Portugal, Great Britain, and France were the main contributors to the trans-Atlantic slave trade that plagued the world between the 16th and 19th centuries. Spain and Portugal began their trade at the turn of the 16th century moving an estimated 500 slaves per five years to South America in modern day Brazil. The first American colony slave ship would not arrive until 1651. Great Britain and France began around the 1640’s with Great Britain bring a total of 14,316 slaves their first five years and France exporting 922. All together these four powers would move a total of 11,550,639 slaves in 300 years.
- The trans-Atlantic slave trade was abolished as the morals of these European world powers shifted. By 1810, British Navy forces could detain any foreign slave ships coming to or from these destination. By the 1840’s ten percent of British naval forces were used to end the trade of human lives. This time would see the Cuban and Brazilian governments taking serious action against the slave trade. By 1850 slave trade became a despised and illegal traffic.

SOURCES:
Slave Voyages Database, accessed on September 26th, 2019, <https://www.slavevoyages.org/>



AGE

It was very common for children to be transported by slave ship. On ship *Amelia*, there were 100% children aboard this ship, 90.5% boys and 9.5% girls. On ship *Legitimo Africano* there was a percentage of 98.9% children on this ship, 47.8% boys and 51.1% girls aboard. On ship *Voadora*, the percentage of boys was 33.9% and the percentage of girls was 62.9%. In search for just the amount of children going to be enslaved on these boats came up to hundreds of ships with high percentages of children. Many of these ships with children didn’t have adults and if they did it was a small percentage.

SOURCES:
-Slave Voyage Database
-National Museum of African American History and Culture
-Jim’s Journey (The Huck Finn Freedom Center)

GENDER DEMOGRAPHICS

From research, there was only one ship that had a 100% women. As for men, there were eight ships that had 100% enslaved men. I found out that there was never a ship where there was an equal amount of men and women. Instead, there were more ships of men that were greater than women and children. The people who were selling the slaves wanted to sell more of men than women and children because women and children do not last long. Their life expectancy was short. Women were not very prominent in the trans-Atlantic ship. Women were portrayed as sassy, emasculating and domineering by the Sapphire caricature from the 1800s. In one of the movies of “Amos ‘n’ Andy” a woman was depicted as ignorant and lazy, because of the Sapphire rage.

SOURCES:
<https://nmaahc.si.edu/visit/passes>
<https://www.slavevoyages.org/>



Dress worn by an enslaved child named Lucy Lee Shirley



JASMINE VAIL-GOMEZ | KENDRA SWAYNE | TRENT VAN EREM | DUSTIN JAMES HUDGINS

We intend for our memorial to exist in two parts, as represented in the photograph above: a steambot in the midst of the Chattahoochee River and, on the brick wall behind the steambot in the photograph, a representation of this poster as a series of plaques affixed to the wall. We came to a consensus among ourselves to represent multiple symbols in our memorial: a steambot, a tree, enslaved people underneath the boat, and the series of plaques which are affixed to the wall with backgrounds that resemble both bars and railroad tracks. The steambot serves to illustrate the importance of the Chattahoochee River in our region. Underneath it is a tree to which enslaved African Americans are attached by ropes tied to their necks. This is a visual representation of the fact that Southern industry was held afloat on the backs of enslaved African American people, who were often brutally repressed—sometimes to the point of death, as noted by the tree, which is a representation of Columbus’ infamous “lynching tree” on Broadway. The tree, along with the statues of the enslaved people, is obscured by the river during high tide—very much like how the United States has desired to conceal the fact that it is built upon slave labor—but, when the tide recedes, the horrific scene is exposed for all to see. The plaques—affixed to the brick wall by bar-like or railroad track-like backgrounds—have a twofold meaning: they represent both the parallel between the importance of the railroad to Southern industry and the Underground Railroad (a symbol of liberation) and represent bars, a symbol of bondage. The color of the bricks—dark red—is representative of the blood of the many enslaved African American people upon whom our city—and our nation—is built. We desired—more than anything—to have our memorial placed in Columbus, Georgia—very near to a downtown memorial dedicated in honor of Christopher Columbus—to combat the founding myth of this nation and to show its true origins. It is our earnest desire that our memorial may cause a moment of solemn reflection upon the true founders of our nation, to whom we owe a debt of immense gratitude: enslaved African American people whose stories, until now, have been kept silent. **SOURCES:** Slave Voyages Database, New Georgia Encyclopedia, National Museum of African American History and Culture, the Huck Finn Freedom Center. **PHOTOGRAPH ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:** J.R. Shockley.