**Turning Point #5: Slavery and the Triangular Trade (1500s – 1800s)**

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PERIOD: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**SCORE: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_/10**

**Essential Question for TP #5**

What were the effects of the Triangular Trade on the people of Africa and the Americas?

* What were the physical effects on Africans during the process of slavery?
* What industries in the Americas were affected by the use of slaves?
* What was the political effect of slavery on the United States?
* What was the importance of rum as a currency during the slave/triangle trade?

**Ch. 16-3 & 24-2 Guided Reading**

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**The Slave Trade (398)**

As they did in Asia, the Portuguese went to Africa to trade. At first, they maintained friendly relations with the Africans. Christian missionaries wanted to convert the continent's residents. Friendly relations soon collapsed, however, as the economic interests of the Portuguese—in gold and, over time, in slaves—became obvious.

Despite the fact that Europeans themselves had been slaves in the Byzantine, Arab, and Turkish empires, during the 1500s they began to use slave labor in their own overseas empires. Europeans tried enslaving Native Americans, but the system did not work well due to the devastation of the Native American population caused by disease and the difficulties of enslaving people in their own land. Instead, the Europeans began to rely more heavily on enslaved Africans.

The slave trade grew quickly when the Portuguese set up sugar plantations on islands off the coast of Africa. To make a profit, large numbers of slaves were required. Plantation owners got these slaves from the African mainland. Later, the Dutch, English, and French also became active in the slave trade. By the early 1600s the slave trade was the chief focus of European relations with Africa.

Triangular Trade

Slave trade in the Atlantic was *part* of a system known as the [**Triangular Trade**](javascript://). On the first leg of their three-part journey, often called the Triangular Trade, European ships brought manufactured goods, weapons, even liquor to Africa in exchange for slaves; on the second, they transported African men, women, and children to the Americas to serve as slaves; and on the third leg, they exported to Europe the sugar, rum, cotton, and tobacco produced by the enslaved labor force. Traders referred to the Africa-Americas part of the voyage as the "Middle Passage" and the term has survived to denote the Africans' ordeal.

The Middle Passage was brutal and degrading often lasting anywhere from 1-3 months. Traders chained the slaves in the crowded hold of the ship. This stopped slaves from jumping overboard or causing trouble aboard ship. Branded, stripped naked for the duration of the voyage, lying down amidst filth, enduring almost unbearable heat, compelled by the lash to dance on deck to straighten their limbs, all captives went through a frightening, incredibly brutal and dehumanizing experience. Slaves had little food or water and no sanitary facilities. Many died before reaching their destination.

At the height of the trade in the years between the mid-1700s and the early 1800s, European slave ships carried thousands of slaves each year. It has been estimated that some 10-12 million Africans survived the horrible journey to slavery in the Americas. Many more perished during the horrible journey of the Middle Passage. Others died even earlier, on the hard trip from the African interior to slave ships on the coast.

**African Kingdoms and Slavery (399)**

During the 1400s and the 1500s, strong states began to rise in West Africa. Some of these kingdoms profited from the slave trade. Not all African states participated in the slave trade with Europeans. Many African societies, however, had practiced slavery well before the Europeans' arrival. Slaves were sometimes taken in war or during raids on neighboring groups. In some traditional African societies, slaves might be allowed to gain their freedom. Generally, they played a distinct role in society. Europeans, on the other hand, considered slaves as property to be bought and sold for profit.

Some Africans who lived in the interior helped the Europeans capture and move slaves. In return they received European-made arms and other goods. Neighboring groups either had to participate or be taken as slaves. During the years of the slave trade, native populations in some parts of Africa were greatly reduced. As demands for slaves increased, population losses had disastrous effects on Africa's development and progress.

***Ch. 16-3 (pgs. 398-399) SCORE: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_/4***

1. **Use the section above to *describe* each section of the “triangular trade”.**

**1.**

**2.**

**3.**

1. **Why do you think slave traders wanted to stop slaves from jumping overboard during the “Middle Passage?”**
2. **What were two effects of the slave trade on the population/people of Africa?**

**Slavery and the Civil War (611)**

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Although unified politically, the United States was hurt by sectionalism, or competition among sections or regions of the country. In the early 1800s three major sections emerged: the industrial Northeast, the agricultural South, and the largely frontier West. People from these three regions had different ways of life and different views on issues. The issue that divided them most was slavery.

Slavery was legal in the United States, but each individual state could allow or abolish it. Some southerners believed they needed African American slaves to harvest their cotton and tobacco crops. As the nation expanded, Americans began to question whether slavery should be allowed in the new territories. Southerners said that Congress had no power to prohibit it. Northerners disagreed. In time, however, more and more people began to think that slavery should be abolished altogether. Throughout the early 1800s these arguments led to bitter sectional quarrels. Southern states sometimes threatened to [**secede**](javascript://), or withdraw from the Union.

In 1860 Abraham Lincoln was elected president. His Republican Party had already vowed to stop the spread of slavery to new territories. In response to the election South Carolina seceded from the Union. Other southern states followed, and together they formed the Confederate States of America.

President Lincoln argued that these states had no constitutional right to secede. Therefore they were rebelling, and the federal government had a constitutional duty to end all rebellions. In 1861 the Union and the Confederacy began a bloody war that continued for four long years. Military leaders employed the new strategy of total war, in which both the enemy's military and civilian resources were targets of destruction. The use of new and vastly more lethal weapons made this the first "modern" war.

As the war continued, it became clear that the South lacked the troops and industrial resources needed to overcome the power of the North. In April 1865 the Confederacy surrendered, ending the war. The Civil War was the most costly conflict in which the United States has ever been involved. More than 600,000 people lost their lives. Families were torn apart, property was destroyed, and bitterness endured well into the 1900s.

In 1863 President Lincoln had issued the [**Emancipation Proclamation**](javascript://), freeing slaves in those parts of the country still in rebellion. Although it had little immediate effect, the proclamation signaled that slavery would end everywhere with the end of the war. Following the war, Congress passed three amendments to the Constitution, abolishing slavery and guaranteeing rights to former slaves. In many places, however, the law was not followed. Freedom did not necessarily ease the lives of the former slaves.

***Citation:*** *World History: The Human Journey. Holt, Rinehart, and Winston. 2005.*

***Ch. 24-2 (pg. 611)***

1. **Why types of industries/jobs did slaves work in once they reached the Americas/Caribbean?**
2. **What did the southern states of the U.S. do in response to Abraham Lincoln’s vow to stop the spread of slavery? What was the ultimate political result of this action by the Southern States?**
3. **What is the “Emancipation Proclamation?”**

**A History of the World in 6 Glasses**

**Excerpt from Chapter 5 – “High Spirits, High Seas”**

Citation: **Standage, Tom. *A History of the World in 6 Glasses*. New York. 2005.**

**Spirits, Sugar, and Slaves**

The emergence of new distilled drinks (brandy and others) occurred just as European explorers were first opening up the world’s sea routes, reaching around the southern tip of Africa to the east, and crossing the Atlantic to establish the first links with the New World in the west. The process began with Portuguese explorers of the west coast of Africa, and the discovery and colonization of nearby Atlantic islands, the first stepping stones on the way to the Americas.

The Atlantic islands of Madeira, the Azores, and the Canaries proved to be ideal places to produce sugar, but growing sugarcane required enormous amounts of water and manpower. That manpower was readily available during the 1440s as the Portuguese began to ship black slaves from their trading posts on the west coast of Africa. At first these slaves were kidnapped, but the Portuguese soon agreed to buy slaves, in return for European goods, from African traders.

Mass slavery had been unseen in Europe since Roman times, in part for religious reasons, for the church forbade enslavement of one Christian by another. Such theological objections to the new slave trade were overlooked or sidestepped using a number of dubious arguments. At first, it was suggested that by buying slaves and converting them to Christianity, Europeans were rescuing them from the false doctrine of Islam. But then another argument emerged: Black Africans, argued some theologians, did not qualify as fully human, could not, therefore, become Christians, and could be enslaved. This logic was not widely accepted, at least at first. But the remoteness of the Atlantic islands meant the use of slave labor could be kept conveniently out of sight. By 1500 the introduction of slaves had turned Madeira into the largest exporter of sugar in the world, with several mills and two thousand slaves.

The use of slaves in sugar production expanded dramatically after the European discovery of the New World by Columbus in 1492. He had been looking for a westerly passage to the East Indies but instead found the islands of the Caribbean. There was no gold, spices, or silk to take back to his royal patrons in Spain, but Columbus confidently declared the islands ideal for growing sugar. On his second voyage to the New World in 1493 he took sugarcane from the Canary Islands. Production was soon underway on the Spanish islands of the Caribbean and on the South American mainland, in what is now Brazil, under the Portuguese. Attempts to enslave the native people failed, as a vast majority of them died from Old-World diseases, so the colonists began importing slaves directly from Africa instead. Over the course of four centuries, around eleven million slaves were transported from Africa to the New World, though this figure understates the full scale of the suffering, because as many as half of the slaves captured in the African interior died on the way to the coast. Distilled drinks played a role in this evil trade, which intensified as the British, French, and Dutch established sugar plantations in the Caribbean during the seventeenth century.

The African slavers who supplied the Europeans with slaves accepted a range of products in exchange, including textiles, shells, metal bowls, jugs, and sheets of copper. But most sought after by far were strong alcoholic drinks. The Africans in different regions already drank alcoholic drinks such as palm wine, mead, and various varieties of beer. But alcohol imported from Europe was, in the words of one trader, “called for everywhere,” even in Muslim parts of Africa. In the early days of the slave trade, when it was dominated by Portugal, African slavers acquired a taste for strong Portuguese wines. In 1510 the Portuguese traveler Valentim Fernandes wrote that the Wolofs, a people from the Senegal region, “are drunkards who derive great pleasure from our wine.”

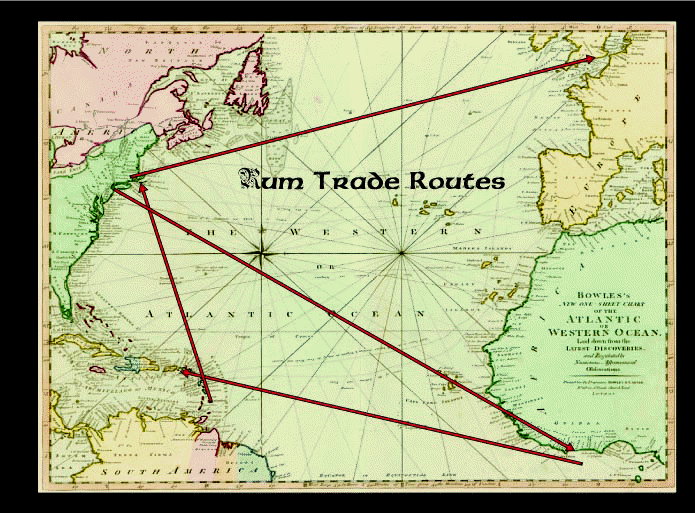
Wine was a convenient form of **currency** (money), but European slave traders quickly realized that brandy was even better. It allowed more alcohol to be packed into a smaller space inside the small holds of ships, and its higher alcohol content acted as a preservative, making it less likely than wine to spoil while in transit…

Brandy oiled the wheels of the slave trade. One account records that the canoe-men who ferried goods to and from European ships were paid a bottle of brandy a day as a retainer, plus an extra two to four bottles on days when they worked, and a bonus on Sundays. The guards who marched slaves from holding pens on the coast down to the shore were also paid in brandy. The connections between spirits, slaves, and sugar were further strengthened following the invention of a powerful new drink made from the waste products of the sugar production process itself. That drink was rum.

**The First Global Drink**

The first English settlers to arrive on the island of Barbados in 1627 found the island uninhabited. They set about trying to grow tobacco, which had become popular back in England, but found that the product they produced was of awful quality not even fit to be smoked. Rather than let their slaves convert to Christianity and therefore become free, the farmers of Barbados converted their tobacco fields to sugar. Within a decade Barbados dominated the sugar trade, making its sugar barons among the richest men in the New World.

When the planters on Barbados originally brought sugarcane and equipment from Brazil to start their crops, they also learned how to ferment the by-products of the sugar-making process and then to distill the result to make a powerful alcoholic drink. The Portuguese called it cane brandy, and they made it from the foam skimmed off the boiling cane juice or from the cane juice itself. This process was further refined on Barbados, however, where the cane brandy was made from molasses, the otherwise worthless leftovers from sugar making. This made it possible to make cane brandy far more cheaply and without any reduction in the output of sugar. The planters on Barbados could literally have their sugar and drink it too.



This cane brandy soon took the name of rum, and it spread throughout the Caribbean and then beyond. Rum had many uses during the triangle/slave trade. It was given to newly arrived slaves as part of the “seasoning” process, which weeded out the weak and subdued the unruly. Slaves were encouraged to become dependent on regular rations of rum, both to withstand the demands placed upon them and to blot out the associated hardship. It was also used in order to get slaves to work harder. Slaves were rewarded with extra rum for catching rats or performing particularly unpleasant tasks. Also, plantation records suggest slaves were typically issued two or three gallons of rum a year (but in some cases as much as thirteen gallons), which they could either drink or barter for food. As a result, rum became an important tool of social control. It was also used as a medicine, and that when slaves were unwell, the doctor gave to each one “a dram cup of this Spirit, and that [was] a present cure.”

Rum’s most important use was as a currency, for it completed the triangle linking spirits (alcohol), slaves, and sugar. Rum could be used to buy slaves, with which to produce sugar, the leftovers of which could be made into rum to buy more slaves, and so on and on. Jean Barbot, and French trader, observed on visiting the west coast of Africa in 1679 that he found “a great change: the French brandy, whereof, I had always had a good quantity abroad, being much less demanded, by reason that a great quantity of rum had been bought on that coast.” By 1721 one English trader reported that rum had become the “chief currency” on the slave coast of Africa, even for gold. Rum also took over from brandy as the currency in which canoemen and guards were paid. Brandy helped to kick-start the transatlantic trade in sugar and slaves, but rum made it self-fueling and far more profitable.

Unlike beer, which was usually produced and consumed locally, and wine which was usually made and traded within a specific region, rum was the result of the convergence of materials, people, and technologies from around the world, and the product of several intersecting historical forces. Sugar, which originated in Polynesia, had been introduced in Europe by the Arabs, taken to the Americas by Columbus, and cultivated by slaves from Africa. Rum distilled from its waste products was consumed by both European colonists and by their slaves in the New World. It was a drink that owed its existence to the buccaneering enterprise of the Age of Exploration; but it would not have existed without the cruelty of the slave trade, from which Europeans deliberately averted their gaze for so long. Rum was the liquid embodiment of both triumph and the oppression of the first era of globalization.

**A History of the World in 6 Glasses**

**Score: \_\_\_\_\_\_/3**

1. **What group of people were the *first* to make slaves of the people of West Africa?**
2. **What industry were slaves needed for in the Atlantic islands and in the Caribbean?**
3. **Why did colonists in the Caribbean need to import slaves? In other words, why couldn’t colonists have used natives of the colonized lands for their work?**
4. **What was the most important use of rum during the slave/triangle trade? Why was it important?**
5. ***According to this article* what are the three parts of the Triangular Trade?**

**The African Slave Experience: Oluadah Equiano (1788 A.D.)**

Citation: **Stearns, Peter N. *World History in Documents: A Comparative Reader*. New York: NYUP, 2008.**

**Most slaves, needless to say, had no opportunity to write about their experience. Olaudah Equiano’s account is unusual because of its existence, but the experience reported is not necessarily unusual. Equiano was born in a Nigerian village, Isseke, in 1745. He was kidnapped and in 1756 taken to Barbados and then to Virginia. Finally able to buy his freedom from his Quaker master, he went to England in 1767. He became active in the antislavery movement, publishing his memoirs in 1788 as a protest against the whole institution of slavery. His writings were among the first antislavery books written by an ex-slave.**

One day, when all our people were gone out to their works as usual, and only I and my dear sister were left to mind the house, two men and a woman got our walls, and in the moment seized us both, and, without giving us time to cry out, or make resistance, they stopped our mouths, and ran off with us into the nearest wood. Here they tied our hands, and continued to carry is as they could, till the night came on, when we reached a small house, where the robbers halted for refreshment, and spent the night. We were then unbound, but were unable to take any food; and, being quite overpowered by fatigue and grief, our only relief was some sleep, which allayed our misfortune for a short time. The next morning we left the house, and continued travelling all day. For a long time we had kept the woods, but at last we came into a road which I believed I knew. I had now some hopes of being delivered; for we had advanced but a little way before I discovered some people at a distance, on which I began to cry out for their assistance; but my cries has no other effect than to make them tie me faster and stop my mouth, and then they put me into a large sack. They also stopped my sister’s mouth, and tied her hands; and in this manner we proceeded till we were out of sight of these people. When we went to rest the following night, they offered us some **victuals**, but we refused it; and the only comfort we had was in being in one another’s arms all that night, and bathing each other with our tears. But alas! We were soon deprived of even the small comfort of weeping together.

The next day proved a day of greater sorrow than I had yet experienced; for my sister and I were then separated, while we lay clasped in each other’s arms. It was in vain that we besought them not part to us; she was torn from me, and immediately carried away, while I was left in a state of distraction not to be described.

The first object which saluted my eyes when I arrived on the coast was the sea, and a slave ship, which was then riding an anchor, and waiting for its cargo. These filled me with astonishment, which was soon converted into terror, when I was carried on board. I was immediately handled and tossed up to see if I were sound. By some of the crew; and I was now persuaded that I had gotten into a world of bad spirits, and that they were going to kill me. Their complexions, too, differing so much from ours, their long hair, and the language they spoke (which was very different from any I has ever heard), united to confirm me in this belief. Indeed, such were the horrors of my views and fears at the moment, that, if ten thousand worlds had been my own, I would have freely parted with them all to have exchanged my condition with that of the meanest slave in my own country. When I looked round the ship too, and saw a large furnace of copper boiling, and a multitude of black people of every description chained together, every one of their **countenances** expressing dejection and sorrow, I no longer doubted of my fate; and, quite overpowered with horror and anguish, I fell motionless on the deck and fainted. When I recovered a little, I found some black people about me, who I believed were some of those who had brought me on board, and had been receiving their pay; they talked to me in order to cheer me, but all in vain. I asked them if we were not to be eaten by those white men with horrible looks, red faces, and long hair. They told me I was not…

I now saw myself deprived of all chance of returning to my native country, or even the least glimpse of hope of gaining the shore, which I now considered as friendly; and I even wished for my former slavery in preference to my present situation, which was filled with horrors of every kind, still heightened by my ignorance of what I was to undergo. I was not long suffered to indulge my grief; I was soon put down under the decks, and there I received such salutation in my nostrils as I had never experienced in my life: so that, with the loathsomeness of the stench, and crying together, I became so sick and low that I was not able to eat, nor had I the least desire to taste anything. I now wished for the last friend, death, to relieve me; but soon, to my grief, two of the white offered me eatables; and, on my refusing to eat, one of them held me fast by my hands, and laid me across. I think, the windlass, and tied my feet, while the other **flogged** me severely. I had never experienced anything of this kind before, and, although not being used to water, I naturally feared that element the first time I saw it, yet, nevertheless, could I have got over the nettings, I would have jumped over the side, but I could not; and besides, the crew used to watch us very closely who were not chained down to the decks, lest we should leap into the water; and I have seen some of these poor African prisoners most severely cut, for attempting to so, and hourly whipped for not eating. This indeed was often the case with myself.

In a little time after, amongst the poor chained men, I found some of my own nation, which in a small degree gave ease to my mind. I inquired of these what was to be done with us? They gave me to understand, we were to be carried to these white people’s country to work for them. I then was a little revived, and thought, in so savage a manner; for I had never seen among any people such instances of brutal cruelty; and this not only shown towards us blacks, but also to some of the whites themselves. One white man in particular I saw, when we were permitted to be on deck, flogged so unmercifully with a large rope near the foremast, that he died in consequence of it; and they tossed him over the side as they would have done a brute. This made me fear these people the more; and I expected nothing less than to be treated in the same matter.

One day, when we had a smooth sea and moderate wind, 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 nettings and jumped into the sea; immediately, another quite dejected fellow, who, on account of his illness, was suffered to be out of irons, also followed their example; and I believe many more would very soon have done the same, if they had not been prevented by the ship’s crew, who were instantly alarmed…

***The narrative moves on to the point at which the slaves were sold…***

We were not many days in the **merchant’s** custody, before we were sold after their usual manner, which is this: On a signal given (as the beat of the drum), the buyers rush at once into the yard where the slaves we confined, and make choice of that parcel they like best. The noise and clamor with which this attended, and the eagerness visible in the countenances of the buyers, serve not a little to increase the apprehension of terrified Africans, who may well be supposed to consider them as the ministers of that destruction to which they think themselves devoted. In this matter, without scruple, are relations and friends separated, most of them never to be seen again.

I remember, in the vessel in which I was brought over, in the men’s apartment, there were several brothers, who, in the sale, were sold in different lots; and it was very moving on this occasion, to see and hear their cries at parting. O, ye nominal Christians! Might not an African ask you—Learned you this from our God, who says unto you. Do unto all men as you would men should do unto you? Is it not enough that we are torn from our country and friends, to toil for your luxury and lust of gain must every tender feeling be likewise sacrificed to your avarice? Are the dearest friends and relations, now rendered more dear by their separation from their kindred, still to be parted from each other, and this prevented from cheering the gloom of slavery, with the small comfort of being together, and mingling their sufferings and sorrows? Why are parents to lose their children, brothers their sisters, or husbands their wives? Surely, this is a new refinement in cruelty, which, it has no advantage to atone for it, thus aggravates distress, and adds fresh horrors even to the wretchedness of slavery.

**The African Slave Experience: Oluadah Equiano (1788 A.D.)**

**Score: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_/3**

1. What is special about this written account of slavery by Oluadah Equiano?
2. In Equiano’s mind (1st two paragraphs) what was the worst part of his and his sister’s capture?
3. According to Equiano, what type of person brought him on board the slave ship?
4. Since Equiano was split up from his sister and he then watched husbands and wives, brothers and sisters being split up in the slave markets; what assumption can we make about the benefit of this practice for the slavers?
5. In your mind and opinion, what moved you the most about Equiano’s account of his journey into slavery? Please write a 3-4 sentence description in your own words about how the Africans were treated during the slave trade.