

A Chronology of the History of Slavery, Antislavery, and Emancipation (adapted by Newton Key, Eastern Illinois University, from Sue Peabody and Keila Grinberg, *Slavery, Freedom, and the Law in the Atlantic World*, Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2007; and *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Oloudah Equiano*, ed. Robert J. Allison, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Bedford/St. Martin's, 2007)

- 1340 (1340s) The Portuguese begin direct slave raids and trading in the Canary Islands.
- 1441 Explorers return to Portugal from Senegal with the first African slaves imported via the Atlantic, rather than the Saharan, trade.**
- 1502 The first enslaved Africans arrive in Spanish America.**
- 1538 The first ship of African slaves arrives in Brazil.**
- 1564 England enters the slave trade.**
- 1619 Enslaved Africans arrive in the English settlement of Jamestown, Virginia.
- 1625 England settles Barbados.
- 1635 France establishes the colonies of Guadeloupe and Martinique in the Caribbean, mainly to produce tobacco.
- 1654 The Portuguese expel the Dutch and the Jews from Brazil; the refugees bring technological expertise and slaves to French, Dutch, and English settlements in the Caribbean.
- 1688 Early Quakers protest the slave trade in Pennsylvania.
- 1695 Palmares, the largest maroon community in Brazil, is destroyed after one hundred years of war.
- 1713 The British win the Spanish asiento (exclusive transatlantic slavetrading contract) from France.**
- 1734 Portuguese royal law first mentions liberty as a reward for good services provided by slaves.
- 1739 Jamaica's First Maroon War (1700-1739) concludes with a treaty between the British and the maroons.
- 1755 "Gustavus Vassa" listed in muster book of British warship Roebuck.
- 1756 Equiano enters British navy (serves 1756-62)**
- 1757 According to Equiano's recollection, this year he arrived in England.
- 1759 Olaudah Equiano baptized at St. Margaret's Church, London.
- 1761 (1761-70) 63,500 Africans transported to the New World each year.
- 1761 Royal proclamation frees all slaves who arrive in Portugal.
- 1763 (1763-66) Equiano working for Robert King in Montserrat, Equiano trades between West Indies and mainland American colonies.
- 1765 In Savannah, Equiano hears evangelist George Whitefield preach.
- 1766 July 11: Equiano buys his freedom.**
- 1767 Equiano shipwrecked in 'Bahamas. On last visit to Savannah, buries black child. Sails for London.
- 1768 Equiano sails to the Mediterranean. St Patrick's Day slave uprising on Montserrat.
- 1771 (1771-80) 58,000 Africans transported to the New World each year.
- 1772 Judge Mansfield rules in London that the slave James Somerset cannot be compelled by his master to return to the colonies. This, decision is widely interpreted as abolishing slavery in England.**
- 1773 Equiano on expedition to Arctic. Massachusetts slaves petition legislature for

- emancipation.
- 1774 John Annis kidnapped by his former master and taken to the West Indies, where he is tortured to death. Equiano sails for Spain, has vision of Christ on October 6. Methodist John Wesley writes *Thoughts upon Slavery*.
- 1775 Equiano admitted to communion in Westminster Church. Equiano voyages to Mosquito Coast (Nicaragua) with Dr. Irving to establish a plantation.
- 1776 June: Equiano leaves Nicaragua for London.
- 1776 American Declaration of Independence declares that "all men are created equal."**
- 1777 The republic of Vermont declares independence from England. Its constitution outlaws slavery and allows all adult males to vote.
- 1778 In *Knight v. Wedderburn*, the Scottish high court rules that enslavement is incompatible with national law.
- 1779 Equiano meets British abolitionist Granville Sharp.
- 1780 Pennsylvania passes a gradual emancipation law, freeing children born to slave parents, though they owe service until the age of twenty-eight.
- 1781 (1781-1790) 88,800 Africans transported to the New World each year.
- 1781 Zong massacre: Captain orders 132 slaves drowned so ship owners can collect on insurance.
- 1783 Upon the captain's return to England, Zong case is heard as an insurance dispute, not a murder trial, causing public outrage. Equiano tells abolitionist Granville Sharp of Zong massacre. American Quakers call on Congress to end slavery and honor its commitment to "universal liberty."**
- 1784 Equiano sails for New York. Rev. James Ramsay publishes *Essay on the Treatment and Conversion of African Slaves in the Sugar Colonies*. Methodists declare slavery contrary to God's law, give members twelve months to free slaves. Pennsylvania Society for Promoting Abolition of Slavery formed. Connecticut and Rhode Island pass gradual emancipation laws.
- 1785 Equiano in Philadelphia. New York Society for Promoting Manumission of Slaves formed. Methodists petition Virginia legislature for emancipation. James Tobin's *Cursory Remarks* attacks abolitionists, defends slavery.
- 1786 Committee for Relief of the Black Poor appoints Equiano commissary to Sierra Leone expedition.** Thomas Clarkson publishes *Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species*.
- 1787 Equiano dismissed from Sierra Leone expedition after he publicizes mismanagement. With the Africans in London, Equiano organizes Sons of Africa. Ottobah Cugoana writes antislavery *Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil of Slavery*. Committee for the Abolition of the Slave Trade formed in England. U.S. Congress bans slavery north of the Ohio River after 1800. New U.S. Constitution does not mention slavery, allows slaveholders more representation in Congress, requires the return of fugitive slaves, and forbids Congress to end the slave trade before 1807
- 1788 Abolitionists circulate public petitions, signed by thousands of citizens, urging the end of the slave trade in England.
- 1789 Black abolitionist Olaudah Equiano publishes his book, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African, in England*.**
- 1789 The French National Assembly issues the Declaration of Rights of Man and Citizen; the French Revolution begins.**
- 1790 William Wilberforce presents the first bill to abolish the slave trade to the British House of Commons, but it does not pass.**

- 1791 A slave revolt breaks out on the northern plains of the French Caribbean colony of Saint Domingue; the Haitian Revolution begins.**
- 1792 April 7 Equiano marries Susanna Cullen of Ely, Cambridgeshire. London Oracle charges that Equiano actually born in West Indies.
- 1793 Anna Maria Vassa born; French republican commissioners abolish slavery in Saint Domingue.
- 1794 Ninth English edition of Narrative appears; The French revolutionary government abolishes slavery throughout the French empire.
- 1795 Johanna Vassa born.
- 1796 Susanna Cullen Vassa dies. House of Commons defeats bill abolishing the slave trade. St. George Tucker, Virginia law professor, proposes a plan to end slavery in the United States by 1896.
- 1797 Equiano dies in London on March 31.** Anna Maria Vassa dies on July 21.
- 1802 Napoleon declares the restoration of slavery in the French empire. His armies attempt to impose this by force in Saint-Domingue but are repelled by insurgents. The people of Guadeloupe resist the return of slavery but are defeated in battle.
- 1802 The French army entraps Toussaint-Louverture, a former slave, a brilliant general, and at the time of his capture the governor-for-life of Saint-Domingue. They transport him to a prison in France, where he dies in 1803.
- 1804 Jean Jacques Dessalines declares Haiti independent.
- 1805 Haiti's first constitution abolishes slavery and denies whites the right to own property.
- 1807 The U.S. Congress and the British Parliament independently ban the transatlantic slave trade. The U.S. ban takes effect on January 1, 1808.
- 1811 Argentina and Venezuela declare independence from Spain.
- 1813 Argentina passes a gradual emancipation law.
- 1815 At the Congress of Vienna, concluding the Napoleonic Wars, Britain pressures Spain, Portugal, France, and the Netherlands to agree to abolish the slave trade. However, Spain and Portugal are permitted a few years of continued slaving to replenish labor supplies, and the French ban is not enforced.**
- 1816 A major slave rebellion occurs in the British colony of Barbados.
- 1817 Spain signs a treaty with England, agreeing to end the Spanish slave trade north of the equator immediately and south of the equator in 1820.
- 1823 British forces brutally suppress a slave revolt in the British South American colony of Demerara.
- 1829 Mexico abolishes slavery.
- 1831 British forces brutally suppress a major slave revolt in Jamaica; French forces suppress a slave revolt in Martinique; Nat Turner leads a slave revolt in Virginia.
- 1833 Britain abolishes slavery throughout the British Empire, initially requiring that slaves provide six more years of labor (system ends, and all slaves free from 1838).**
- 1865 Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution abolishes slavery.**