

How extensive was Britain's
involvement in the Atlantic
slave trade?

Professor Suzanne Schwarz

History at Worcester

- Wide range of subject matter – early modern to modern
- Wide range of topics, and broad geographical range
- Research-Inspired Teaching
- Underpinned by research expertise of staff
- Informs approach to learning and teaching
- This research-inspired approach is reflected in the modules I teach on the Atlantic slave trade.
- For example, materials digitised in the Sierra Leone Public Archives are used in class workshops (see next slide).

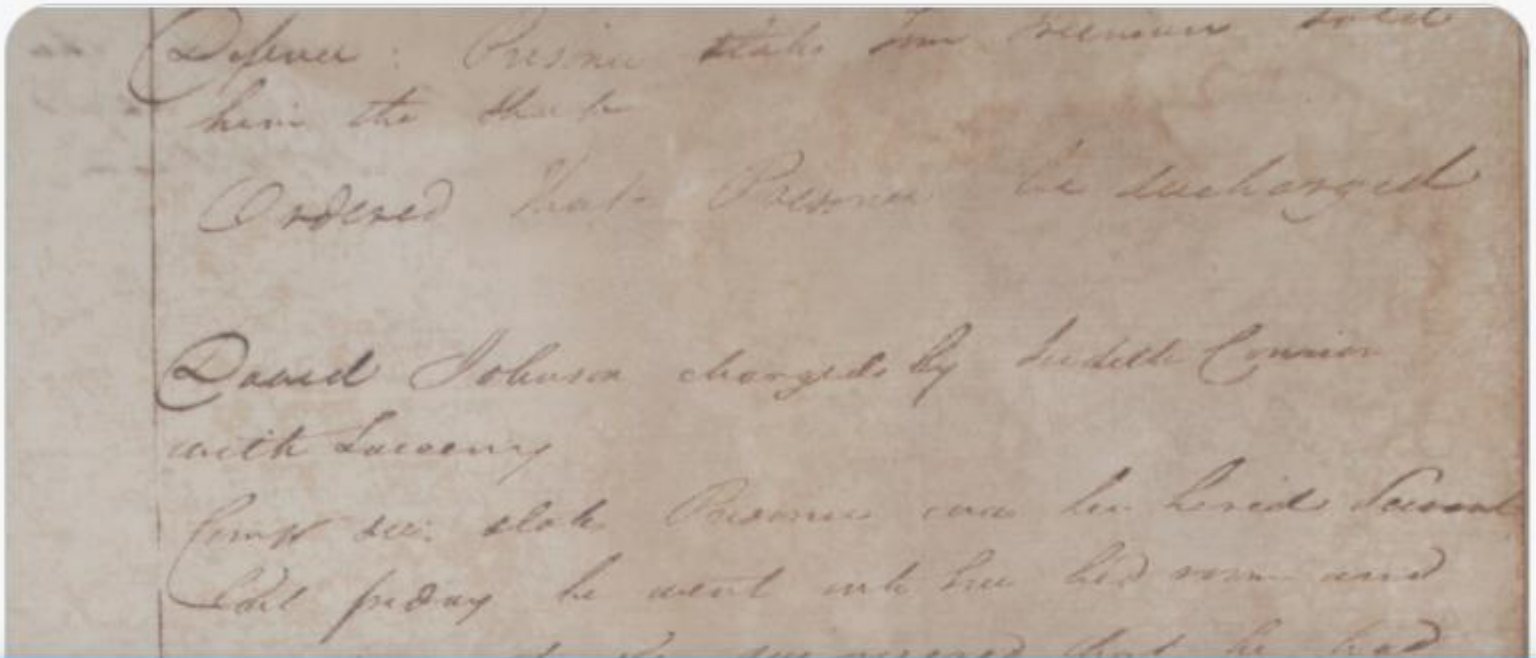


Endangered Archives Programme @bl_eap · 22 Jan



 New Online! 19th century records of colonial governors, police & court officials in Sierra Leone (eap.bl.uk/collection/EAP...)

- Rare insight into life experiences of enslaved people & their descendants
- Includes extensive testimonies given by formerly enslaved people



Don't miss what's happening

People on Twitter are the first to know.

Suggestions for reading

- Suzanne Schwarz, ed., *Slave Captain. The Career of James Irving in the Liverpool Slave Trade* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008).
- Slave Voyages database – www.slavevoyages.org
- (click on 'Trans-Atlantic' on the upper right side. Go into the Essays – many useful articles are provided here).

SLAVE CAPTAIN

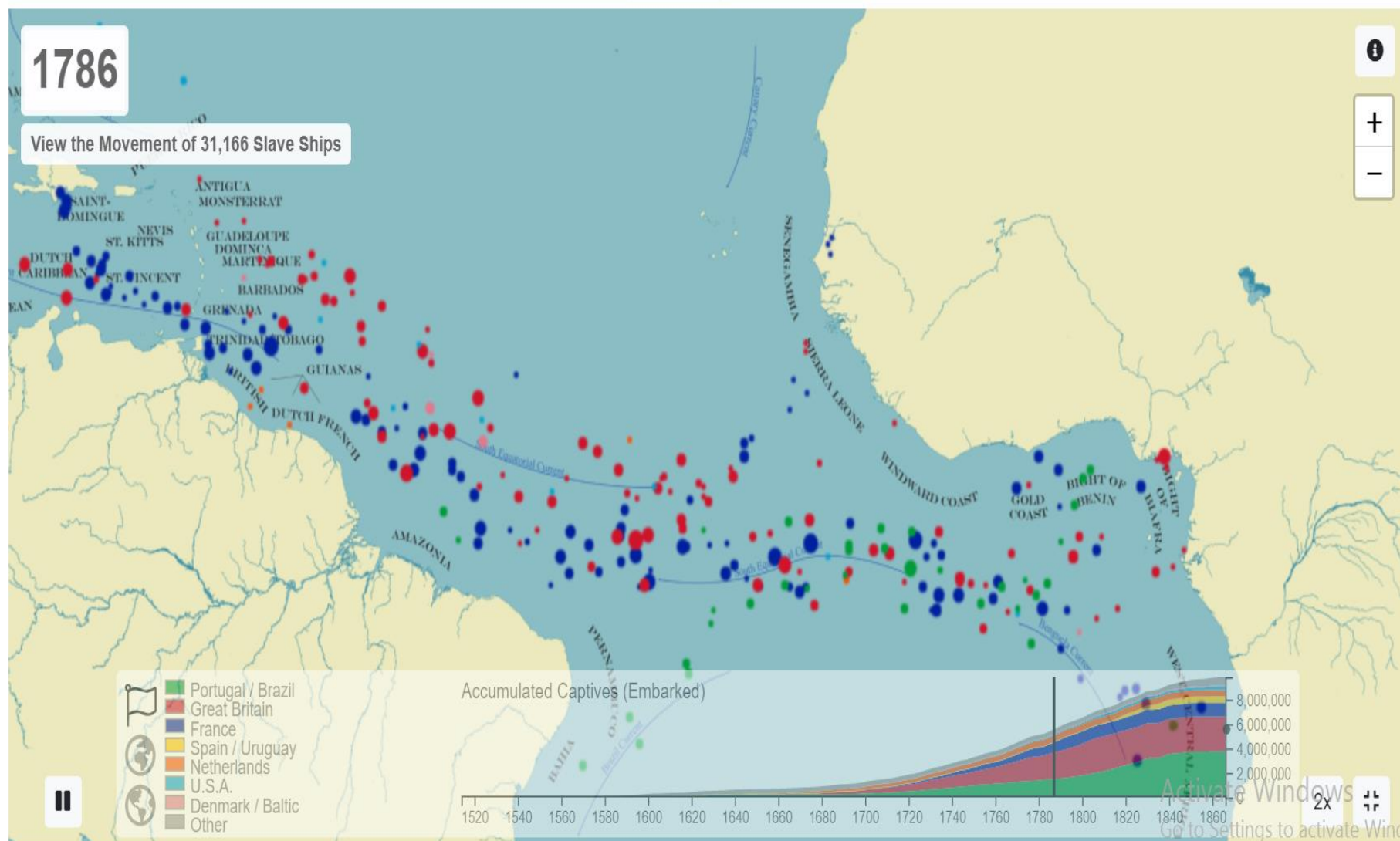
THE CAREER OF JAMES IRVING
IN THE LIVERPOOL SLAVE TRADE



[Results](#) [Summary statistics](#) [Tables](#) [Data visualization](#) [Timeline](#) [Maps](#) [Timelapse](#)

1786

View the Movement of 31,166 Slave Ships



Scale of the Atlantic Slave Trade

- Between early sixteenth century and mid-nineteenth century, an estimated 12.5 million Africans were forcibly transported from West Africa by all nations involved
- Use as a slave labour force in the Americas
- How do we know these figures?
- Cutting edge research: www.slavevoyages.org
 - Records of 36,110 slaving voyages (11 Jan. 2021)
 - New voyages, new information on numbers of individuals transported regularly updated.



SLAVE VOYAGES

Trans-Atlantic ▾ Intra-American ▾ African Names ▾ Resources ▾ About ▾ EN ▾

Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade - Database

Year range ▾ Ship, nation, owner ▾ Itinerary ▾ Enslaved people ▾ Dates ▾ Captain and crew ▾ Outcome ▾ Source ▾



Results Summary statistics Tables Data visualization Timeline Maps Timelapse

Showing 1 to 15 of 36,110 entries

Configure columns ▾ Show 15 rows ▾ Download ▾

Voyage ID	Vessel name	Place where voyage began IMP	Principal place of purchase IMP	Principal place of slave landing IMP	Year arrived with slaves IMP	Slaves arrived 1st port	Captain's name
1	Pastora de Lima	Rio de Janeiro	Mozambique	Bahia, port unspecified	1817	290	Dias, Manoel José
2	Tibério	Bahia, port unspecified	Mozambique	Bahia, port unspecified	1817	223	Mata, José Maria da
3	Paquete Real	Bahia, port unspecified	Cabinda	Bahia, port unspecified	1817	350	Ferreira, José dos Santos
4	Bom Caminho	Bahia, port unspecified	Quilimane	Bahia, port unspecified	1817	342	Dias, Domingos Francisco
5	Benigretta	Bahia, port unspecified	Cabinda	Bahia, port unspecified	1817	516	
6	Voador	Bahia, port unspecified	Mozambique	Bahia, port unspecified	1817	515	

Activate Windows
Go to Settings to activate Windows.

Current Query ?

View All

Reset All

Time Frame



Show data from 1501 to 1866

Full extent of coverage by estimates is
1501 - 1866.

Apply

Reset

Flag



- ☒ Spain / Uruguay
- ☒ Portugal / Brazil
- ☒ Great Britain
- ☒ Netherlands
- ☒ U.S.A.
- ☒ France
- ☒ Denmark / Baltic

Apply

Reset

Regions



Create a Query Link



Tables

Timeline

Maps

Rows: 25-year periods



Columns: Flag



Cells: Only embarked

Include empty: ☐

Update

Download Table

	Spain / Uruguay	Portugal / Brazil	Great Britain	Netherlands	U.S.A.	France	Denmark / Baltic	Totals
1501-1525	6,363	7,000	0	0	0	0	0	13,363
1526-1550	25,375	25,387	0	0	0	0	0	50,762
1551-1575	28,167	31,089	1,685	0	0	66	0	61,007
1576-1600	60,056	90,715	237	1,365	0	0	0	152,373
1601-1625	83,496	267,519	0	1,829	0	0	0	352,844
1626-1650	44,313	201,609	33,695	31,729	824	1,827	1,053	315,050
1651-1675	12,601	244,793	122,367	100,526	0	7,125	653	488,065
1676-1700	5,860	297,272	272,200	85,847	3,327	29,484	25,685	719,675
1701-1725	0	474,447	410,597	73,816	3,277	120,939	5,833	1,088,909
1726-1750	0	536,696	554,042	83,095	34,004	259,095	4,793	1,471,725
1751-1775	4,239	528,693	832,047	132,330	84,580	325,918	17,508	1,925,315
1776-1800	6,415	673,167	748,612	40,773	67,443	433,061	39,199	2,008,670
1801-1825	168,087	1,160,601	283,959	2,669	109,545	135,815	16,316	1,876,992
1826-1850	400,728	1,299,969	0	357	1,850	68,074	0	1,770,978
1851-1875	215,824	9,309	0	0	476	0	0	225,609
Totals	1,061,524	5,848,266	3,259,441	554,336	305,326	1,381,404	111,040	12,521,337

Activate Windows
Go to Settings to activate Windows.

Patterns of change over time

- Overall British ships transported 3,259,441 of 12.5 million (26%)
- Limited 16th century involvement
- Rapid growth between early 17th century and late eighteenth century
- Calculate proportion for Britain in the eighteenth century using the previous table.
- British trade at its height 1751-1775 (43% of total number)
- Passage of the Act for the Abolition of the Slave Trade in 1807 – this did not stop the trade in Africa.

Problems of statistics?

- Important - but numbers do not reveal the full human impact
- Impact of the trade on the lives of people uprooted and forcibly exported from West Africa
- Importance of reconstructing the names, identities and cultural experiences of individuals (see Liberatedafricans.org)

Contemporary Attitudes to the Atlantic Slave Trade

'It is difficult to believe in the first decades of the twenty-first century that just over two centuries ago, for those Europeans who thought about the issue, the shipping of enslaved Africans across the Atlantic was morally indistinguishable from shipping textiles, wheat, or even sugar'.

David Eltis, 'Methodology' (2018),
<https://www.slavevoyages.org/voyage/about#methodology/introduction/0/en/>

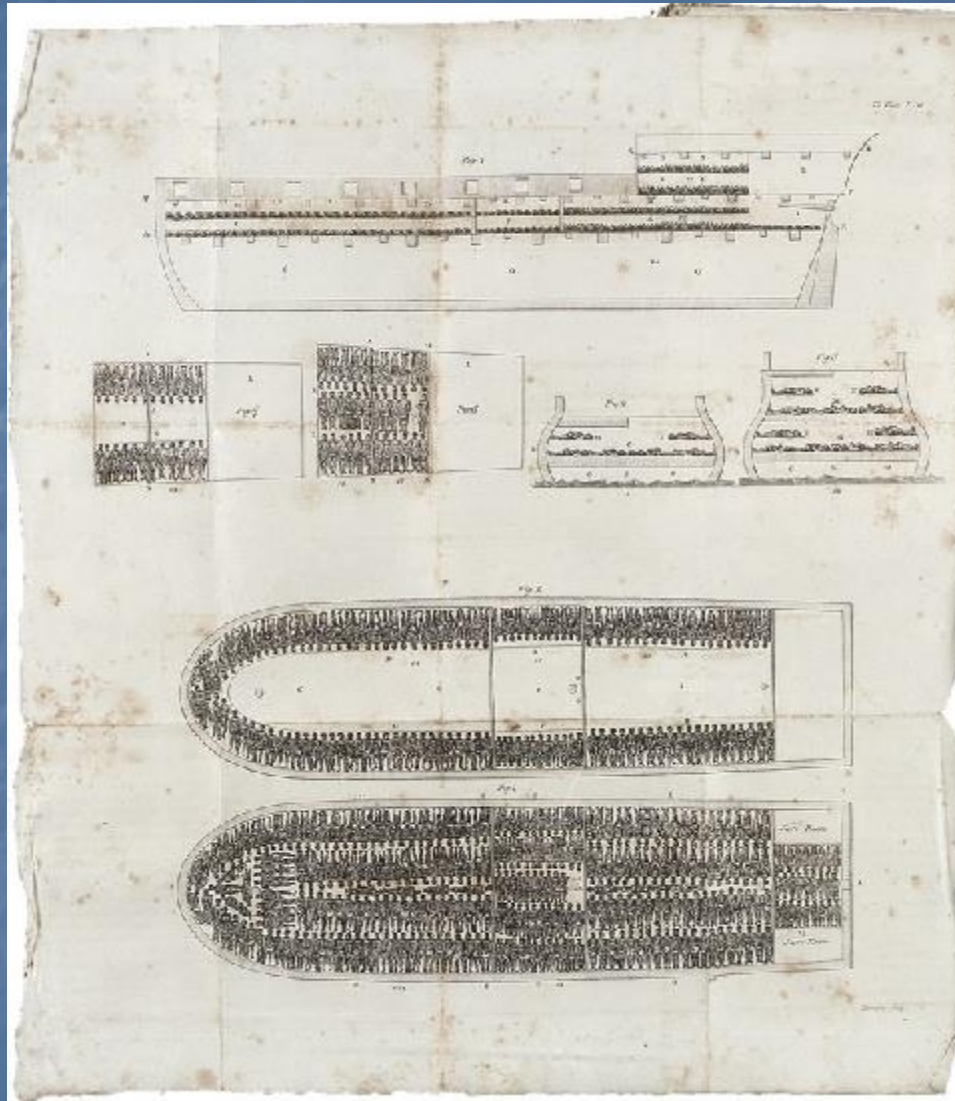
James Irving II to his parents in Langholm,
Scotland, 2 January 1791 (see Schwarz,
Slave Captain)

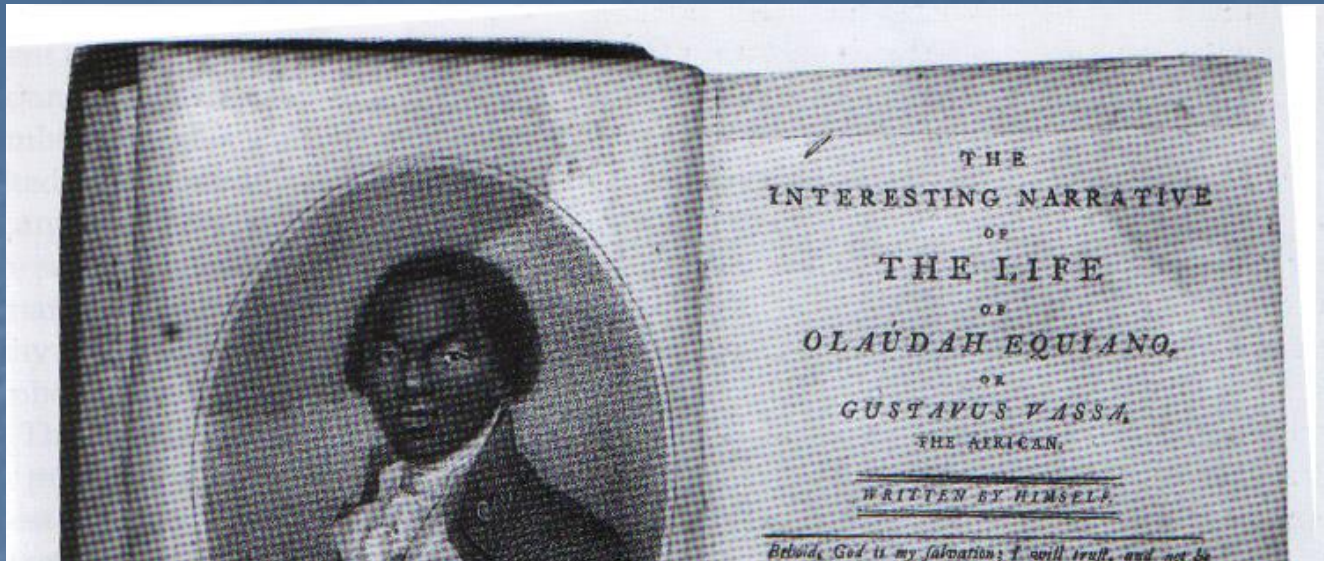
'We are Bound for Anamaboe in the Gold Coast ... My wages is £4 Sterling per month besides if it please God we make a good voyage, I get head Money, and if we only bury 6 slaves my Couzen will receive £50 and I £25 bounty'.

Eighteenth-Century Britain

- Sharp division of opinion by late eighteenth century
- Views expressed in petitions, newspaper articles, pamphlets, posters (e.g. the *Brooks*), first-hand accounts.
- Recent research tracing social profile of abolitionist and anti-abolitionist supporters

The Brooks





I was soon put down under the decks, and there I received such a 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... I now wished for the last friend, death, to relieve me.



Georgian Papers Programme Fellowship

- Royal archives at Windsor Castle
- Duke of Clarence – pro-slavery
- 2nd Duke of Gloucester and Edinburgh – promoter of abolition
 - President of the African Institution, 1807
 - Royal Navy patrols sent to Sierra Leone

'A View of Freetown'

