

On a Slave Ship

By Amy Kirby, Year 8

On the middle passage, slaves were treated badly and the living conditions were inhumane. Source D says "those who wouldn't eat would be punished." It further tells that one captain poured molten lead onto slaves. I think that this source is very reliable because it is from a modern historian. These means that they would have looked at all previous sources in order to see whether the statements are similar to others or whether one statement is just random and there are none similar to it. Then that would be less reliable as it could just be made up. This particular source shows that punishments were very bad and slaves were punished for silly things. This would mean that the slaves would be hurt and because of poor living conditions, wounds could get infected and the slave could even die. I think the captain only did it to prove he was in control and the other slaves had to obey him. If I was him I would be slightly worried because I would be in control of all these slaves and if anything happened, it would be my fault. I think if I was one of the slaves I would be terrified in case I did something wrong and I was then punished.

On the middle passage, the weather was horrible and the seas were rough. On the video we watched it showed that slaves were screaming (as they were scared) and water was coming into the ship. It also showed that the ship was moving around a lot. And that the ocean was very stormy. If I was on the middle passage during this, I would be scared and I would just want to die. The video also showed us that lots of slaves were squashed next to each other and there was not much space for each slave. Source E also backs this up by saying "The Brookes was a slave ship originally built to carry a maximum of 450 slaves. However it was found carrying 609." This would mean that slaves were very cramped and they would practically have no room at all. This would mean that they wouldn't have enough air to breathe and because of this the slaves could die. Source G says "In their frenzy, some killed others in hope of getting more room." From this I can infer that the slaves were so cramped that they barely had any room to breathe and they were so scared for their own lives, they had to kill others in the hope of staying alive. I think that there were too many slaves on each ship and by having that amount on there, they were killing many innocent people. As for the video I watched, I think it could have facts based around it but because it's a movie it may have been exaggerated a bit in order to please the audience. I think Source E is very reliable because there is a picture to back up the evidence. However, Source G may not be very reliable because we don't know who the person was who wrote the source and they could just be making it all up.

I think the worst part of the middle passage was the fact that slaves were so cramped next to each other because there were too many slaves on each ship and not enough room for each one. Many slaves would have died just because they put too many on to each ship and I don't think that was very fair or very nice. I think the slaves would be terrified that they were going to die every day and I think that would be horrible for the slaves.

I think the middle passage truly was horrible because lots of sources tell us how bad it was whereas none state that it was good. Despite some sources not being as reliable as others, the sources that you can believe still tell us of how bad the middle passage was. Ships were cramped full of hundreds of slaves, all fighting for air, food and space. They were punished for stupid reasons and stormy seas rocked them around the ship. Ships were full of screaming, puking and crying slaves all wishing the same thing: to get off that ship. They were taken away from their families after doing nothing wrong. Altogether, slaves were treated with no respect at all just because of their skin colour. They were treated with nothing but cruelty and to conclude the slave trade was cruel, as was the middle passage. The slaves did not deserve to be treated the way they were but the thing is they were, and the only thing I can say is that the middle passage was literally equal to hell.