

Second Middle Passage Timeline

1600s – Cotton was cultivated for the first time in the American South.

1760s – The Industrial Revolution began in England.

1788 – The U.S. Constitution was ratified, protecting the import of slaves for 20 years.

1794 – Eli Whitney patented the cotton gin.

1803 – The Louisiana Purchase doubled U.S. landholdings.

1807 – Congress banned the import of slaves.

1821 – Cotton accounted for a majority of all U.S. exports.

1830 – Congress passed the Indian Removal Act, leading to the forced relocation of thousands of Native Americans.

1845 – The U.S. annexed Texas.

1848 – Mexico ceded more than half of its territory at the end of the Mexican-American War, expanding U.S. landholdings to the Pacific Ocean.

1850 – Congress passed the Fugitive Slave Act, which required law enforcement officials to arrest suspected runaway slaves and forbid free people from assisting runaways. The law resulted in the kidnapping and enslavement of free African Americans.

1861 – The Battle of Fort Sumter started the Civil War.

1865 – The 13th Amendment was ratified, legally ending slavery in the United States.

Document A: Domestic Slave Trade

This graph is based on the research of University of Liverpool historian Michael Tadman.



Source: Michael Tadman, *Speculators and Slaves: Masters, Traders, and Slaves in the Old South*. Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989, 12.

Document B: Mingo White's Narrative (Modified)

Levi D. Shelby Jr., an African American interviewer for the Federal Writers' Project, conducted this interview with former slave Mingo White sometime between 1936 and 1938. White was in his 90s at the time of the interview, which took place in Tuscumbia, Alabama.

I was born in Chester, South Carolina, but I was mostly raised in Alabama. . . . When I was about four or five years old, I was loaded in a wagon with a lot more people in it. Where I was bound, I didn't know. Whatever became of my mother and father I didn't know for a long time.

I was told there were a lot of slave speculators in Chester to buy some slaves for some folks in Alabama. I remember that I was taken up on a stand and a lot of people came around and felt my arms and legs and chest, and asked me a lot of questions. Before we slaves were taken to the trading post, Old Master Crawford told us to tell everybody that asked us if we'd ever been sick to tell them that we'd never been sick in our life. We had to tell them all sorts of lies for our Master or else take a beating.

I was just a little thing, taken away from my mother and father just when I needed them most. The only caring that I had or ever knew anything about was given to me by a friend of my father. His name was John White. My father told him to take care of me for him. . . . My father and mother were sold from each other, too, at the same time as I was sold. . . .

I was nothing but a child enduring slavery, but I had to work the same as any man. I went to the field and **hosed** cotton, **pulled fodder** and picked cotton with the rest of the hands. I kept up too, to keep from getting any **lashes**. . . .

Source: "Interview with Mingo White." In *A Folk History of Slavery in the United States From Interviews with Former Slaves*, c. 1936-1938.

Vocabulary

hosed: watered

pulled fodder: harvested the portions of plants fed to livestock

lashes: whippings

Document C: *Genius of Universal Emancipation* Article (Modified)

The Genius of Universal Emancipation, an abolitionist newspaper run by Benjamin Lundy in Baltimore, Maryland, published the following article.

“Domestic Slavery”

The ship La Fayette . . . left this port for New Orleans on Tuesday with a cargo of 200 souls for that market. This is the largest number of slaves we ever knew to be gathered together in a domestic slave ship. From the size of the vessel we are under the impression that their situation must be very uncomfortable especially as they are chained in pairs in the **hold**. This precaution we understand because they should rise on those who are **conveying** them to a land in which hope never enters and thus **endeavor** by violent means to obtain their liberty.

Source: “*Domestic Slavery*,” *Genius of Universal Emancipation*, October 25, 1828.

Vocabulary

hold: the space in a ship for carrying cargo

conveying: carrying

endeavor: try

Document D: Slave Trader Letter (Modified)

A. J. McElveen was an agent for Ziba B. Oakes, a prominent slave trader and auctioneer in Charleston, South Carolina. This is a letter McElveen sent to Oakes.

A. J. McElveen to Z. B. Oakes,
Sumterville, S.C., 10 July 1853.

I send you one **boy**, which I hope will please you well. I think he is as near number one as boys get. The price I think is rather high. I hope he will pay a tolerable profit. It is the best that can be done.

[For] boy Wilson Bough of Mr. Semore I paid \$775. I hope you will be able to get \$900 for him.

I refused a **girl** 20 years of age at \$700 yesterday. I offered \$675 for her. I think it's enough. If you think it's best to take her at \$700 I can still get her. She is very badly whipped but has good teeth. The whipping has been done long since. She is **tolerably likely**.

The prices up here are tall. They ask from \$950 to \$1000 for fellows and \$800 for girls generally.

I weighed this boy Wilson. His weight is 100 pounds by the scales this evening. I will try and have some more next week. Do let me hear from you. I leave here Thursday for below. I will return next week.

Vocabulary

boy: term used to refer to an enslaved man likely: promising
girl: term used to refer to an enslaved woman

Middle Passage Guiding Questions

Document A: Historian

1. (Sourcing) Who did the research for the statistics included in this chart?

Why might this chart be a useful source to help explain why the internal slave trade was known as the Second Middle Passage?

2. (Close reading) Slave traders captured and forced approximately four hundred thousand Africans onto ships to the United States during the Middle Passage. According to this document, how many slaves did traders sell across state lines from 1820-1860?

3. Using evidence from this document, complete the following sentence:

Historians refer to the slave trade within the United States as the Second Middle Passage because

Document B: Mingo White's Narrative

1. (Sourcing) When was this interview conducted?

How might this affect the reliability of this source?

2. (Contextualization) According to Mingo White, "there were a lot of slave speculators in Chester to buy some slaves for some folks in Alabama."

What was happening in the economy of the Deep South at that time (1840-1852)?

How might this historical context help to explain why there were so many slave traders in Chester?

3. (Close reading) How does this narrative provide evidence of the human impact of the domestic slave trade? List at least three pieces of evidence.

4. Using evidence from this document, complete the following sentence:

Historians refer to the slave trade within the United States as the Second Middle Passage because

Document C: Genius of Universal Emancipation

1. (Sourcing) What type of publication was *Genius of Universal Emancipation*?

What might have been the purpose for publishing this article?

2. (Close reading) According to the article, why were people chained together on the *La Fayette*?

3. Using evidence from this document, complete the following sentence:

Historians refer to the slave trade within the United States as the Second Middle Passage because

Document D: Slave Trader Letter

1. (Sourcing) Who was A. J. McElveen?

What was his purpose for writing this letter?

What does this tell you about the economics of the domestic slave trade?

2. (Close reading) What do McElveen's descriptions of slaves tell you about the domestic slave trade?

3. (Corroboration) Compare this account to Document B. What information from Document B does this letter corroborate?

4. Using evidence from this document, complete the following sentence:

Historians refer to the slave trade within the United States as the Second Middle Passage because

Final Argument

Using evidence from at least two documents, explain why historians refer to the slave trade within the United States as the Second Middle Passage.