



*The
2020 Annual
Key West Community
Observance of the
United Nations
International Day for
the Remembrance of the
Victims of Slavery and the
Transatlantic Slave Trade*

*Key West, Florida
March 25*



*To Begin...
Giving Thanks,
Before All Else*

Prayer to Tunkasilah

*Offered by Raining Deer In observance of the
International Day for Remembrance of the Victims
of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade, 2020 ©*

*O Great Spirit,
We are grateful to you for the many blessings
That you have bestowed upon us.
We feel your heart through the beat of the drum.
We sway in concert to the rhythm of the blood flow
Through our veins, connecting us to life.*

*Our human family recognizes that it is only
By your grace and benevolence that we may
Gather – albeit in spirit, to remember those whose lives were lost
As they made their way to the shores of Turtle Island.
Although forcibly, restrained, mostly chained and suppressed,
we honor the spirit of the people who were taken from their native lands.*

*They were courageous and persevered with unimaginable atrocities
committed against them. Yet, they were not broken but
triumphant even in death, as some refused to give their new born babies to slavery,
gifting them to the deep, some sacrificing their own lives
to the wide Atlantic, the Sargasso and Caribbean seas.
We pray that they were welcomed in a good way by sister and brother spirits
Of the ocean, that father tortoise allowed them to ride on his back to a
Final resting place.*

*Great Creator, in these uncertain times, as we reflect on the past,
we ask that in this day you give us the healing we need from
the ravages of the plague that is moving around the Earth Mother.
Give us the humility to know that if we are unkind to the land and one another,
Our own self-destruction will be brought upon us.*

*May we continue to seek guidance from you Great Mystery,
And remember that those who have gone before us from our human family
as well as brother buffalo, mother deer, all the four leg creatures, the winged ones
on the earth and in the sky, and even the small and microscopic beings and those
of the plant world, left a sacred path for us to follow.
It is a path of respect and honor, gratitude and beauty.*

We send up this prayer to the Great Spirit on eagles' wings.

*Aho - Mitakuye Oyasin.
(Thank you, All My Relations)*

*The Dos Amigos/Fair Rosamond Middle Passage Ship Replica Project
The Florida Black Historical Research Project, Inc.
Cornish Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church
Mel Fisher Maritime Museum, and
Key West Carnival Corp.
present;*

*The 2020 Annual Key West Community Observance of
the United Nations International Day for the Remembrance of
the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade*

An E-book Summary of Presentations

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INTRODUCTION: 2020

Hindsight • Foresight • Insight

FROM KEY WEST, FLORIDA, U.S.A.

The two International Days of Remembrance related to Middle Passage (Transatlantic “slave trade”) history and heritage declared by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly and the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), on March 25, and August 23 respectively, each have a growing tradition of more than a decade of being observed annually in Key West, Florida, the southernmost city in the continental United States, with its strong, numerous, and often heroic connections to the suppression and commemoration of the dominant human trafficking routes that were a scourge of the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico for more than four centuries.

In recent decades, the small island city of Key West, mostly known for its laid-back, free-spirited, come-as-you-are welcoming atmosphere and tourist attractions, has also emerged as a significant epicenter of Middle Passage interest, education, and remembrance with its notable landmarks, programs, and repositories of research and artifacts, making it an increasingly significant Cultural Heritage Tourism destination as well.

This year, however, as the coronavirus pandemic has made it impossible to continue that tradition with a public gathering as we had planned, to be in solidarity with the spirit of the observance and with others around the world this remembrance (in spite of the UN itself being necessarily closed), we have opted to share the various presentations which would have been made here in Key West, at the African Cemetery and at Cornish memorial A.M.E. Zion Church, via this e-book format.

In the of the wise Native American proverb, “The center of the universe is everywhere,” we would be interested in learning about other remembrances from other epicenters of knowledge in the world, and in building a strong and lasting communications network, undefeated by the virus. Please share this e-book with your lists as we give new meaning to “Reply to All.”

We Give Thanks for your presence on the planet. May we all be strengthened by it.



Scheduled Programs for the 2020 Key West Community Observance

The Dos Amigos/Fair Rosamond Middle Passage Ship Replica Project
The Florida Black Historical Research Project, Inc.
Cornish Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church
Mel Fisher Maritime Museum, and
Key West Carnival Corp.




present;

A WEEKEND OF REMEMBRANCE
*In Observance of the United Nations International Day
for the Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the
Transatlantic Slave Trade*

March 21-22, 2020
KEY WEST, FLORIDA, U.S.A.

Saturday, March 21, 2:00 - 5:00 p.m.
CORNISH MEMORIAL A.M.E. ZION CHURCH HALL
702 Whitehead Street, Key West, Florida 33040

★ **SPECIAL REMEMBRANCE OF THE REMARKABLE LIFE OF
FORMERLY ENSLAVED KEY WEST HISTORY MAKER
MR. SANDY CORNISH**
and

★ **ECONOMICS, EVIDENCE, HEALING,
AND PREVENTION OF 'SLAVE TRADING,'
THEN AND NOW**

Film Showing, Panel Presentation, and Fellowship featuring
Special Guest Distinguished Economist Dr. Ralph Henry
of the University of the West Indies, Trinidad and Tobago,
Marine Archaeologist **Dr. Corey Malcom**,
and Middle Passage artist/historian **Dinizulu Gene Tinnie**

Admission to Both events is Free and Open to the Public
For Further Information, Call 305-904-7620 • 305-834-2143 • 305-304-1136

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The Florida Black Historical Research Project, Inc.
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A WEEKEND OF REMEMBRANCE
*In Observance of the United Nations International Day
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Transatlantic Slave Trade*

March 21-22, 2020
KEY WEST, FLORIDA, U.S.A.

Sunday, March 22, 4:00-6:00 p.m.
KEY WEST AFRICAN CEMETERY
1094 Atlantic Boulevard, at Higgs Beach
(just west of the White Street Pier, adjacent to the West Martello Tower brick fort)

SPIRITUAL REMEMBRANCE
*Honoring the Memory of the 297 African Refugees rescued from three captured American
slave ships in 1860 who died in Key West, and all those who perished in the Middle Passage,
as well as those who survived to give life to new generations.*

**FOLLOWED BY OPEN MIC 'VILLAGE TALK' AND SPOKEN WORD
LIVE PERFORMANCES BY TOKO IRIE, THE NEWTON STREET BAND,
AND AFRICAN WORLD CULTURAL AND CULINARY EXPERIENCE.**

Admission is Free and Open to the Public
For Further Information, Call 305-904-7620 • 305-834-2143 • 305-304-1136

Special Thanks to
Blue Heaven Menus • Destination Catering and Events • Dion's Quick Chick
Fausto's Food Palace • Grand Vin Classic Wine Bar and Shop
La Crêperie French Café • Margaritaville Resort & Marina • VIV Wine Bistro





Events originally Planned for Key West, where International Days are observed on the nearest weekend

Tentatively Rescheduled to August 22-23, 2020

These programs have been tentatively rescheduled to August 22-23, in observance of the **International Day of Remembrance of the Slave Trade and Its Abolition**, commemorating the anniversary of the start of the successful 1804 Haitian Revolution, to underscore the fact that Africans themselves, more so than political leaders in the British Parliament and U.S. Congress, were the primary agents in bringing about the Abolition of the "trade."

Indeed, it was the shocking defeat of Napoleon's vaunted best troops by mostly African-born imported forced laborers, wresting from him the single richest colony in the hemisphere, that was a major factor in causing these frightened legislatures to pass laws against any further importation of into their respective dominions.

These themes and others will be pursued as we also welcome distinguished economist Dr. Ralph Henry of the University of the West Indies in Trinidad & Tobago, to help "expand the narrative" of previously limited history and the past and present consequences of those developments, on condition, of course of the COVID-19 pandemic having hopefully passed by then.

THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE OF THE VICTIMS OF SLAVERY AND THE TRANSATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE

For over 400 years, more than 15 million men, women and children were the victims of the tragic transatlantic slave trade, one of the darkest chapters in human history.

Every year on 25 March, the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade offers the opportunity to honour and remember those who suffered and died at the hands of the brutal slavery system. The International Day also aims to raise awareness about the dangers of racism and prejudice today.

In order to more permanently honour the victims, a memorial has been erected at United Nations Headquarters in New York.

The winning design for the memorial, *The Ark of Return* by Rodney Leon, an American architect of Haitian descent, was selected through an international competition and announced in September 2013.

The unveiling took place on 25 March 2015.



For more information on the International Day
Follow us on Twitter @rememberstavery and join us on Facebook.
Contact: Remember Slavery Programme,
Education Outreach Section, Outreach Division, Department of
Global Communications

Source: <https://www.un.org/en/events/slaveryremembranceday/>

The Ark of Return, the Permanent Memorial to Honour the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade, located at the Visitors' Plaza of UN Headquarters in New York.
UN Photo/Rick Bajornas

NOTE: NOT JUST 'VICTIMS': They Were Not 'Slaves.' It Was Not 'Trade.'
'The words we use shape the thoughts we have, the decisions we make, and the actions we take.'

The General Assembly of diverse nations from around the world, all having their own issues, challenges, and contributions to make, is certainly to be commended and thanked for having the vision to pause in their deliberations to honor the March 25, 2007 Bicentennial of Great Britain's (followed by the United States') Abolition of the so-called "slave trade" by declaring an **International Day for the Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade**, to be observed annually thenceforth.

For in honoring the hard-won moral victory that finally ended the legalizing of centuries of the most barbaric human trafficking, the world also had to take notice of the profound crime that this nefarious commerce in captured human beings actually represented, and its role and the role of slavery itself in shaping the fortunes and impoverishments that define the world that we know today.

In the language of the past, originating in the countries that perpetrated these practices, the millions of Africans who were killed and exploited could indeed be called victims of the highly profitable dual crimes of the "slave trade" and

slavery, and this language has become our inherited legacy.

In the language of the future, however, those captured, enslaved, and sacrificed Ancestors are recognized to have been much more than passive "victims": Their indomitable spirit affirmed their humanity in the face of the most unspeakable and pathological violence (the only way such an unnatural social order could be imposed and enforced). They were enslaved but they were not "slaves."

Moreover, they built nations in the America not only with their physical strength and toil, but also with skills, knowledge, wisdom, culture, and spirituality that their oppressors lacked, which is what made them so coveted to be captured and enslaved in the first place.

So not only were these men, women, and children not "slaves" (non-human objects to be owed), but, as the late eminent historian Dr. Walter Rodney (How Europe Underdeveloped Africa) has pointed out, such rampant crime and mass devastation, including murder and kidnapping to capture, imprison, and sell human beings must be called what it was and cannot be called "trade" in any legitimate sense

A TIME OF SPECIAL REMEMBRANCES

MARCH 21, 2020

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

RECOGNITION, JUSTICE AND DEVELOPMENT:

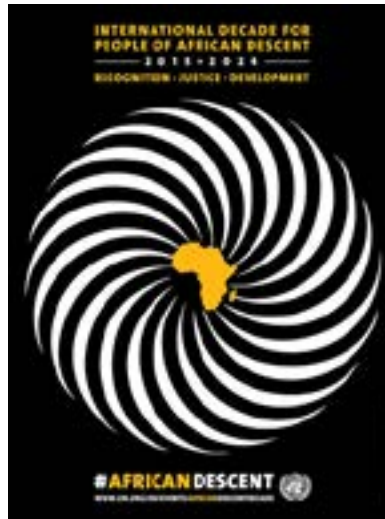
The midterm review of the International Decade for People of African Descent

This year, the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination is focused on the midterm review of the International Decade for People of African Descent undertaken by the Human Rights Council in Geneva as part of its 43rd session. As the Decade approaches its half-way mark in 2020, a review will take stock of the progress made and decide on further necessary actions.

There are around 200 million people identifying themselves as being of African descent living in the Americas. Many millions more live in other parts of the world, outside of the African continent.

Whether as descendants of the victims of the transatlantic slave trade or as more recent migrants, people of African descent constitute some of the poorest and most marginalized groups. They still have limited access to quality education, health services, housing and social security and their degree of political participation is often low. In addition, people of African descent can suffer from multiple forms of discrimination based on age, sex, language, religion, political opinion, social origin, property, disability, birth, or other status.

The International Decade for People of African Descent, proclaimed by General Assembly resolution and observed from 2015 to 2024, provides a solid framework to take effective measures to address these issues in the spirit of recognition, justice and development. The midterm review is vital for assessing the effectiveness of the programme of activities of the Decade, its implementation and challenges during the first five years and, based on the



assessment, generating improvements in the activities and programmes planned for the next five years. The final assessment will provide guidance to the various existing mechanisms and all stakeholders, including concrete recommendations for future courses of action to ensure the continued protection and promotion of the rights of people of African descent after the conclusion of the Decade.

BACKGROUND

The International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination is observed annually on *the day the police in Sharpeville, South Africa, opened fire and killed 69 people*

at a peaceful demonstration against apartheid "pass laws" in 1960.

In 1979, the General Assembly adopted a programme of activities to be undertaken during the second half of the Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination. On that occasion, the General Assembly decided that a week of solidarity with the peoples struggling against racism and racial discrimination, beginning on 21 March, would be organized annually in all States.

Since then, the apartheid system in South Africa has been dismantled. Racist laws and practices have been abolished in many countries, and we have built an international framework for fighting racism, guided by the International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. The Convention is now nearing universal ratification, yet still, in all regions, too many individuals, communities and societies suffer from the injustice and stigma that racism brings.

<https://www.un.org/en/observances/end-racism-day>

Lest We Forget: Remembering Ponce, Puerto Rico, March 21, 1937

In addition to being the anniversary of the 1960 Sharpeville massacre in South Africa, March 21 is also the date of the 1937 Ponce Massacre in Puerto Rico on Palm Sunday, when during 13 minutes of shock and horror police armed with machine guns as well as pistols, killed 19 people and wounded more than 200 as they demonstrated, wearing their Sunday best, for independence from the US on the anniversary of the Abolition of slavery on the island.



MARCH 21 IS WORLD FORESTS DAY.

THE KEY WEST AFRICAN CEMETERY and THE SLAVE SHIPS *WILDFIRE*, *WILLIAM*, and *BOGOTÁ*

In the spring of 1860, three slave ships – the *Wildfire*, *William*, and *Bogotá* – were intercepted by the US Navy in an effort to stop the illegal trade in humans, and they were brought to Key West, the nearest US port. These US-owned ships were bound for Cuba, where their human cargo were to be sold to the thriving sugar plantations.

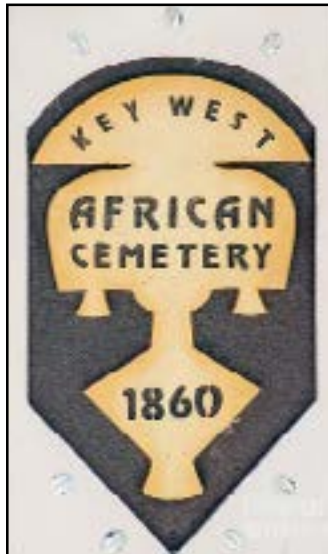
A total of 1,432 Africans were rescued from these ships, and they arrived with nothing. The 3,000 citizens of the small island, led by United States Marshal Fernando Moreno, came together, built housing, donated clothing, and provided food and medical attention for them during their stay.

For eighty-five days, the newly liberated refugees found shelter at Key West. But because of the horrific conditions they had suffered aboard the slave ships, many of the Africans were quite ill, and 295 of them died, and would be buried in shallow sand graves on the southern shore of the island.

It was eventually decided the survivors would be sent to Liberia, a country on the West African coast established as a home for formerly enslaved Americans. Ships were chartered by the United States government for yet another voyage across the Atlantic: The ship *Castilian* carried 400 people from the *Wildfire*; the *South Shore* 355 from the *William*; and the *Star of the Union* 383 from the *Bogotá*. Three months after they had first arrived, the Africans left Key West and were on their way to a new life.

This remarkable incident speaks to the pivotal nature of the times. Slavery was the leading topic of political discussion, and its polarizing effects were about to tear the United States in two. The confused character of the American, and even global, mindset is expressed in so many ways when looking at the microcosm of events that occurred here in 1860.

Despite all the missteps and contradictions, this was adding up to a tremendous shift in the social and political mindset from even a few years before. As difficult and messy as abolition might be, slavery, and the support



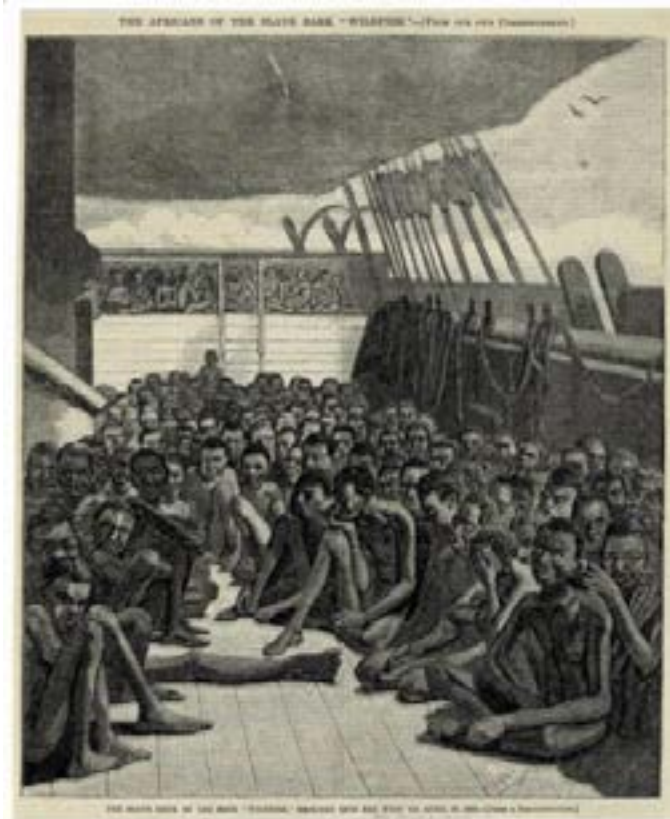
for it, was rapidly collapsing. With the interrupted missions of the *Wildfire*, the *William*, and the *Bogotá* – among the last slave ships to touch on American shores – an institution nearly four centuries old was coming to a close.

For the 295 Africans who died at Key West, a cemetery was established on a sand ridge along the southern shore of the island. The burials were carried out by Daniel Davis, a local carpenter. Davis was paid \$5.50 by the government for each of the burials. A poignant description of one of the funeral services was recounted in the *Key of The Gulf* newspaper:

“The first burial was of a child six weeks old, whose young mother was barely in her teens. Her devotion to her offspring made her an object of much sympathy to the visitors to the camp, and, upon the death of the child, our people provided a handsome coffin to bury it in. The interment took place some distance from the barracoon, and the Africans were allowed to be present at the services, where they performed their native ceremony. Weird chants were sung, mingled with loud wails of grief and mournful moans from a hundred throats, until the coffin was lowered into the grave, when at once the chanting stopped and perfect silence reigned, and the Africans marched back to the barracoon without a sound.”



Rescued Africans being brought ashore in Key West from the captured American bark William, May, 1860



Young Africans aboard the Wildfire, the first of the three captured American vessels brought by the U.S. Navy into Key West in 1860

The African cemetery appears on an 1861 map drawn by the US Army Corps of Engineers, and discovered by Florida Keys historian Gail Swanson in the 1990s. The site was located in a then-uninhabited tract of land along the beach. On the map, it is labeled “African Cemetery,” and nine small X’s are drawn to represent the location of the graves. This same location was later chosen for the

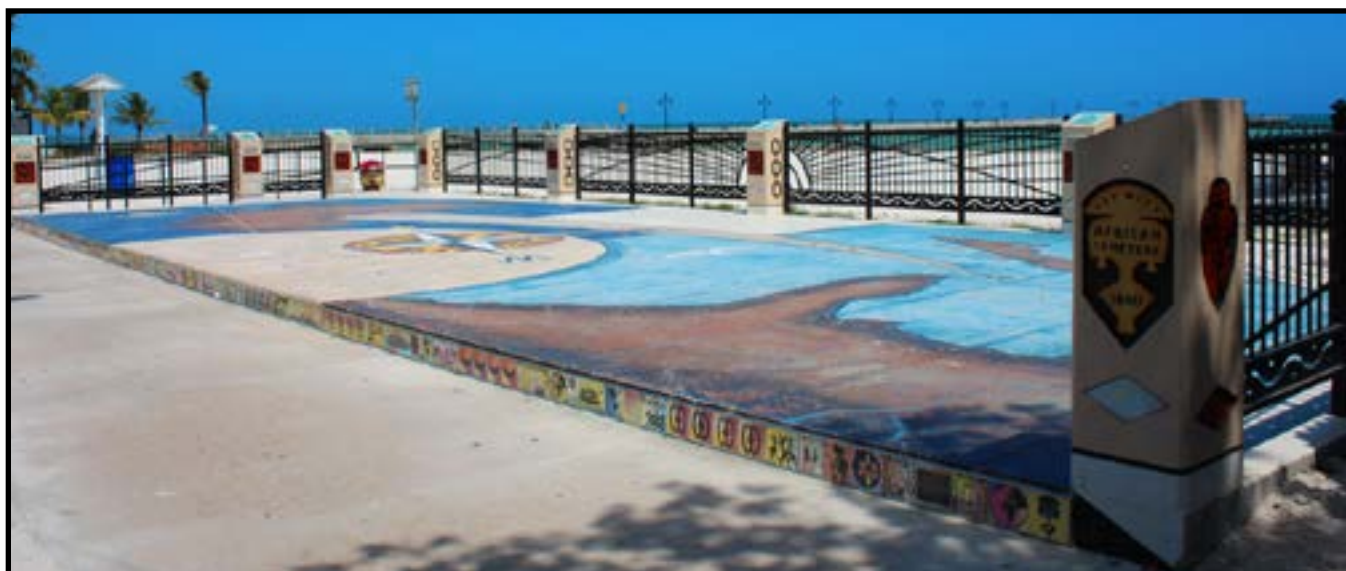
site of the West Martello Tower, constructed in 1862 to fortify the island during the US Civil war.

Using this map, and transferring the information to a modern map, the general location of the African Cemetery was determined. According to this, there were graves under the West Martello structure, and extended out onto the beach towards the east.

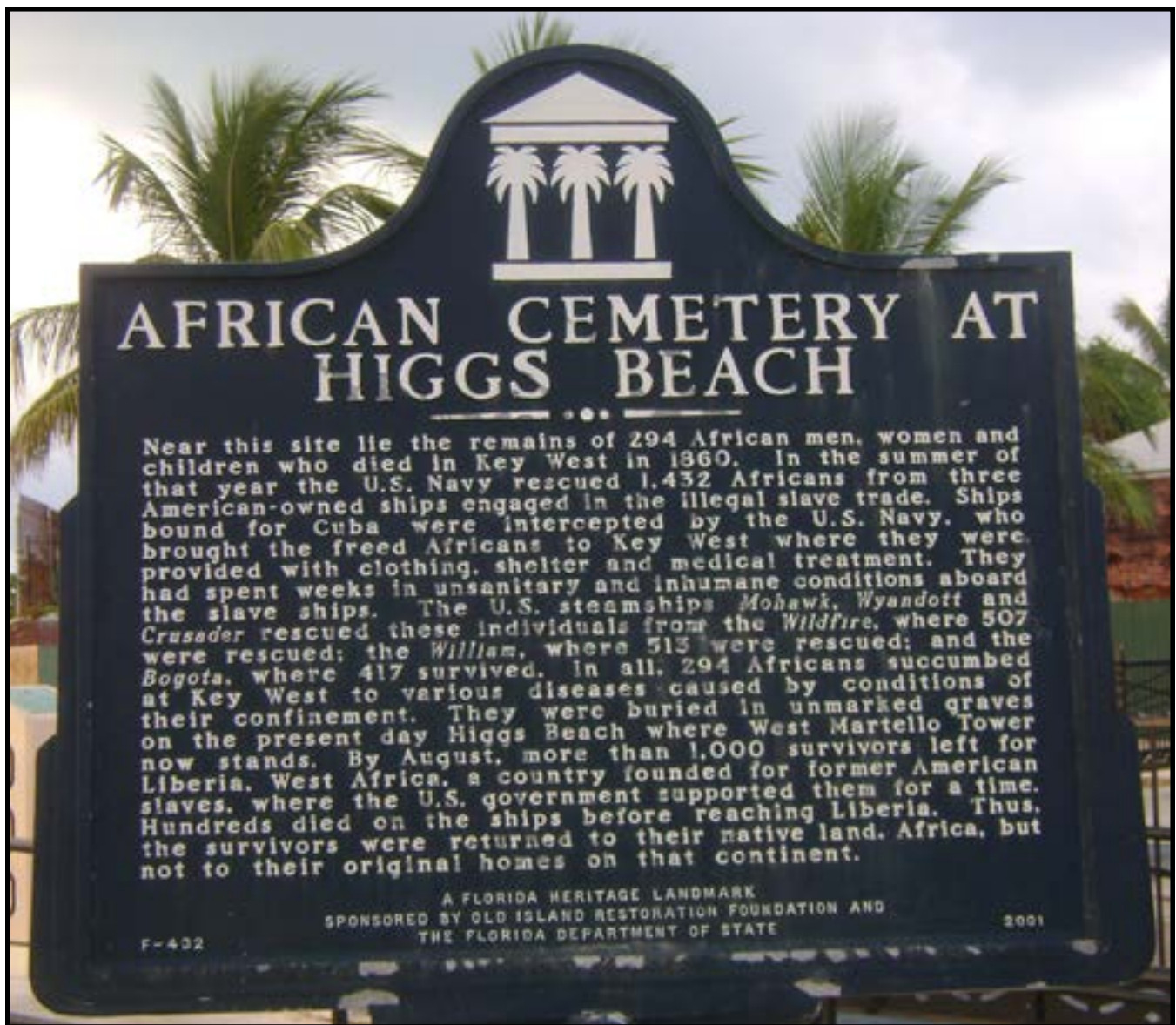
In 2002, the Mel Fisher Maritime Heritage Society (MFMHS) organized an archaeological survey that was designed to test the theory of their location. Though it was important to find any graves, it was imperative that the search would not cause any disturbance to them, or otherwise affect their integrity. Ground-penetrating Radar (GPR), a technique that uses the reflection of pulses of energy transmitted into the ground to “see” below the surface without disturbing anything, offered the best solution.

GPR data was collected near the West Martello Tower. On Higgs Beach, approximately 40 feet east of the fort’s brick walls, rows of closely-spaced graves were found. Though the GPR did not reveal details such as coffins or skeletons, it clearly showed fifteen 5 to 6 foot long oval holes starting 2 to 3 feet below the surface of the beach sand - a series of excavation features exactly where the African Cemetery was recorded in 1861.

Working with Monroe County and the Key West African Memorial Committee, staff from the MFMHS helped design and implement a memorial for the African refugees buried on Higgs Beach. The memorial was installed in 2007, and through artwork and traditional



Memorial monument at the Key West African Cemetery, where the first burials were discovered by GPR.



Cemetery (continued from page 7)

West African motifs, it tells the story of the cemetery and the tortuous journey the 1860 Key West Africans were forced to endure.

When the West Martello Tower was built in 1862, it was recorded that many graves were encountered and removed, which explained why so few of the 295 burials had been found on the beach. As Monroe County developed plans to renovate the Higgs Beach Park, additional historical research showed that they had been reburied in landward areas of the park, and it was proposed that additional GPR surveys should be conducted to locate the missing bodies. In 2010, a new round of surveys found many more burials. The majority of these graves were found across Atlantic Boulevard,

in an existing dog park. Today, the dog park has been relocated, and plans have been drafted to move the street and join the more-recently discovered, unmarked burials with the African Cemetery Memorial. When this happens, the site will be whole.

The Key West African Cemetery – a cemetery of African refugees rescued from the slave trade – is unique in the United States and represents a particularly compelling story from the last days of the centuries-old Transatlantic Slave Trade. So much so that it has been deemed “nationally significant” and placed on the National Register of Historic Places. And it was a combined effort of historical research, archaeological investigation, and public interest that brought the cemetery to light and made it a part of today’s world. ☹

Author Dr. Corey Malcom, a certified scuba diver, is Director of Archaeology at the Mel Fisher Maritime Museum.

Program

The 2020 Annual Key West Community Observance of the United Nations International Day for the Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade

*'Opening of thr Way' Native America Prayer and Blessing Raining Deer
Native/African American Cultural
Practitioner and Author
Miami, Florida*

Traditional. African Pouring of Libation Ceremony

*Invocation Pastor Rochelle Pearson
Cornish Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church
Key West, Florida*

Welcome Community Dignitaries

Historical Perspectives:

*The History of the Key West African Cemetery Dr. Corey Malcom
Director of Archaeology
Mel Fisher Maritime Museum*

*An Economic Perspective Dr. Ralph Henry
Professor of Economics.
University of the West Indies, Trinidad & Tobago*

*The Middle Passage in African World Perspective Dinizulu Gene Tinnie
Co-Director, Southern Office
The Dos Amigos/Fair Rosamond Middle Passage Ship Replica Project*

Live Music Selection Toko Irie and the Newton Street Band

Village Talk: Open Mic Sharing

Singing of "Lift Evr'y Voice and Sing"

Placing of Flower Offerings

Benediction Pastor Rochelle Pearson

Live Performance Toko Irie and the Newton Street Band

Cultural and Culinary Experience Key West Carnival Corp.

A Remarkable Key West Story that Continues Today

We are reminded that the Middle Passage, also known as the Slave Route, in continental North America extended beyond the ports of entry where slave ships docked, to include the “domestic slave trade” routes, and indeed the life path of every captive to his/her final destination, which may be a liberated Maroon community or any number of “slave cemeteries” that are only recently coming to light. The story of Mr. Sandy Cornish’s remarkable escape and subsequent life was to be duly remembered at the Church which he co-founded, as part of a program including an illuminating film showing and panel discussion on the “slave trade” and its continuing aftermath.

THE SANDY CORNISH MEMORIAL TRAIL IN KEY WEST

One of the most unique and influential individuals to come out of slavery in American history was Mr. Sandy Cornish, born enslaved but who purchased his freedom which he was later famously forced to defend after escaping his captors in northern Florida through a spectacular public act of self-inflicted injuries to render himself unsalable as a “slave.” (See page 13.) He would come to Key West in the late 1840s, where, together with his wife Lillah, he would become a farmer, businessman, highly respected and beloved civic and spiritual leader, and one of the city’s wealthiest individuals. He is officially memorialized today in several locations, most notably the historic landmark church that he co-founded.

It is especially significant that Mr. Cornish’s iconic leadership flourished in the period leading up to, during, and after the American Civil War, in a strategically important city which remained under Union control throughout, even though the state of Florida had seceded and joined the Confederacy.

Although historical records of the arrival of nearly 1,500 African refugees from captured slave ships in Key West in 1860 do not mention him by name, we might only guess at the influential role he played in rallying the community to meet their needs.

More certain is confirmation of his prominent community role when. “On January 24, 1863, official news of Emancipation Proclamation arrived in Key West... Sandy, the aristocratic farmer of the race, was called on and made a speech of the day” (curiously reported in a racist fashion on page 14).



Engraving of portrait of Sandy Cornish (“Uncle Sandie”) by W.G. Jackman, for the book After the War by Whitelaw Reid, published in 1866 by Moore, Wiltach & Baldwin.

Mr Cornish’s local importance would be further confirmed by his being memorialized in downtown Key West (p. 13), and at Key West Cemetery where a monument has been erected, while the site of his historic homestead awaits due public recognition.

KEY WEST SANDY CORNISH MEMORIAL TRAIL

KEY WEST HISTORIC MEMORIAL SCULPTURE GARDEN



Text on plaque on memorial monument to Sandy Cornish:

Sandy Cornish C1793-C1869

Sandy Cornish (Uncle Sandie) was born a slave in Maryland about 1793. He migrated to Florida in 1839 where with his wife Lillah's help he was able to buy his freedom. In the late 1840s his free papers were lost in a fire. **Six unprincipled men captured him with the intent of selling him at the slave market in New Orleans. Uncle Sandie escaped and to prevent recapture he inflicted severe injuries on himself. In the public square of Port Leon, he cut the muscles of his ankle joint, plunged a knife in the other hip joint and cut off the fingers of his left hand rendering himself unfit for labor and worthless as a slave.** In the late 1840s he came to Key West where he and Lillah bought a farm on what is now Truman Avenue near Simonton Street. Uncle Sandie supplied fresh vegetables and fruit to the island's Bahamians. During the Civil War, many Union soldiers visited Sandy's fruit orchard. He was by all accounts a successful farmer, one of the richest men in Key West and a leader of the African American community. In 1864 he established the ongoing Cornish Chapel of the African Methodist Episcopal Church at 702 Whitehead Street. Uncle Sandie died in the late 1860s, a wealthy, respected and free citizen of Key West. *[Emphasis added]*

Donated by
Peter and Ellen Barry
Earl Scheuerman and Carol Solomon

Key West Historic Memorial Sculpture Garden at Mallory Square, in the heart of the city's main tourist attractions, pays tribute to the island's most influential residents. From well-known figures such as Ernest Hemingway and Harry S. Truman to lesser-known trailblazers such as Sandy Cornish and Eduardo Gato, the sculpture garden gives an unparalleled insight to Key West's colorful past through author 36 life-like busts sculpted by late acclaimed artist James Mastin.

<https://www.24northhotel.com/location/attractions/sculpture-garden/>

New York Herald, February 11, 1863, page 8 [back page]

INTERESTING FROM KEY WEST¹

Arrival of the Steamship North Star.

THE NEGRO EMANCIPATION JUBILEE²

Prospect of an Attack on our Block- ading Fleet at Appalachicola

The Report of a Refugee from Appalachicola,³

&c, &c, &c.

By the arrival of the transport steamer *North Star*, Captain Lefevre, at this port yesterday from New Orleans, via Key West, we have our usual interesting letters from our correspondent at the latter point.

Our Key West Correspondence.

Key West, Jan. 29, 1863

*Negro Celebration in Key West in Honor of the Proclamation – the Parade and Its Commander – How It Was Received by the Population – The Ladies of Color and Their Appearance – Arrival of the United States Bark *Gemsbok* – the Coal Depot at Turtle Harbor Transferred To Key West – A Suspicious Steamer off Turtle Harbor – The Late Norther – The Steam Transport *Quincy* and Captain Richardson, &c., &c.*⁴

The niggers have had to-day a grand celebration in honor of obtaining their freedom, by virtue of the President's proclamation, in which Key West was not excepted, but Norfolk and New Orleans were. The celebration consisted first of a parade, and ended with a grand dinner at the barracoons.⁵ The parade was the great feature of the day. It consisted of about two hundred and fifty he niggers, of all sizes, ages and complexions, marching in columns of twos, with proper officers. They were commanded by "Sandy," a venerable nigger of huge proportions, formerly the property of Mr. Baldwin, of this place.⁶ It was a matter of doubt for some time before Mr. Baldwin left Key West – says the oldest inhabitant – if he belonged to Sandy or Sandy belonged to him. Sandy to-day felt his importance. He was attired in a full suit of black, a sash and rosette on his breast of enormous size and of the most gaudy colors; he had suspended to his side a cavalry sabre and wore an army fatigue cap. His martial bearing and the resemblance of his foot to that of a scrubbing brush, with his leg for a handle were remarked on every side.⁷ All conceivable costumes could have been found in the procession, and all shades of color, from the

light straw, showing only a slight "lick of the tar brush," to the blackest ebony. As the procession moved through the streets it was flanked on either side by a crowd of wenches, dressed in their best attire and presenting the appearance of a walking rainbow, and the number of nigger children in advance of and following the procession showed the African race to be largely on the increase. As they marched on, cheers were given over and over again, for Mr. Ferguson, Captain Curtis and other prominent abolitionists of Key West, and they finally brought up at the Baptist church, where services were performed. The darkeys were not unmolested in their march. They were pelted with stones on several parts of the route, basins of dirty water were emptied upon their devoted heads; several were knocked down, and the American flag, with which they were marching, was taken from them and the staff broken over the head of the bearer. No serious outbreak occurred,⁸ but there would have been had not the provost guard been out in force. Not one person among those who have heretofore borne the reputation of being disloyal interfered in any manner with the celebration. The dinner, I understand, gives every promise of being A grand affair; but not being among those favored with an invitation, I shall have to imagine all that will be said and done on the occasion. It is a most fortunate occurrence for all concerned, but especially for the whitewashed niggers – i.e., the abolitionists – that the thermometer to-day was as low as fifty-two degrees – six degrees lower than it has previously been this winter. Had it been an ordinary hot day the atmosphere in the neighborhood of the procession and within the barracoons would have been unbearable.

Source:<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1863-02-11/ed-1/seq-8/>

NOTES:

1. This is a line-for-line transcription of the original article. The community is much indebted to Archaeologist Dr. Corey Malcom of the Mel Fisher Maritime Museum for finding this article.
2. It is very notable that this celebration took place only weeks after the Emancipation Proclamation took effect, on January 1, the time required for a ship to bring the news to Key West, while Emancipation for the rest of the state of Florida would not be until May 20, 1865, following the Confederate surrender.
3. It will be recalled that the Appalachicola River in northern Florida is the site of the onetime "Negro Fort" which was destroyed by U.S. forces invading Spanish Florida, in a massive explosion claiming hundreds of Black and Native American lives on July 27, 1816.
4. This tone and tenor of this introduction, written by the *Herald* editors in New York, stand in sharp contrast to the article itself written by the their "Key West Correspondent," who clearly does not sympathize with the Abolitionist cause, and, equally clearly, is not alone in that opinion.
5. The "barracoons" refer to the hastily but well-built structures which housed the 1,432 Africans brought into Key West from three captured slave ships three years earlier, in 1860.
6. See 1861 map, page 5, for Baldwin's property, adjacent to Sandy's.
7. This evidently refers to the lasting effects of Mr. Cornish's famous public self-mutilation years earlier to escape re-enslavement (see page 13).
8. Seriously? By this remark the author evidently means there was no retaliation for these actions.

CORNISH MEMORIAL A.M.E. ZION CHURCH

Circa 1864

Centerpiece of the Sandy Cornish Memorial Trail



The Church's original name "Cornish Chapel" still graces the historic sign casing showing the schedule of regular services continuing the legacy.

The heart of Key West's commemoration of one of its most historically significant citizens is the church he co-founded with other African Americans during the Civil War and which still stands on Whitehead Street, serving the community in multiple ways, about a block from the iconic Mile-Zero marker at the end of the 2,369-mile (4,247 km) US highway 1 to Fort Kent, Maine.

Under the leadership of Pastor Rochelle Pearson, the church remains a strong presence in the southernmost city, and is an active participant in the annual observances of the March 25 and August 23 observances of International Days of Remembrance, often providing inspirational words of prayer. In 2019, the Church was the venue for Key West's participation in the synchronized National Bell Ringing Ceremony memorializing the 400th anniversary of the 1619 arrival of the first captive Africans in the British colonies of North America, and thus the beginning of what would become chattel slavery in the United States.

MEL FISHER MARITIME MUSEUM: REPOSITORY OF KNOWLEDGE



The Mel Fisher Maritime Museum (MFMM) is famous for its collection of treasures from sunken Spanish galleons, but it is also a leading center for other aspects of maritime heritage research, in particular the history and archaeology of the Transatlantic Slave Trade. Over the past 35 years, the organization has put forth efforts from both above and below the sea to document one of the darkest, but most significant, chapters of world history.

The MFMM is perhaps best known for its research into the *Henrietta Marie*, a London-based slave ship that wrecked 35 miles west of Key West in the summer of 1700. The *Henrietta Marie* had carried some 200 people from Calabar in today's Nigeria and sold them in Port Royal, Jamaica, when it wrecked on remote New Ground Reef on the return voyage to London. The study of the shipwreck and its artifacts has laid bare the operations of a "typical" slave ship at dawn of the 18th century. Today, visitors to the MFMM can see the items recovered from the wreck and learn its story firsthand.

The MFMM has also led more recent efforts to locate other sites of wrecked slave ships. One, the *Guerrero*, is found near Key Largo, Florida. The *Guerrero* was a Havana-based pirate ship that had sailed to West Africa, somehow illegally-acquired nearly 600 people, and was sailing back to Cuba to sell them. A British Navy ship attempted to intercept it near The Bahamas; a chase and gun battle ensued, and in the confusion, both ships wrecked on the Florida Reef. Members of the MFMM have worked with the **Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary**, the **Diving with a Purpose** group (DWP), and others to successfully search for and then document the shipwrecks. Today, underwater research is active and continuing, with new information being discovered with every dive.

On July 25, 1860, at nearly the same time that the African refugees were in Key West, a New Orleans-based slave ship named the *Peter Mowell* wrecked at Lynyard Cay in the Abaco Islands of The Bahamas. The *Peter Mowell* ran ashore, and almost all of the people on board made it safely to shore. The crew was arrested and the rescued Africans were taken to Nassau, where the governor determined that they should be put into indentured servitude. These people, mostly teenagers, were distributed amongst Bahamian families and served them for terms of six years. After that, they were freed and blended into Bahamian society. With their new lease of life, they formed Afro-centric "Congo" communities outside of Nassau. Today, descendants of the *Peter Mowell's* people are still found in The Bahamas, Florida, and beyond. In 2012, the MFMM worked with The Bahamas Antiquities, Monuments, and Museums Corporation to locate the shipwreck of the *Peter Mowell*. The site was found quickly, very near where the historical documents said it should be, but it was badly battered by the pounding surf, and little survived. A collection of some of these remains, as well as the story of the *Peter Mowell* and its people can be seen in the **Pompey Museum of Slavery in downtown Nassau**.

The Mel Fisher Maritime Museum is home to the **Florida Slave Trade Documentation and Education Center**, focused on the decades of archaeological and historical research conducted by the organization. This collection of exhibits, student lesson plans, and a digital database of artifacts, underwater field photographs, historical documents, books, manuscripts, and 3-D models, is easily accessible to the public via the internet at www.floridaslavetradecenter.org.

The *Dos Amigos/Fair Rosamond* Middle Passage Ship Replica Project

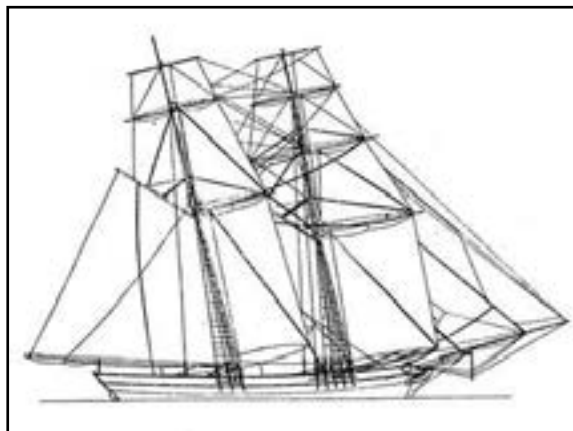
Research • Remembrance • Replication

“The slave trade was not a statistic, however astronomical. The slave trade was people living, lying, stealing, murdering, dying. The slave trade was a black man who stepped out of his house for a breath of fresh air and ended up, ten months later, in Georgia with bruises on his back and a brand on his chest.”

--S.E. Anderson, *The Black Holocaust for Beginners*

RE-PRESENTING THE MIDDLE PASSAGE

The Middle Passage, or Transatlantic “slave trade,” the largest migration of human beings (forced or otherwise) in recorded history, was the single most common denominator -- transcending differences in geography, ethnicity, language, religion, or political ideologies by its uniformity of operation and its constant demand



regardless -- in the making of the “New World” (and of the world made new) as it supplied an entire hemisphere of emergent settler nations on invaded Indigenous lands with the labor force by which they demanded. For more than four centuries this barbaric human trafficking in conditions of unspeakable horror systemically impoverished and depopulated one continent while creating fabulous fortunes on others, thus laying the foundations of the global (dis)order that shapes our lives today.

Besides shared ancestry, shared history is the psychic “glue” which binds nations and communities together, so that it is not surprising that practically all human societies have a certain reverence for that which stands as evidence and reminders of that shared experience, such as landmarks, anniversaries, and physical artifacts. Where such artifacts are particularly significant but no longer exist in recognizable form, accurate replicas, labeled as such, can be made to bring that history to life, as has been done with great effectiveness by the Mel Fisher Maritime Museum in demonstrating what the remains of valuable treasures recovered from the sea floor originally looked like.

It is not surprising that in the modern nations of the “New World,” established largely by immigrants who arrived by sea, among the most precious of artifacts

and relics are the ships on which the first settlers arrived, or subsequent ones that were vital to the settlers’ defense for example. Where the original vessels have not been preserved, replicas abound, of Viking ships, the Columbus ships, the Jamestown ships, the Mayflower, the *Dove* (of Maryland), the *Kalmar Nyckel* (of Delaware), Henry Hudson’s *Half Moon*, and so many others.

Yet, notably, there is no such tribute to the tens of millions of captured and coveted Africans who also crossed that oceanic vastness, without whose skills, knowledge, culture and spirituality as well as physical labor – speaking only of the naked, emaciated, branded and chained survivors of the unspeakable horrors – this entire brash experiment in invasion and colonization would have been impossible. (Even the Freedom Schooner *Amistad* reproduction launched in 1999 tells a specific story of only one revolt, albeit a hugely significant one, after the ocean crossing.)

RIGHTING THE SHIP OF HISTORY

While virtually all of these aforementioned historic ship replicas carry the tagline, “as she is thought to have looked,” remarkably, out of the tens of thousands of vessels that were engaged in the “slave trade,” only one, belonging to the 19th century era of fast-sailing, elusive Baltimore-built schooners and brigs specially designed exclusively for the illegal “slave trade” to the lucrative markets of Brazil and Cuba after Abolition in 1808, has yielded a nearly complete set of design plans, making an accurate replica to fill that historic void much more possible.

This was the Spanish-owned brigantine schooner *Dos Amigos* (“Two Friends”), of Havana, Cuba, which was

Middle Passage (continued from page 17)

captured by the British Royal Navy in Cameroon, West Africa, with 567 Africans aboard who were fortunately safely landed ashore in a vain attempt by the captain to “remove the evidence” of his criminal activity.

Because of the vessel’s excellent design, she was purchased into the Navy, refitted to serve in the Anti-Slave-Trade Squadron, and renamed H.M. Schooner *Fair Rosamond*, which would make an impressive number of captures. In the process of this conversion, the vessel was sent to England and carefully surveyed and “reverse-engineered” to produce the detailed design plans that exist today.

This invaluable find makes it all but imperative to build a replica, to be an international traveling museum, educational resource center, and Ancestral memorial shrine, bringing the history of the Middle Passage to light in a way, like most replicas, that far surpasses all descriptions or pictures.

Because we still bear the burden of centuries of bias, omission, misunderstanding and misrepresentation of our collective history it is equally important that this story be re-presented to include primarily the much-needed perspective of the African World, those and their descendants who have lived the story and its ongoing consequences. In this light it is readily revealed that this is not merely a story of indescribable horrors and suffering at the hands of people of ill will, but also, even more importantly, a narrative of extraordinary resilience, resistance, and indomitability of the human spirit.

In addition, it is a story that global perspective makes clear that the Transatlantic “slave trade” was not the first or only time that Africans crossed oceans or came to the Americas, as verified in accounts by artifacts and the accounts of Indigenous peoples of the Americas.

THE MIDDLE PASSAGE IN PERSPECTIVE

“The slave ship was the violated womb that gave birth to new African peoples and new nations.” The Middle Passage was the crucible in which new identities, languages, and kinships were forged. Of the men, women, and children who were captured as Wolofs, Mandinkas, Mende, Fantis, Yoruba, Igbo, Fulani, Tikar, BaKongo, those who survived would disembark in strange new lands as simply Africans adapting to the newly formed nations that they would be forced to build, but not without a rich, often mixed and diverse heritage of cultural retentions and reinventions which would

become an indelible force, whether recognized or not, in defining those nations.

The Middle Passage from the past to the future continues. Like the Ship Replica Project itself, it is a process as much as it is a final product. It is a journey toward restored wholeness and wisdom after centuries of pathological violence, oppression, and imbalance in the service of senseless greed, fueled by ignorance, fear, envy, and hatred. The completed Ship Replica -- an educational project in its own right -- is envisioned to be an integral and vital part of that journey, visiting as many locations as possible that were touched by the drama and trauma of the “slave trade.”

The ship might arrive at each port with the graceful yet stark and foreboding outward appearance that greeted the eyes of our captured Ancestors, but this time bringing an empowering story within, and might depart festooned with celebratory offerings and remembrances to honor the memory of those whose tragic loss of so much life and freedom gave so much life and opportunity to the world we know today, and resolve to know tomorrow with no such further sacrifices.

It is the hope of the Replica Project to inspire interest, study, “popularization” and mass sharing of more knowledge of this chapter of human history. The specific story of the *Dos Amigos/Fair Rosamond* offers a unique-yet-typical case study of the this deadly human trafficking during a certain period of history, related to particular places. But, as such, this single story, benefiting from continuing research and documentation, also becomes a portal to greater understanding of more and similar stories, and ultimately of the causes and motives of all such stories, so as to eliminate those in the future. It is hoped that the Project might also inspire artistic creativity, fresh thinking, spiritual uplift, and a heightened appreciation of life by all who are touched by it.

“The past is present; the future is now.” *The Dos Amigos/Fair Rosamond* Replica and her story already exist in our present awareness, seeking only to come closer to fruition through the further research, public support, and the process of actual construction. ☸

The Dos Amigos/Fair Rosamond Ship Project
Southern Office: Dinizulu Gene Tinnie, Co-Director
80 NW 51st Street, Miami, FL 33127-2114, U.S.A.
T: 305-904-7620 • E: dinizulu7@gmail.com
Eastern Office: Harmon R. Carey, Co-Director
900 N. Pine Street, Suite One
Wilmington, DE 19801, U.S.A.
T: 302-562-4718 • E: harmon.carey@yahoo.com

On March 25 in History

- 1634 Lord Baltimore establishes the Catholic colony of Maryland.
- 1807 British Parliament abolishes the “slave trade.”
- 1895 Italian troops invade Abyssinia (Ethiopia;).
- 1905 Rebel flags captured during the American Civil War are returned to the South. [Why?]
- 1911 In New York City, 146 women, mostly Jewish and Italian immigrants, are killed in a fire at the Triangle Shirtwaist Company. The owners of the company are indicted for manslaughter because some of the employees were behind locked doors. These owners are later acquitted but in 1914 are ordered to pay damages to each of the twenty-three families that sued.
- 1931 Death of Ida Barnett Wells, Chicago, IL
- 1931 The Scottsboro Boys are arrested in Alabama.
- 1947 John D. Rockefeller III presents a check for \$8.5 million to the United Nations to purchase land for the site of UN Headquarters.
- 1955 “Moulin Rouge Agreement” opens first integrated hotel and casino in Las Vegas, with Joe Louis as owner. All hotels in Las Vegas are desegregated.
- 1965 The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. leads a group of 25,000 to the state capital of Montgomery, Alabama, after a five-day march from Selma, to demand equal voting rights.
- 1966 U.S. Supreme Court rules that “poll tax” is Unconstitutional
- 2007 International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Atlantic Slave Trade is declared by the UN General Assembly (anniversary of the 1807 British Abolition law)

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The Key West Carnival Corporation is a not-for-profit cultural organization with a wide network of expertise that organizes, promotes and supports celebratory performing arts events and the Annual Observances of International Days in Key West with publicity, fundraising, logistical assistance and acclaimed world-class Caribbean-inspired five-star culinary experiences open to the public. The KWCC played a key role in raising awareness of the International Days in particular, which have grown significantly in popularity and participation, attracting local residents and visitors alike

PRESENTER



The Florida Black Historical Research Project, Inc.

A not-for-profit 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization founded by Isa Hamm Bryant in 1996

Miami Office: 80 NW 51st Street, Miami, FL 331227-2114, U.S.A.

T: 305-772-7714 /305-904-7620 E: info@fbhrpinf.org W: www.fbhrpinf.org

FBHRP's MISSION IS TO RESEARCH, COLLECT, AND DISSEMINATE KNOWLEDGE OF SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTIONS BLACKS HAVE MADE IN THE STATE OF FLORIDA.

FBHBP provides the general public with previously hidden or forgotten facts about Florida's African American history and heritage, including early African arrivals, Black pirates, the mound builders, Southern Underground Railroad routes, Seminole Maroons and the Seminole Wars, particularly the 1838 Battls of the Loxahatchee River in northern Palm Beach County and their aftermath.

Most notably, FBHRP has established, and continues to maintain vital links to the Black Seminole communities of Oklahoma, descendants of Trail of Tears survivors expelled from Florida by the U.S. Government.

FBHRP conducts and encourages research, organizes presentations, and produces displays and publications, including "We R Florida," the popular brief history by FBHRP founder, the late Isa Hamm Bryant (1943-2007), who pioneered the effort to bring these important stories to light.

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