

AFRICANS IN THE NEW WORLD

1493-1834



Adam Matthew Publications

This project is based on an exhibition held at the **John Carter Brown Library in 1988. Eighty-one rare printed works** were selected to be shown, organised into seven thematic groupings:

- The Slave Trade
- The World of Work
- Control
- Resistance
- Africans and their Descendants in Multiracial Societies
- Creation of an Afro-American Culture
- Slavery Attacked and Defended: Towards Emancipation

Dr Larissa Brown ensured that the exhibition encompassed the African experience in both North and South America, from Argentina and Brazil in the South to Canada in the North. The Caribbean is also very well represented.

This project serves as an excellent introduction to the history of **Africans in the Americas**, from the first direct shipment of slaves across the Atlantic in 1518, to the last known shipment to Cuba in 1864. It presents a variety of perspectives, including those of slave merchants, plantation owners, merchants, ships' captains, slaves and abolitionists. These sources reveal the complexities of the African-American diaspora and will help scholars to write a more nuanced account of the events.

Slave voyages are described in a number of works. Even though it was in the interest of the captain to achieve high survival rates, they also sought to keep costs to a minimum. The horrors of the middle passage are made clear. Works include *A New Account of Some Parts of Guinea and the Slave Trade* by William Snelgrave (London, 1734) and *Journal of a Voyage to Brazil and Residence There, During Part of the Years 1821, 1822, 1823* by Maria Graham

(London, 1824). The beliefs of the slaves about their likely fate are touched upon in Courte de la Blanchardière's *Nouveau Voyage Fait Au Perou* (Paris, 1751).

Personal accounts of **slave labour** come from all over the world, including *Gazophilatium Regium Perubicum* by Gaspar de Escalona Agüero (Madrid, 1647), *The English-American his Travail by Sea and Land: or, A New Survey of the West-Indies* by Thomas Gage (London, 1648), *Voyages à Buenos-Ayres, et à Porto-Alegre. . .* (de 1830 à 1834) by Arsène Isabelle (Havre, 1835), *Histoire Naturelle et Morale des Iles Antilles de l'Amérique* by Charles de Rochefort (2nd ed. Rotterdam, 1665), and *An Impartial Description of Surinam upon the Continent of Guiana in America* by George Warren (London 1667).



Slave uprisings were not uncommon. Works included here describe runaway slave communities and rebellions in north-eastern Brazil, Barbados, Jamaica, the Guianas, and St Vincent. Another volume describes fears that slaves planned to burn the city of New York. The only completely successful slave rebellion was in Haiti and this - and the fear that

this caused to colonial administrators and businessmen - is described in works such as *Toussaint L'Ouverture. Proclamation...A ses Concitoyens de la ville du Cap* by Pierre Dominique (Cap François, 1797), *A Particular Account of the Commencement and Progress of the Insurrection of the Negroes in St. Domingo* (London, 1791), *Código Formado Por Los Negros de la Isla de Santo Domingo de la Parte Francesa Hoi Estado de Hayti* by Juan López Cancelada (Cádiz, 1810) and *Manuscrit d'un Voyage de France à Saint-Domingue, à la Havanne et aux Unis Etats D'Amérique* (1816).



These sample volumes only hint at the richness of the collection. These materials will find a ready place in any university supporting research into the issues of slavery, the African diaspora and the origins of African-American culture and society.

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