

# 1

## Wooden Yokes Used in Slave Coffles, Senegal

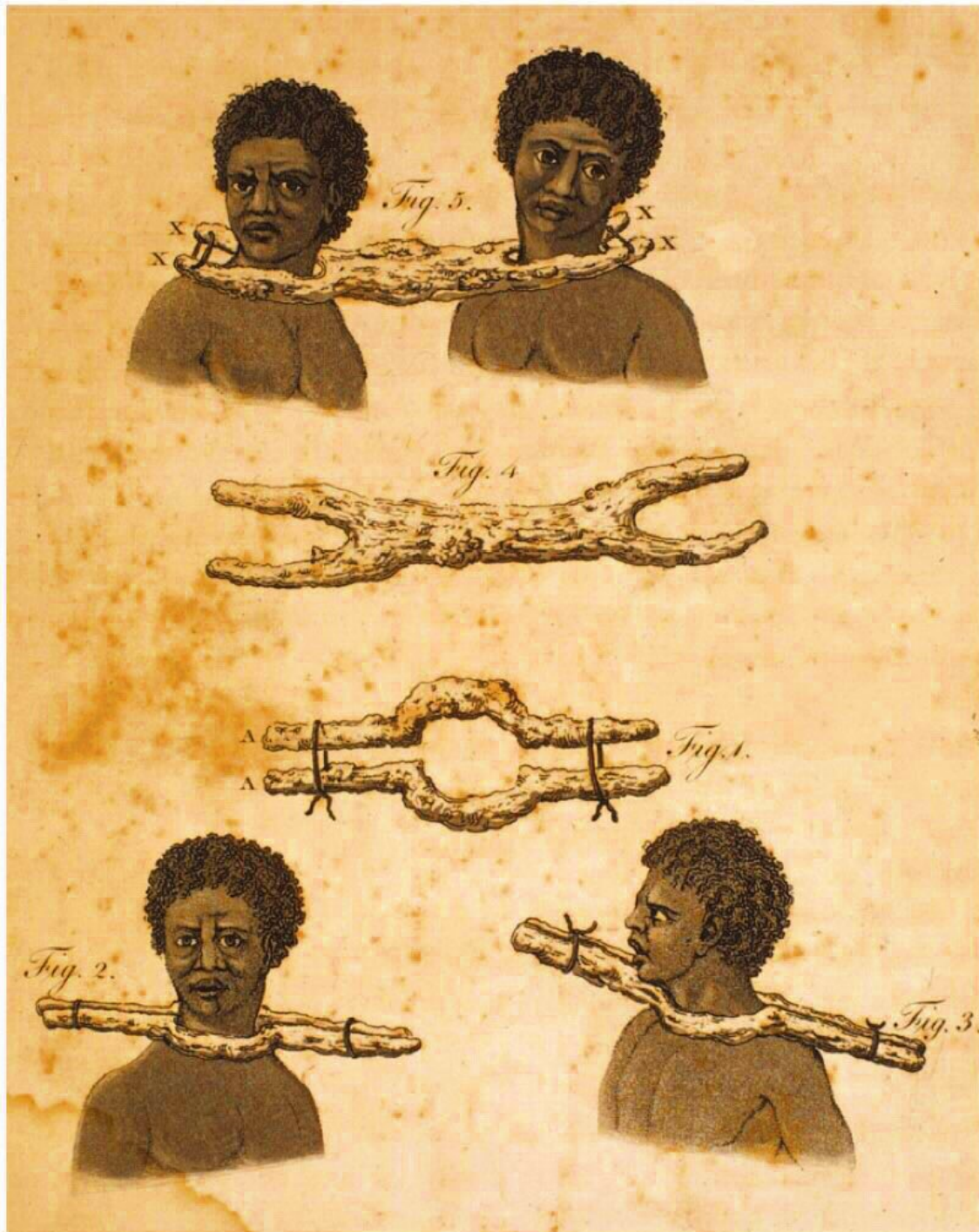


Illustration from *Letters on the slave-trade, and the state of the natives in those parts of Africa, . . . contiguous to Fort St. Louis and Goree* by Thomas Clarkson (London, 1791), plate 2, facing p. 36, figures 1-5. From "The Atlantic Slave Trade and Slave Life in the Americas: A Visual Record," by Jerome S. Handler and Michael L. Tuite Jr., an online exhibition available at <http://hitchcock.itc.virginia.edu/Slavery/>.

# # 2

## Captured!

. . . I was born, in the year 1745, in a charming fruitful vale, named Essaka. . . . \*

My father was one of [the] elders or chiefs . . .

As I was the youngest of the sons, I became, of course, the greatest favourite with my mother, and was always with her; and she used to take particular pains to form my mind. . . . In this way I grew up till I was turned the age of eleven, when an end was put to my happiness in the following manner . . .

One day, when all our people were gone out to their works as usual, and only I and my dear sister were left to mind the house, two men and a woman got over our walls, and in a moment seized us both, and, without giving us time to cry out, or make resistance, they stopped our mouths, and ran off with us into the nearest wood. Here they tied our hands, and continued to carry us as far as they could, till night came on, when we reached a small house, where the robbers halted for refreshment, and spent the night. We were then unbound, but were unable to take any food . . . The next morning we left the house, and continued traveling all the day. For a long time we had kept the woods, but at last we came into a road which I believed I knew. I had now some hopes of being delivered; for we had advanced but a little way before I discovered some people at a distance, on which I began to cry out for their assistance: but my cries had no other effect than to make them tie me faster and stop my mouth, and then they put me into a large sack.

\* Essaka was a village in the ancient Benin Kingdom, which was a powerful African kingdom located in present-day Nigeria.

From "The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African, Written by Himself," in *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature*, edited by Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Nellie Y. McKay (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997), p. 141, 142, 151-152.



# 4

**Sold!**

We were conducted immediately to the merchant's yard, where we were all pent up together like so many sheep in a fold, without regard to sex or age....

We were not many days in the merchant's custody before we were sold after their usual manner, which is this: — On a signal given, (as the beat of a drum) the buyers rush at once into the yard where the slaves are confined, and make choice of that parcel they like best. The noise and clamour with which this is attended, and the eagerness visible in the countenances of the buyers, serve not a little to increase the apprehensions of the terrified Africans... In this manner, without scruple, are relations and friends separated, most of them never to see each other again.

From "The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African, Written by Himself," in *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature*, edited by Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Nellie Y. McKay (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997), p. 160-161.

# 5

**Africans Forced to Dance on Deck of Slave Ship**

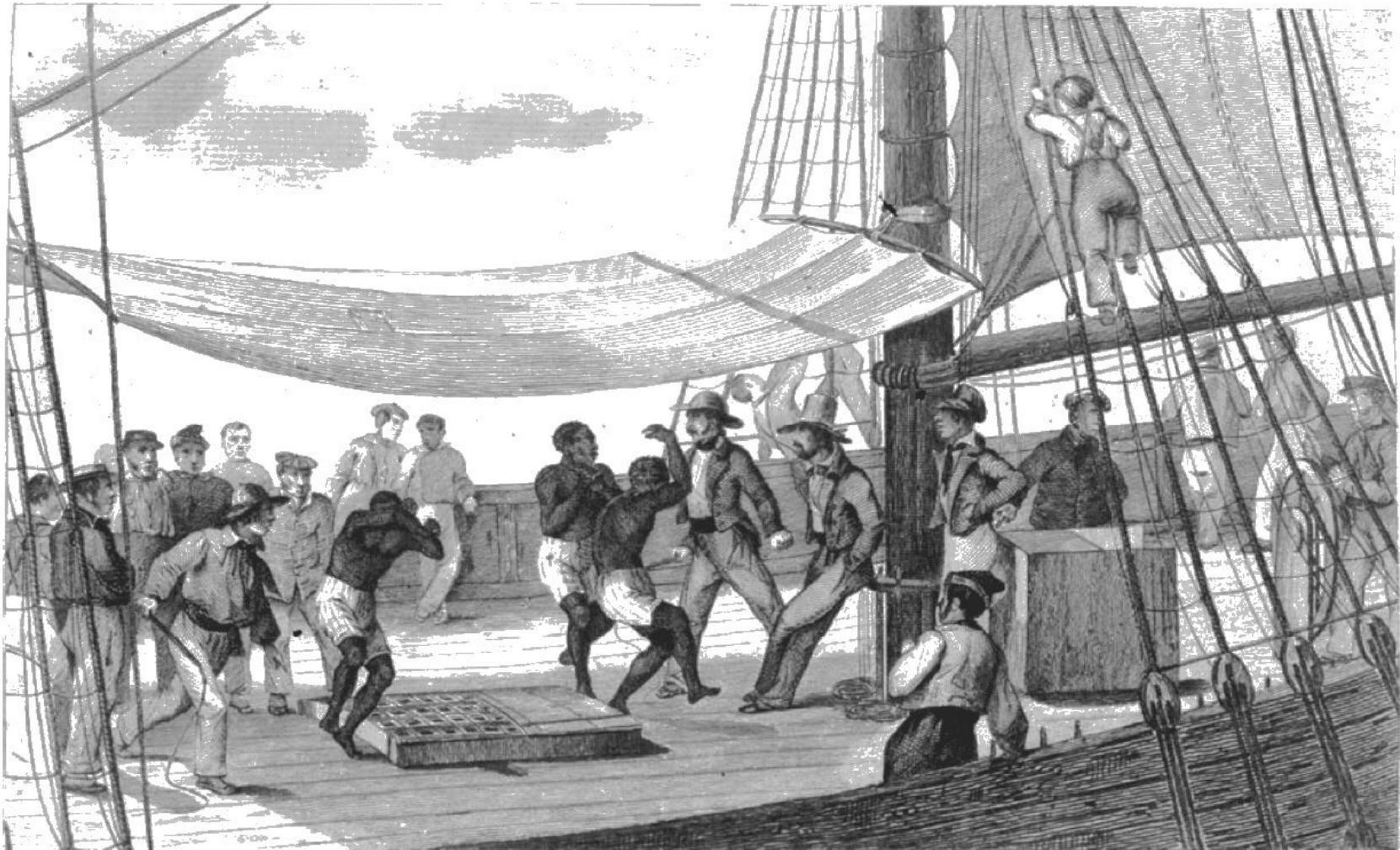


Illustration from *La France Maritime*, edited by Amédée Grehan, vol. 3, facing p. 179. From "The Atlantic Slave Trade and Slave Life in the Americas: A Visual Record," by Jerome S. Handler and Michael L. Tuite Jr., an online exhibition available at <http://hitchcock.its.virginia.edu/Slavery/>.



## The Voyage

The first object which saluted my eyes when I arrived on the coast was the sea, and a slave ship, which was . . . waiting for its cargo. These filled me with astonishment, which was soon converted into terror when I was carried on board. I was immediately handled and tossed up . . . When I looked round the ship too and saw a large furnace of copper boiling, and a multitude of black people of every description chained together, every one of their countenances expressing dejection and sorrow, I no longer doubted of my fate; and quite overpowered with horror and anguish, I fell motionless to the deck and fainted. . . .

I was not long suffered to indulge my grief; 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, nor had I the least desire to taste any thing. I now wished for the last friend, death, to relieve me; but soon, to my grief, two of the white men offered me eatables; and on my refusing to eat, one of them held me fast by the hands . . . and tied my feet, while the other flogged me severely. . . .

The stench of the hold . . . was so intolerably loathsome, that it was dangerous to remain there for any time, and some of us had been permitted to stay on the deck for the fresh air; but now that the whole ship's cargo were confined together, it became absolutely pestilential. The closeness of the place, and the heat of the climate, added to the number in the ship, which was so crowded that each had scarcely room to turn himself, almost suffocated us. This produced copious perspirations, so that the air soon became unfit for respiration, from a variety of loathsome smells, and brought on a sickness among the slaves, of which many died . . . This wretched situation was again aggravated by the galling of the chains . . . and the filth of the necessary tubs, into which the children often fell, and were almost suffocated.

From "The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African, Written by Himself," in *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature*, edited by Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Nellie Y. McKay (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997), p. 157, 159.

# 7

Advertisement for Slave Sale, Charleston, South Carolina

**TO BE SOLD**, on board the  
Ship *Bance-Island*, on tuesday the 6th  
of *May* next, at *Ashley-Ferry*; a choice  
cargo of about 250 fine healthy



**NEGROES,**

just arrived from the  
Windward & Rice Coast.

—The utmost care has  
already been taken, and



shall be continued, to keep them free from  
the least danger of being infected with the  
**SMALL-POX**, no boat having been on  
board, and all other communication with  
people from *Charles-Town* prevented.

*Austin, Laurens, & Appleby.*

**N. B.** Full one Half of the above Negroes have had the  
**SMALL-POX** in their own Country..

# 8

## Slave Sale, Richmond, Virginia

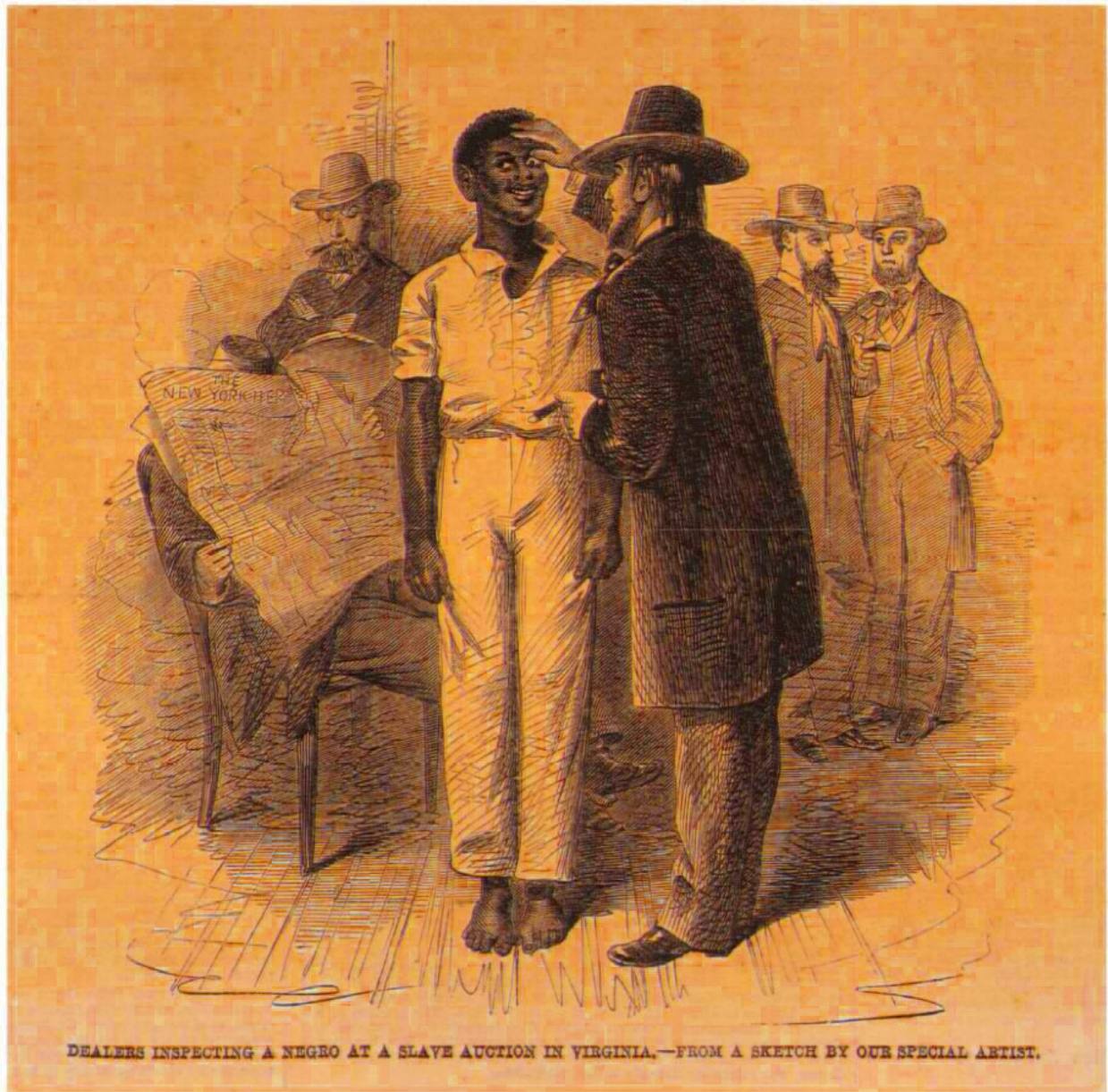


Illustration from *The Illustrated London News*, vol. 38 (Feb. 16, 1861), p. 138. From "The Atlantic Slave Trade and Slave Life in the Americas: A Visual Record," by Jerome S. Handler and Michael L. Tuite Jr., an online exhibition available at <http://hitchcock.itc.virginia.edu/Slavery/>.