



The Water's Edge Museum seeks to empower the young people of today to find their place in history and identify their own positive and unique voice when facing contemporary issues and challenges.

Celebrating how people of color on the Eastern Shore lived, and how their lives mattered.

THE WATER'S EDGE MUSEUM INITIATIVE FOR A MIDDLE PASSAGE CEREMONY AND MARKER AT THE PORT OF OXFORD, MARYLAND

Prepared for the Founding Black Families of Maryland
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Oxford, Maryland is the only documented Middle Passage stop on the Eastern Shore of Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia. Initially a major maritime tobacco port on colonial Maryland's Eastern Shore, Oxford is where many of Maryland's Founding Black Families first encountered American soil—and likely the spot where the ancestors of Frederick Douglass and Harriet Tubman arrived after surviving the horrors of the Middle Passage. Working with an international team of scholars, we have now documented details around the 4 Middle Passage disembarkations as well as the 25 Intra-American slave voyage stops to Oxford, Maryland. Special thanks are due to Professor Jane Landers, Mr. Jeffrey Moaney, Professor Gregory O'Malley, Dr. Lorena Walsh, Jules Walter of Antigua, Mr. Tabue Nguma of the UN, Ann Chinn, Ann Cobb, and Regina Hartwell of the Middle Passage Ceremony and Marker Project.

This history is relevant today, and planning to continue to honor this site has many opportunities:

- The last known documented Middle Passage ship docked in Oxford on August 11, 1772
- Interestingly, the last known documented Intra-Americas slave ship docked in Oxford on July 4, 1772. The Ship was known as the *Experiment*. The owners John Dickinson (1732-1808), James Lloyd Chamberlain (1732-1783), and William Nicols (1730-1774), all of whom were destined to become (European) founding families from Maryland's Eastern Shore
- Given the first two points, may we consider this: Next year marks the 250th Anniversary of BOTH of these slave voyages to Oxford, Maryland. We are looking forward to working with everyone to come up with an appropriate way to honor that anniversary as well

However conflicted they may have been, the Founding Fathers of America acknowledged that slavery was a critical building block toward creating the solid foundation of democracy. Enslaved persons—men, women, and children—they were the ones who fueled the engine that would become the new democracy. They were the human element in America's deepest stain—it's role in the global slave trade. These were America's enslaved Africans, and in their hard-earned way, Founding Fathers of America. At home, on African soil, they knew themselves as Ota Bendi, Kunta Kinte, Olaudah Equiano, and Ayubah Suileman Diallo. But once they were relocated to a plantation they were given new names: Toby, Kizzie, Nero, Jimbo, Modesty.

Through the Middle Passage Initiative, The Water's Edge Museum embraces, explores, and tells again and again in different ways, the complex stories of the Founding Black Families who harnessed their power, and placed it quietly but resolutely into the hands of

their descendants. The museum honors how they lived, and how their lives mattered. They were privately aware of the accomplishments of their forebears. They knew that, as healers, skilled craftsmen, respected artisans, revered nobility, because they knew that, they were resilient, creative, and they too excelled, exemplary in their own right.

In spite of pervasive racial injustice, they forged ahead to stake a claim in the America that needed them, but refused to acknowledge them for their crucial role. At least until now. Born in Oxford in 1910, Waters Edward Turpin was a person of color with deep roots on the Eastern Shore. Here are words from his last novel, *The Rootless* (1957). In it, he evokes the haunting memories of slavery and its aftermath:

Throughout these obvious distortions of the folk-mind, however, one thread of constancy weaves: a somber chronicle that begins in the foul belly of a slave ship, and ends in a gutted ruin.

To this day, Oxford, Maryland remains the only UNESCO-documented Middle Passage stop on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, Delaware, and Virginia. There is currently no sign commemorating this fact.

Many of the captive Africans were delivered directly to the tobacco plantations on Maryland rivers rather than to an official commercial port like Oxford. By the end of the 18th century, much of Oxford's seaport commerce had shifted to Annapolis and later to Baltimore. However, it remained a ship building center and supported a thriving seafood industry predominated by black watermen until the 20th century. The Water's Edge Museum and Bellevue Passage reach across the very river that carried so many souls to shore, and also served as the watery grave for those who didn't survive the arduous voyage.

We are working under the wise counsel of Ann Chinn and her associates at the Middle Passage Ceremony and Marker Project Foundation(MPCMP). It is our goal to work with them and their colleagues for an initial ceremony on 25 March, 2021 (to link with the UN), and then a well-planned significantly larger celebration including representatives from First Nation peoples, African Americans from all over the State, religious, cultural, environmental, and social justice groups, as well as the MPCMP team and State officials on the 4th of July, 2021 with a larger event on 4 July, 2022.

Following is a brief report of what we know so far (more research now in progress in an international collaboration among scholars working in the U.S., U.K., and the Caribbean).

MIDDLE PASSAGE JOURNEYS TO OXFORD, MARYLAND

1. Year: 1763 August 29
 Ship: Two Sisters
 Vessel Owners: Anthony Bacon, Gilbert Franklyn, Anthony Richardson
 Embarkation: Saint-Louis, Senegal 6
 Captain: Jeremiah Banning
 6 captives Deaths: 1
 Disembark at Port of Oxford: 5
 Sources:
 LR1764: *Lloyd's Register of Shipping*, 1764, 1768, 1776, 1778-84, 1786-1787, 1789-1808 (all published in London)
 BT6/3, 161: *TNA* (Kew, London)
 C05/750 *BNA* (Kew)

2. Year: 1770 September 6
 Ship: Lancaster
 Vessel Owner: Richard Worge
 Embarkation: Saint-Louis, Senegal
 Captains James Wilcox and Morgan Jenkins
 140 captives Deaths: 16
 Disembark at Port of Oxford: 124
 Sources:
 LList, 10 November 1769: *Lloyd's Register of Shipping*, 1764, 1768, 1776, 1778-84, 1786-1787, 1789-1808 (all published in London)
 BT6/3, 172: *TNA* (Kew, London)
 C05/750 *BNA* (Kew)
 ADM7/94: *BNA* (Kew, London)
 Walsh Maryland Database: Lorena Walsh, *Database of slave trading voyages to Maryland*

3. Year: 1771 July 13
 Ship: Success Packet
 Vessel Owner: Richard Worge
 Embarkation: Saint-Louis, Senegal
 Captain: John Kinghorn
 134 captives Deaths: 30
 Disembark at Port of Oxford: 104
 Sources:
 LList, 15 Feb 1771: *Lloyd's Register of Shipping*, 1764, 1768, 1776, 1778-84, 1786-1787, 1789-1808 (all published in London)
 LList, 22 Feb 1771: *Lloyd's Register of Shipping*, 1764, 1768, 1776, 1778-84, 1786-1787, 1789-1808 (all published in London)
 LList 26 Feb 1771: *Lloyd's Register of Shipping*, 1764, 1768, 1776, 1778-84, 1786-1787, 1789-1808 (all published in London)
 LList, 12 July 1771: *Lloyd's Register of Shipping*, 1764, 1768, 1776, 1778-84, 1786-1787, 1789-1808 (all published in London)
 LList 13 Sept 1771: *Lloyd's Register of Shipping*, 1764, 1768, 1776, 1778-84, 1786-1787, 1789-1808 (all published in London)
 LList 15 Oct 1771: *Lloyd's Register of Shipping*, 1764, 1768, 1776, 1778-84, 1786-1787, 1789-1808 (all published in London)
 BT6/3, 176: *TNA* (Kew, London)
 C05/750 *BNA* (Kew)
 ADM68/202, 129: *BNA* (Kew, London), Admiralty
 Walsh Maryland Database: Lorena Walsh, *Database of slave trading voyages to Maryland*
4. Year: 1772 August 11
 Ship: Success Packet
 Vessel Owner: Richard Worge
 Embarkation: Saint-Louis, Senegal
 Captain: John Kettle
 110 captives Deaths: 24
 Disembark at Port of Oxford: 86
 Sources:
 LList, 21 Jan 1772: *Lloyd's Register of Shipping*, 1764, 1768, 1776, 1778-84, 1786-1787, 1789-1808 (all published in London)
 LList, 24 Jan 1772: *Lloyd's Register of Shipping*, 1764, 1768, 1776, 1778-84, 1786-1787, 1789-1808 (all published in London)

LList 9 Oct 1772: *Lloyd's Register of Shipping*, 1764, 1768, 1776, 1778-84, 1786-1787, 1789-1808 (all published in London)

LList 15 Dec 1772: *Lloyd's Register of Shipping*, 1764, 1768, 1776, 1778-84, 1786-1787, 1789-1808 (all published in London)

BT6/3, 179: *TNA* (Kew, London)

ADM7/96: *BNA* (Kew, London), Admiralty

Walsh Maryland Database: Lorena Walsh, *Database of slave trading voyages to Maryland*

INTRA-AMERICAS SLAVE VOYAGES TO OXFORD, MARYLAND

Further to Middle Passage destination information, there are an additional 25 registered stops in Oxford from intra-American locations.

1. Year: 1696 August 2
Ship: Unknown
Embarkation: Virginia, port unspecified
Captain: William Sharp
8 captives Death: 1
Disembark at Port of Oxford: 7
Source
CO 5/749: *BNA* (Kew)
Walsh Maryland Database: Lorena Walsh, *Database of slave trading voyages to Maryland*
2. Year: 1696
Ship: Unknown
Vessel Owners: Wiliam Stevens and Nicholas Goldsberry
Embarkation: Virginia, port unspecified
Captain: Unknown
5 captives Death: 1
Disembark at Port of Oxford: 4
Source
CO 5/749: *BNA* (Kew)
Walsh Maryland Database: Lorena Walsh, *Database of slave trading voyages to Maryland*
3. Year: 1696
Ship: Unknown
Embarkation: Americas, port unspecified
Captain: William Edmondson
3 captives Death: 1
Disembark at Port of Oxford: 2
Source
CO 5/749: *BNA* (Kew)
Walsh Maryland Database: Lorena Walsh, *Database of slave trading voyages to Maryland*

4. Year: 1747 June 13
Ship: Sea Flower
Vessel Owners: John Wynn and Pat Donell
Embarkation: Rhode Island, port unspecified
Captain: Nicholas Tucker
2 captives Death: 1
Disembark at Port of Oxford: 1
Source
Walsh Maryland Database: Lorena Walsh, *Database of slave trading voyages to Maryland*

5. Year: 1749 August 16
Ship: Buxom Joan
Vessel Owners: Thomas Berkley
Embarkation: Virginia, port unspecified
Captain: William Thomas
9 captives Death: 1
Disembark at Port of Oxford: 8
Source
Walsh Maryland Database: Lorena Walsh, *Database of slave trading voyages to Maryland*

6. Year: 1749 July 23
Ship: Elizabeth
Vessel Owners: John Hagaman and Littleton Eyre
Embarkation: Accomac, Virginia
Captain: Bartholomew Petit
2 captives (1 male, 1 female) Death: 1
Disembark at Port of Oxford: 1
Sources
Minch, 193: Minchinton, Walter E., Cecilia King, and Peter Waite (eds.), *Virginia Slave Trade Statistics, 1698-1775* (Richmond, 1984)
Walsh Maryland Database: Lorena Walsh, *Database of slave trading voyages to Maryland*

7. Year: 1750 August 31
Ship: Little Betsy
Vessel Owners: John Deverell
Embarkation: Barbados, port unspecified
Captain: John Baddy
31 captives Death: 1
Disembark at Port of Oxford: 30
Source
Walsh Maryland Database: Lorena Walsh, *Database of slave trading voyages to Maryland*

8. Year: 1752 October 21
Ship: Rachel
Vessel Owners: James Dickenson
Embarkation: Antigua, port unspecified
Captain: Richard Bruff
38 captives Death: 1
Disembark at Port of Oxford: 37
Source
Walsh Maryland Database: Lorena Walsh, *Database of slave trading voyages to Maryland*

9. Year: 1753 July 21
Ship: Liverpool Merchant
Vessel Owners: Foster Cunliffe
Embarkation: Liverpool, England
Captain: Samuel Matthews
13 captives Death: 1
Disembark at Port of Oxford: 12
Source
Walsh Maryland Database: Lorena Walsh, *Database of slave trading voyages to Maryland*

10. Year: 1754 March 29
Ship: Charming Molly
Vessel Owners: Thomas Pratt
Embarkation: Boston, Massachusetts
Captain: Daniel McCarty
4 captives Death: 1
Disembark at Port of Oxford: 3
Source
Walsh Maryland Database: Lorena Walsh, *Database of slave trading voyages to Maryland*

11. Year: 1754 May 8
Ship: Upton
Vessel Owners: Foster Cunliffe
Embarkation: Barbados, port unspecified
Captain: Thomas Birch
31 captives Death: 1
Disembark at Port of Oxford: 30
Source
Walsh Maryland Database: Lorena Walsh, *Database of slave trading voyages to Maryland*

12. Year: 1754 March 29
Ship: Yuphan
Vessel Owners: Robert Wilson
Embarkation: Nevis, port unspecified
Captain: James Mitchell
3 captives Death: 1
Disembark at Port of Oxford: 2
Source
Walsh Maryland Database: Lorena Walsh, *Database of slave trading voyages to Maryland*

13. Year: 1756 May 8
Ship: Upton
Vessel Owners: Cunliffe Foster
Embarkation: Maryland, port unspecified
Captain: Thomas Birch
6 captives Death: 1
Disembark at Port of Oxford: 5
Source
Walsh Maryland Database: Lorena Walsh, *Database of slave trading voyages to Maryland*
14. Year: 1758
Ship: Unknown
Vessel Owners: Unknown
Embarkation: Barbados, port unspecified
Captain: Unknown
29 captives Death: 1
Disembark at Port of Oxford: 28
Source
Walsh Maryland Database: Lorena Walsh, *Database of slave trading voyages to Maryland*
15. Year: 1758
Ship: Luciana
Vessel Owners: Benjamin Phillips
Embarkation: Boston, M
Captain: James Stewart
4 captives Death: 1
Disembark at Port of Oxford: 3
Source
Walsh Maryland Database: Lorena Walsh, *Database of slave trading voyages to Maryland*

16. Year: 1761 September 17

Ship: Molly

Vessel Owners: John Miller and James Russell

Embarkation: Boston, Massachusetts

Captain: James Dean

10 captives Death: 1

Disembark at Port of Oxford: 9

Source

Walsh Maryland Database: Lorena Walsh, *Database of slave trading voyages to Maryland*

17. Year: 1762 August 30

Ship: Charming Anne

Vessel Owners: Edward Lloyd, Esq.

Embarkation: Montserrat and Guadeloupe, ports unspecified

Captain: Joseph Byus

2 captives Death: 1

Disembark at Port of Oxford: 1

Source

Walsh Maryland Database: Lorena Walsh, *Database of slave trading voyages to Maryland*

18. Year: 1762 March 10

Ship: Sally

Vessel Owners: Unknown

Embarkation: Americas, port unspecified

Captain: Charles Courtney

4 captives Death: 1

Disembark at Port of Oxford: 3

Source

Walsh Maryland Database: Lorena Walsh, *Database of slave trading voyages to Maryland*

19. Year: 1763 December

Ship: Judith

Vessel Owners: Unknown

Embarkation: Americas, port unspecified

Captain: John McKerrall

3 captives Death: 1

Disembark at Port of Oxford: 2

Source

Walsh Maryland Database: Lorena Walsh, *Database of slave trading voyages to Maryland*

20. Year: 1765 November 25

Ship: Nancy

Vessel Owners: James Howinson, William Lang

Embarkation: Registered in Antigua. Shipped from Philadelphia

Captain: William Lang

6 captives Death: 1

Disembark at Port of Oxford: 5

Source

Walsh Maryland Database: Lorena Walsh, *Database of slave trading voyages to Maryland*

21. Year: 1765 May 23

Ship: Ranger

Vessel Owners: Thomas Bragden, Josiah Simpson, Abel Moulton, Lewis Bean

Embarkation: Boston, Massachusetts

Captain: Samuel Paine

5 captives Death: 1

Disembark at Port of Oxford: 4

Sources:

CO 5/850, 76: *BNA* (Kew)

Walsh Maryland Database: Lorena Walsh, *Database of slave trading voyages to Maryland*

22. Year: 1766 September 23
Ship: Patience
Vessel Owners: Daniel Willcocks
Embarkation: Barbados, port unspecified
Captain: Unknown
3 captives Death: 1
Disembark at Port of Oxford: 2
Source
Walsh Maryland Database: Lorena Walsh, *Database of slave trading voyages to Maryland*
23. Year: 1767 July 16
Ship: Edward and Richard
Vessel Owners: Edward Lloyd, Esq.
Embarkation: St. Kitts, port unspecified
Captain: James Kent
12 captives Death: 1
Disembark at Port of Oxford: 11
Source
Walsh Maryland Database: Lorena Walsh, *Database of slave trading voyages to Maryland*
24. Year: 1767 November 24
Ship: Nancy
Vessel Owners: Joseph Clark and Henry Coston
Embarkation: Antigua, port unspecified
Captain: John M. Keels
5 captives Death: 1
Disembark at Port of Oxford: 4
Source
Walsh Maryland Database: Lorena Walsh, *Database of slave trading voyages to Maryland*

25. Year: 1772 July 4

Ship: Experiment

Vessel Owners: John Dickinson, James Lloyd Chamberlain, William Nicols

Embarkation: Barbados, port unspecified

Captain: Thomas Robinson

6 captives Death: 1

Disembark at Port of Oxford: 5

Source

Walsh Maryland Database: Lorena Walsh, *Database of slave trading voyages to Maryland*

LITERATURE: Middle Passage disembarkation in Oxford, Maryland.
 Excerpt from *The ROOTLESS*, Oxford, Maryland-Born Morgan State
 University Professor Waters Edward Turpin (Vantage Press, 1957)

Written by Oxford born author Waters Edward Turpin, *The Rootless* opens with the haunting scene of a slave ship arriving on a chilly night. Oxford remains the only documented Middle Passage stop on the Eastern Shore of Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia, and the gruesome detailed scene of the dead and dying offloaded is reminiscent of the kind of oral history that Turpin may have likely heard as a child. The book tells the story of the kind of psychological trauma inherent to so-called slave society from the perspective of both the enslaved and slave holders.

Please see below for an excerpt from Professor Turpin's book:

The chroniclers of the County have been steadfast in their omission of intimate details concerning Old Delafield and Shannon Landing, those two parcels of an original royal grant of some forty-six hundred acres, locked by water and swamp, remote from (or one might say "aloof from") Shrewsbury town and thrust like a neck into the Bay. Only suggestions seep through here and there in official records: sheriffs' bills-of-sale, deeds of manumission, and wills. For the outsider, the ghostly memories of Old Delafield and Shannon Landing are shrouded by time or hidden in the ivied graves of their adjacent burial grounds.

But, until the third decade of the present century, aged descendants of the blacks originally bound to the dark loam of Delafield's earth, given a chew of Brown's Mule or a generous pinch of snuff and a rocker by a roaring fire on a wintry evening when the lowland wind whipped eerie harmonies from giant pines, would still recall incidents and episodes handed down by their "Uncles" and "A'nts" in the good old times when a young-un had no indulgently skeptical smile for the pipe tales of his elders.

Throughout these obvious distortions of the folk-mind, however, one thread of constancy weaves: a somber chronicle that begins in the foul belly of a slave ship and ends in a gutted ruin, the walls of which still crumble on the shore of a hidden cove, shunned even now by superstitious crabbers and tongers. [Introduction]

CHAPTER 1

Hubert Delaney strode his impatience along the wharf and peered across the cove from which a slowly enlarging point of light flashed in answer to Sutton's lantern. Between strides he flicked ruffled sleeves at mosquitoes swarming from the marshy shore.

“Lanrick’s a blasted month behind time,” he fumed, dabbing his heavy jowls and glaring biliously at the wizened Sutton who seemed impervious to the August heat.

“Aye, Master Delaney, and so he be.” Sutton’s tone and manner marked him the lackey of the pair. “But mind ye, the wind’s been slack, and Lanrick’s a canny lad. Wi’ the Betsy Ann in the Bay, he must take care.”

Sutton coughed and glanced sideways up at Delaney. “’Tis a risky business—even wi’ dropping a bit of cargo in the Indies—this smuggling o’ duty-free blacks—.”

“Hush man!”

“—and Lanrick must have a care.” Sutton ignored the interruption. “Once caught by the royal navy, he’ll hang from —.”

[p.9]

“Will you bite your damned tongue, man!” Delaney’s glare became more bilious.

“But there’s little to fear, sir,” Sutton rattled on obliviously. “A clever lad, Lanrick be—“

“Aye—too damned clever.”

“Eh, sir?”

“Mind your own affairs!”

“Right clever wi’ the ladies, so I hear...” Sutton awaited the effect this would have.

Delaney’s mottle deepened. “You’ve a habit of hearing too much, you have! And you’d be hearing no more, had not my heart turned chicken five years a-gone!”

“Sure, and ‘twas only me fishnets I be tending the nigh I heard the chains and howls o’ the first blacks ye smuggled —.”

“Hush, damn you!”

Delaney’s glare checked Sutton momentarily, but he squared himself before the larger man without flinching.

“Now, now, Master Delaney,” he almost cooed, his tight little eyes widening. “And what other body in the County, I ask ye how, would ha’ come to ye and let ye know the secret was out?” I ask ye now! A friend I be —.”

“Faugh! Friend, indeed! Delaney took a threatening step but caught himself. “I’ve done finely by you, have I not! Made you overseer at a goodly wage —.”

“Aye!” In the dull glow of the lantern Sutton’s thin face reflected his irony. “Aye, and that ye have, sir — to make me party to the bloody business w’ little o’ the profit!”

“And what’s your grievance? Mine’s the risk, not yours! ‘Tis my ship, and the law’ll hold me to account —.”

“And who’ll be held to account w’ ye, sir?” Sutton tapped his narrow chest. “Who drives the beastly baggages to market and passes ‘em off as domestic? And what’s me recompense, sir? A shanty by the marsh w’ the niggers and a spavined wench to do for me woman and a spare guinea or so a year!”

“And what would you be expecting now?” Delaney’s glare was haughty down the veined bulb of his nose. “‘Tis better [p.10] than trusting to your blasted nets and oyster rakes!”

“Ye’ve plenty o’ land and to spare, sir.” Sutton’s tone became wheedling. “All I ask is the acre on Shrewsbury road wi’ a tavern Peter and the blacks could build. I’ve served ye well, sir, these five years. Aye! I’ve served ye well, Master Delaney...”

“Hmmm...” Delaney fingered his nose speculatively, his pale eyes glinting coldly. “So you have, Sutton. So you have. Mayhap—mayhap... We’ll talk of it later.”

The dull outlines of a three-master suddenly looming against the starless skyline broke off Sutton’s rejoinder.

“Quick!” Delaney pointed. “She’s in the cove!” The lanterns!”

Sutton hurriedly swung two lanterns atop the wharf-end pilings. A silent gray ghost, the Betsy Ann hove to under her jib, cautious of the shoals bordering the deep narrow channel that made it possible for a ship of her size to ease into the concealed cove.

A hawser thudded at Sutton’s feet as a strident baritone cracked:

“Make ‘er fast, Sutton! Look alive now and haul your jib, Mister Lockerman—be ye after shoaling ‘er, man? Hansen!”

“Aye, sir!”

“Hitch ‘em in scores bucks first—and fetch ‘em on deck. And look ye non o’ the gags and chains be loose! Lively now, men! Heave the plank and hustle ‘em up! Durkin!”

“Aye, sir!”

“Lead the way to the pen, a score to five o’ the crew. And keep a sharp eye out when ye skirt the swamp! I’ll break the skulls o’ the lot ‘o’ ye if there’s an escape! Look alive now!”

From wheel to bow the Betsy Ann was commotion. Hatches slammed. Men scurried to posts with firearms and muffled moans wove an obbligato to commands issued in the harshness peculiar to humans vested with sudden power over the defenseless: [p.11]

Pup wi’ ye now, ye black spalpeens!”

“‘Tis the hide from your stinkin’ behinds. I’ll be takin’ if ye don’t step lively now!”

“Say ye canna move, eh? Ye bloody pukin’ barst’ds!”

The cesspools of a dozen seaports had spawned them, and the brutal school of the sea had nurtured them. And brutes led brutes. And commands were punctuated by the smack of rawhide upon mortified flesh (applied with the butts of whips to avoid the drawing of blood, for scars would reduce the market value of Black Ivory).

And the Betsy Ann, a beauteous queen upon the high-seas, with her skysails, royals, and gallants bellied to a spanking breeze while her jibs dipped to the swells – the Betsy Ann now wallowed at rest in her true identity: a bedraggled and diseased strumpet from whose bowels poured a miasma of putrescent flesh and offal.

Sutton fingered his outraged nostrils, but Delaney evinced more of apprehension than of offended sense of smell. That rank stench meant disease; disease meant loss of profit.

“Lord, what a stink!” Sutton driveled his nausea. “’Tis well Shrewsbury’s to the windward or the whole town’d know a slaver’s about and—he retched a spume of vomit to the wharf’s edge.

“Ahoj there, master Delaney! What ails friend Sutton, a-sickening the fish wi’ his puke?”

Waving derision at Sutton, a tall, lean boy-man swaggered down the gangplank and brought his hand violently athwart the lackey’s shoulders.

“Well, here’s the Betsy Ann, Master Delaney,” he said, wide-legged and arms akimbo. “Safe after a rough trick of it and only one scratch to show.”

In the lantern light his gaunt, strongly boned face, with its nose of hawk’s swoop and its eye of the eagle’s gray, was devil-may-care and hardened by the sardonic curve of thin lips and pronounced jut of red-bristled chin. His voice was of an insolence that managed to give to the word “master” an inflection, subtle and barely perceptible, which conveyed the real relationship between him and Delaney. [p.12]

A mockery, light and pitched, played about the lips of the bushed eyebrows winging at intervals up the knotty-forehead scorched by tropical suns. And the bronzed bush of his pompadour, curving from a precise point at the middle of his brow to a short queue tied by a small green bow, was the crest of the challenging bully cock.

Delaney nodded inquiringly at the splintered gunwale near the Betsy Ann’s stern.

“Cannon shot,” explained Lanrick coolly with a mirthless grin. “French off the Indies. Poor marksmen, the French—.”

“Cap’n Shannon!”

A stocky fellow lumbered to the wharf, sweat spotting his beard as he gestured.

“What is it, mate?” Lanrick’s brows shot upwards, a sign of his annoyance. “Is it a ghost ye’ve seen, man?”

“That woman—the Coromant wench wi’ child, sir! *She’s giving birth!*”

Lanrick’s laugh was a bellow of scorn as he nudged Delaney.

“’Tis no white woman, Lockerman! ‘Tis as easy wi’ these blacks as emptying the bowels!”

“But ‘tis dying she be, sir!” The mate lifted his hands in horror. “No more o’ this bloody business I’ll have! Tis wrecking I’d rather off the Cornish coast than another trick o’ the likes o’ this —.”

“Pah!” Lanrick thumped the mate’s chest. “Stow the weak bellied gaff o’ ye!” He frowned to Delaney: “Your damned surgeon, sir, swilled too much rum and washed overside midway to the Indies. Where’s Sulla?”

“Sutton!”

Still gagging, Sutton looked up from his crouch at the wharf’s edge.

“Come, man,” admonished Delaney, “pull yourself together! Take my mare with you and ride to Delafield for Sula. And see that you don’t rouse Miss Louisa and her guests!”

As Sutton made for the shore, the mate hurried up the gangplank. Lanrick laughed again. [p.13] “I reckon Lockerman’s first trick on a slaver is too much for him,” he said. “Drunk he was when he signed on at Bristol. Squealed like a stuck pig when he found we were bound for the slave coast! Pah! But eager he’ll be to have his pay, like enough!” He scowled darkly. “Damn that Coromantee wench! ‘Twas she brought the French upon us.”

“How so?” asked Delaney.

“We had the blacks on decks to wash ‘em down and swab out the hold after losing a third o’ the crew and half o’ the blacks from the flux—.”

“Half!” Delaney was aghast. “‘Od’s blood, man! Where’s the profit to—.”

“we’ve a score over a hundred left,” broke in Lanrick. “And lucky you are to have that many! Fever and flux are curses this season. Besides, there’s the third o’ the crew that’ll claim no pay.” “But half—?”

“Damn it. I’ve done the best I could!” Lanrick’s eyes flashed twin witches’ fires.

Delaney placated swiftly: “Aye, lad, that you have!”

“Well,” resumed Lanrick, “unbeknownst to us below, the lookout died in the ‘nest, and before we knew it the French hove to out o’ the fog bank to south’ard just when this Coromantee wench made to jump overside. When the hands caught ‘er, she let out a howl could be heard in hell! We had to run for it.”

While the two men talked, the gangplank creaked to the tread of shackled blacks. Each file was led by one of the crew who held a lead rope looped chain fashion from neck to neck of the gagged captives. Sullen submissiveness and the gangplank. In the middle of that file one great-shouldered, lean-flanked giant stood out from the rest like a lord of the night. His was the face of the earth’s unconquerables. He was the water between wharf and ship. His lunge would have carried the file with him had not one of the crew felled him with the butt of a whip and another leapt astride his threshing legs. [p.14]

Delaney breathed relief at the averted suicide. “Good work there,” he called to the crewmen.

“You’ve an extra guinea and a rum at the Blue Lantern, Hawkins,” said Lanrick to the butt wielder, and leered as he added: “That is, if you can leave your wench long enough to meet me there tomorrow!”

Hawkins grinned and laid his cowhide vigorously upon the rebel’s back.

“Here!” Delaney caught Hawkins’ arm. “Leave off there! You’ll ruin the price o’ him wi’ stripes, man!”

“You’d better market him first chance,” advised Lanrick. “A headman in his village, he wa, and the wench wi’ child must ha’ been his favorite. They were taken together. Fought like bush cats, they did. Killed four o’ the crew and put the scar on Hawkins’s head you see.”

I'll be rid o' the rascal," said Delaney. "These damned Comamantees be worse than redskins, b'Christ...Sula's the only one I've kept because she's a good midwife. And at that, 'tis a witch I believe she be..."

Lanrick laughed his scorn. "For shame to believe such skullduggery, master Delaney! And you a good high churchman!"

"Aye—and never you mind the laugh!" said Delaney. "There be that's above the ken o' men...And there be talk among the blacks that Sula's set a curse upon you!"

"Pah!" Lanrick shrugged and pointed to the first of the women disembarking. Their half-naked bodies lighted Delaney's eyes and made his pulse throb.

"You've a prime lot, my boy," he said. "A number o' virgins among 'em, I'll wager."

Lanrick smirked. "Aye—and I've got a crew o' eunuchs!"

Delaney was too busy looking to gather the import of Lanrick's sarcasm.

"Mark the shapely filly wi' the calico strip!" He pointed.

"A likely wench, eh lad? Octaroon, eh?"

"Aye, and warm amidships, I've been told..." Lanrick's leering nudge was suggestive. "Speaks and reads English, she does." [p.15]

Delaney's tongue ran over his dry lips. "How old, lad?" he whispered.

"Sixteen or thereabouts, I'd say. Name's Delilah. She'll be handy for you, if Louisa's agreeable to—"

Louisa? What's Louisa--.

"I won the wench from her sotted English father at Calabar, said Lanrick. "He's a trader and likes his bottle and cards. She's to be Louisa's wedding present."

"Wedding present?" Delaney's pale eyes slitted. "And who says my daughter is marrying, Shannon?"

The grimy ruff of Lanrick's sleeve flaunted impudently to his chest as he bowed deeply in mock humility.

"Begging a most humble pardon, sire—I say so!"

"And what man be she marrying, might I ask?"

The two faced squarely now. The space between them crackled as the reddened glare of the boar clashed with the cool gray mockery of the eagle. Lanrick smiled thinly and strode into a small, low-roofed building that opened onto the wharf. A light flickered to a glow, revealing an interior fitted out like a ship's cabin. Lanrick bowed an invitation from the door to Delaney.

"Do come in where we may talk, Master Delaney," he said softly.

Sweated forehead betraying his agitation, Delaney entered. Lanrick motioned to one of two chairs at a rough table over which he leaned to look straight into the now leadened expanse of Delaney's face. Slowly and deliberately his right forefinger tapped the statement into the white ruff at Delaney's bosom:

"Begging your pardon, sire," he said, "she's marrying me!"

Livid and as if propelled by a spring, Delaney heaved to his feet. “You blasted blackguard Shannon! You had me answer before ye embarked on this voyage! I’ll kill--.”

You’ll do nothing but give consent!” Lanrick’s baritone held quarterdeck stridence now. “Mark you well what I say: Did you think I’d be risking my neck smuggling these [p.16] stinking blacks so that mine would be but a mite o’ the profits!”

“Tis not enough! What’s a miserable third for all the blasted filth and stench and disease o’ five years skulking the high seas and burning wi’ fevers on the slave coasts, and feeding on the slops and bilge while you ate and drank and wenched your ease at Delafield a-playing the fine gentleman? And did ye think I’d stand by and see you marry Louisa to that spindly lout of an Edward Perry so ye could wash away wi’ high-born blood the stain o’ your sire transported from Newgate three-score year a-gone--.”

...[p.17]