

RESOURCE LIBRARY
UNIT

Sunken Slave Ship

Over 150 years have passed since the last slave ship crossed the Atlantic. Though every effort was taken to hide the evidence of the then- illegal, not to mention immoral, act, remains of the wreckage have been discovered in Mobile Bay. In this unit, you will discover how historic preservation can impact a community as you decide what should become of these artifacts.

GRADES

6 - 8

SUBJECTS

Anthropology, Archaeology, Sociology, Conservation, English Language Arts, Geography, Human Geography, Social Studies, Civics, U.S. History, World History, Storytelling

CONTENTS

3 Lesson plans

For the complete unit with media resources, visit:

<http://www.nationalgeographic.org/unit/sunken-slave-ship/>

In collaboration with



UNIT OVERVIEW

The capture and kidnap of people from Africa to the Americas, known as the transatlantic slave trade, transported more than 10 million Africans against their will across the Atlantic Ocean from the 16th century until the early 19th century. Although this reprehensible practice was banned under U.S. law after 1807, the last-known shipment of Africans into the Mobile area in the United States came in 1860 on the *Clotilda*. When slavery was abolished in the United States, the *Clotilda* survivors could not afford to return to Africa, so they created their own small piece of Africa in Alabama, which they named Africatown.

In this unit, students learn about the experience of one of these formerly enslaved persons, Cudjo Lewis, whose words were captured by author and anthropologist Zora Neale Hurston in the book *Barracoon: The Story of the Last "Black Cargo."* They investigate the recent discovery of the remains of the *Clotilda* at the bottom of Mobile Bay, and learn what it takes to authenticate barely recognizable artifacts. Students listen to testimonies of the descendants of those who arrived on the *Clotilda* and discover how important the preservation of cultural heritage is to their lives today. Finally, students take on the role of a historian, making decisions on how and where the artifacts should be displayed. They develop an exhibit sketch, an exhibit brochure, and a written pitch to the Alabama Historical Commission proposing their plan for a future exhibit.

At the culmination of the unit, students are encouraged to continue their exploration of the power history can have on a community. They could develop a personal heritage museum at their own school that would highlight individual students' ancestry with photos and artifacts. They could also research historical information about their own community and plan and execute an "Our Community: Past and Present Museum Night" for school families and the community at large.

Use this [unit at a glance](#) to explore a brief outline of the materials included in this resource.

Use this [pedagogical support](#) to inform your teaching of this project-based learning unit.

Unit Driving Question: *How do artifacts and their preservation impact communities?*

LESSON 1: UNCOVERING THE PAST | 3 HRS
20 MINS



Students are introduced to Cudjo Lewis, one of the last survivors of the illegal slave ship, the *Clotilda*, and consider why his story is important to his descendants and others. Then, students investigate details about the *Clotilda* that led archaeologists to a positive identification. Finally, students participate in a Socratic seminar to synthesize their learning and connect it to their lives. This lesson is part of the [Sunken Slave Ship](#) unit.

LESSON 2: CONNECTING WITH THE COMMUNITY | 2 HRS 40 MINS



Students learn about Alabama's connection to Benin and the varied perspectives of those involved in the slave trade. Students explore sources that illustrate the transfer of cultural traditions and identify ways in which Africatown has changed over time. Finally, students consider how a museum exhibit showcasing the *Clotilda* could impact the community's pride and economy. This lesson is part of the [Sunken Slave Ship](#) unit.

LESSON 3: PRESERVING THE PAST | 2 HRS 30 MINS



Students analyze the differences between permanent and traveling exhibits and decide which type of exhibit would be appropriate for the *Clotilda* artifacts. Students develop a detailed, annotated sketch that visually represents a proposed exhibit for the *Clotilda* and an accompanying brochure before developing a pitch to present to the Alabama Historical Commission. This lesson is part of the [Sunken Slave Ship](#) unit.

BACKGROUND & VOCABULARY

Vocabulary

Term	Part of Speech	Definition
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Term	Part of Speech	Definition
abolition	<i>noun</i>	ending or wiping out of something, usually referring to the ending of slavery.
African slave trade	<i>noun</i>	(1500-1888) exchange of goods and services from Europe and the Americas in exchange for human beings from Africa. Also called the transatlantic slave trade.
Africatown	<i>noun</i>	small community located about three miles north of Mobile, Alabama, that was founded by previously enslaved people, many of whom were originally brought to the United States on the <i>Clotilda</i> , the last-known slave ship, after the prohibition of the import of enslaved people.
ancestor	<i>noun</i>	organism from whom one is descended.
anthropologist	<i>noun</i>	person who studies cultures and characteristics of communities and civilizations.
archaeological	<i>adjective</i>	having to do with the study of ancient people and cultures.
archaeology	<i>noun</i>	study of human history, based on material remains.
artifact	<i>noun</i>	material remains of a culture, such as tools, clothing, or food.
authentic	<i>adjective</i>	real or genuine.
ban	<i>verb</i>	to prohibit or not allow.
captive	<i>adjective</i>	captured or enslaved.
cohesive	<i>adjective</i>	unified or sticking together.
community	<i>noun</i>	social group whose members share common heritage, interests, or culture.
constructive feedback	<i>noun</i>	tool to enhance the teaching and learning process; highlighting strengths and achievements as well as areas for improvement.
culture	<i>noun</i>	learned behavior of people, including their languages, belief systems, social structures, institutions, and material goods.
descendant	<i>noun</i>	children, grandchildren, and other offspring.
dialect	<i>noun</i>	distinct variation of a language, usually marked by accents and grammar.
disparity	<i>noun</i>	difference or inequality.
enslaved person	<i>noun</i>	person who is owned by another person or group of people.
ethnography	<i>noun</i>	scientific study of individual cultures and customs, often associated with anthropology.
exhibit	<i>noun</i>	display, often in a museum.

Term	Part of Speech	Definition
export	<i>noun</i>	good or service traded to another area.
gallery	<i>noun</i>	area used to display groups of material organized by type.
heritage	<i>noun</i>	cultural or family background.
human trafficking	<i>noun</i>	trade of people for forced labor or sexual exploitation.
import	<i>noun</i>	good traded from another area.
in situ preservation	<i>noun</i>	protecting an archaeological asset while maintaining its original location.
industrialization	<i>noun</i>	growth of machine production and factories.
international	<i>adjective</i>	having to do with more than one country.
legacy	<i>noun</i>	material, ideas, or history passed down or communicated by a person or community from the past.
local	<i>adjective</i>	having to do with the area around a specific place.
mast	<i>noun</i>	tall, pole-like structure rising above the top of a ship, where sails and other rigging are held.
memorial	<i>adjective, noun</i>	something designed or written to preserve the memory of an event or person.
mores	<i>noun</i>	moral characteristics and customs of a community.
national	<i>adjective</i>	having to do with the government or people of a country.
nautical archaeology	<i>noun</i>	study of ancient ship construction and use.
perspective	<i>noun</i>	point of view or way of looking at a situation.
pitch	<i>verb</i>	present an idea or information in such a way as to gain support from one's audience, usually in the form of a short speech or presentation, which is referred to by the same word (<i>pitch</i> , noun).
poverty	<i>noun</i>	status of having very little money or material goods.
preservation	<i>noun</i>	protection from use.
preserve	<i>verb</i>	to maintain and keep safe from damage.
provenance	<i>noun</i>	origin or source of an object, work of art, or literature, the history of ownership of a valued object, work of art, or literature.
remnant	<i>noun</i>	something that is left over.
reparation	<i>noun</i>	payment of damages done.
restore	<i>verb</i>	to return something to its former status or quality.
schooner	<i>noun</i>	large sailing vessel with at least two equal-sized masts.
scuttled	<i>verb</i>	cut a hole through the bottom, deck, or side of a ship.

Term	Part of Speech	Definition
self-sufficient	<i>adjective</i>	able to support all of one's basic needs without assistance.
sketch map	<i>noun</i>	rough, hand-drawn representation of spatial information.
slavery	<i>noun</i>	process and condition of owning another human being or being owned by another human being.
trade	<i>noun</i>	buying, selling, or exchanging of goods and services.
vessel	<i>noun</i>	craft for traveling on water, usually larger than a rowboat or skiff.
voyage	<i>noun</i>	long journey or trip.



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