

**ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF
PRIMARY AND SECONDARY REFERENCES
TO THE
TRANS-ATLANTIC HUMAN TRADE
ON
THE SABINE LAKE AND RIVER REGION
(PORT ARTHUR, TEXAS)**

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for the Middle Passage Ceremonies and Port Markers Project 2023.

SELECTED SECONDARY SOURCES:

Barker, Eugene C. "The African Slave Trade in Texas," *The Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association* (Oct. 1902) 6, no. 2: 145-148. JSTOR, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27784929>.

Block, W. T. "Sabine Lake: Focal Point of the Illegal African Slave Trade," reprinted from *Beaumont Enterprise*, April 4, 1974 and February 4, 1984, <http://www.wtblock.com/slave.htm>.

Block, W.T. "Pirate Lafitte, Bowie dealt in slave trade via SE Texas," reprinted from the *Beaumont Enterprise*, May 22, 1999, <http://theusgenweb.org/la/calcasieu/block/slaves.html#8>.

Robbins, Fred. "The Origins and Development of the African Slave Trade into Texas, 1816-1860," Master's Thesis (University of Houston: May 1972), <https://uh-ir.tdl.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/ed6f7163-329c-46aa-9dc4-593a4c8e7042/content>.

Robbins, Fred. "The Origin and Development of the African Slave Trade in Galveston, Texas, and Surrounding Areas from 1816 to 1836," East Texas Historical Journal, <https://scholarworks.sfasu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1231&context=ethj>.

Kilpatrick. "Early Life in The Southwest-The Bowies," DeBow's Review (Oct. 1852), 380-381. HathiTrust, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.32044015559628&seq=414&q1=bowie>.

- States: "During his sojourn here Bowie mixed a little with society, and was very successful in securing a fair portion of the friendship of the better class of people. As the country improved and landed property became enhanced in value, he sold his land on the Bayou and used the means, thus obtained, in speculating in the purchase of Africans from the notorious Lafitte, who brought them to Galveston, Texas, for sale. James, Resin, and myself fitted out some small boats at the mouth of the Calcasieu, and went into the trade on shares. Our plan of operations was as follows:--We first purchased forty negroes from Lafitte at the rate of one dollar per pound, on an average of \$140 for each negro; we brought them into the limits of the United States, delivered them to a custom-house officer, and became the informers ourselves; the law gave the informer half of the value of the negroes, which were put up and sold by the United States marshal, and we became the purchasers of the negroes, took the half as our reward for informing, and obtained the marshal's sale for the forty negroes, which entitled us to sell them within the United States. We continued to follow this business until we made \$65,000, when we quit and soon spent all our earnings."

PRIMARY REFERENCES:

SlaveVoyages Database Link: **no arrivals are currently listed**

Newspapers: Specific references to vessels landed in the Sabine region

"Slave Trade," *Telegraph and (Houston) Texas Register*, July 5, 1843, 2. The Portal to Texas History, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph48242/m1/2/zoom/print/?q=african&resolution=6&lat=4645&lon=3426.5>.

- States: "The editor of the New York Sun lately published a statement that African negroes continued to be introduced into the United States by way of the Sabine. The National Intelligencer denies the charge. We have heard of but one cargo of slaves being shipped to Louisiana by the Sabine, and those were brought by an English Captain, on an English vessel about six years ago. With this exception, we do not think a single cargo of African slaves have been landed on

the Texas coast since the revolution. Slaves are so cheap in Texas and money so scarce, that the importation of African negroes would prove a very unprofitable business in Texas at this time. If a cargo of choice slaves were landed at this time at any of the port sof Texas, we do not believe they could be sold for \$100 each in cash, or good bankable paper. And such is the risk and expense attending this traffic, that even the most desperate smugglers would not attempt to import slaves at this price.”

Newspapers: General references to the human trade in the Sabine region

The Evening Post (NY), Dec. 19, 1836, 2, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/39643907/>.

- States: “It is said in the New Orleans papers of the 10th inst. That the Texan Government intends making a formal complaint to the Cabinet at Washington, against the practice pursued by American citizens of introducing into their territory, in vessels belonging to the United States, negroes coming from any other quarters than this Union. It is said also, that their Minister at Washington, will be instructed to ask of our government that a vessel be ordered to cruise along their coast to prevent such introduction of unlawful slaves, and also that a small force be stationed at the mouth of the Sabine to guard against their being landed on the coast of the United States, and immediately transferred to the Texan Territory. Adjacent to the mouth of the Sabine are numerous inlets and coves, where small vessels may easily be concealed, and from these points, at present very remoted from any settlements or garrisons, it is easy, without the fear of detection, to transport slaves across the Sabine, and thereby escape the laws of both countries, inasmuch as the constitution of Texas admits of the importation of negroes from the United States while it prohibits it from every other country. The Congress of Texas will also pass a law, prohibiting the introduction of any but slaves born in the United States.”

“The Slave Trade prohibited in Texas,” reprinted from the New Orleans Bulletin in the Fall River (MA) Monitor, Dec. 24, 1836, 2, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/590103393/>.

- States: “These praise worthy determinations of the Texan Republic, will certainly silence the enemies of that country, who have alleged the existence of an intention on the part of the Texans to open a direct traffic with the African slave coast, for the purpose of supplying their country with negroes. It will also dissipate the fears of the late fastidious intermeddlers in Texan affairs in the British House of Parliament, and prove to the world, that on this score at least, there can be no objection to the annexation of Texas to the American Union, and also, that in the wisdom of her provisions and justness of her regulations, she is every way worthy of having her destiny associated with ours.”

“New Orleans,” *The Morning Chronicle* (London, England), Jan. 28, 1837, 2,
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/392039700/>.

- States: “The New Orleans papers state it to be the intention of the leading parties connected with the Mexican revolt to lay a complaint before the Cabinet of the United States at Washington against the practice pursued by American citizens of introducing into the Texian territories, in vessels belonging to the United States, negroes coming from various quarters of the American Union. They are about soliciting the American Government to station a vessel along the Texian coast to prevent the indiscriminate introduction of slaves as at present; and another force they are desirous of having stationed at the mouth of the river Sabine, to prevent the slaves being landed on the territory of the United States, and thence conveyed into Texas. According to the law as it exists in Texas at present, slaves belonging to and born in the United States can only be admitted, those of all other countries being excluded. But this privilege, it seems has been taken advantage of, and slaves neither belonging to nor born in the United States have been smuggled into Texas in American vessels. This newly-awakened horror on the part of the Texians against carrying on a trade in slaves, either openly or indirectly, with the African coast has been engendered, it would appear, by a desire to remove the objections which exist in England, and which were mentioned by Mr. Ward in the House of Commons last session, as one reason amongst others why the Government of this country should oppose the annexation of Texas to the United States, supposing that Mexico was too weak to subdue her revolted province. Mr. Ward on that occasion maintained, and other Members agreed with him, that in the event of the Texians being enabled to carry out their independence, and successfully resist any attempts to subdue them by the Government from which they have seceded, they would not fail to make a traffic in slaves a principal feature of their operations. There is a very strong party in the United States anxious to see Texas annexed to that Government; but the whole of the abolition party, which is every day gaining strength and influence in the Northern States, is resolutely opposed to it.”

Telegraph and (Houston) Texas Register, May 9, 1837, 1. Portal to Texas History,
<https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapth47929/m1/1/zoom/?q=africans&resolution=4&lat=6850.663076201814&lon=3669.9769008831263>

- States: “Not unconnected with the naval force of the country, is the subject of the African slave trade. It cannot be disbelieved that thousands of Africans have lately been imported to the island of Cuba, with a design to transfer a large portion of them into this republic. This unholy and cruel traffic has called down the reprobation of the humane and just of all civilized nations. Our abhorrence to it is clearly expressed in our constitution and laws. Nor has it rested alone upon the declaration of our policy, but has long since been a subject of representation to the government of the United

States, our ministers apprising it of every fact which would enable it to devise such means as would prevent either the landing or the introduction of Africans into our country.”

“The Slave Trade,” reprinted from the *New York Observer* in *The Native American* (Washington, D.C.), July 27, 1839, 4, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/354103532/>.

- “The New York Observer of the 25th of May refers to a statement that slaves have for some time past been landed on the United States side of the Sabine river, and thence in large numbers transported into the territory of Texas. “We are happy to learn,” adds the Observer, “that the Collector at the Sabine has already been armed with a powerful force to enable him to defeat the plans of the slavers.”

“African and Texas Slave Trade,” reprinted from the *Caddo* (LA) in the *Buffalo (NY) Courier Express*, July 2, 1849, 2. Newspapers.com, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/343330553/>.

- “We have been credibly informed that there is a constant trade in the kidnapping of negroes going on between Africa and Texas. Year before last, there were several vessels, well loaded with negroes, brought from Africa and landed near the mouth of the San Bernard, and the negroes there sold. This black scheme should be looked into by the Government, and those engaged in it punished according to the law.”

The (Marshall) Texas Republican, Nov. 18, 1854, 2. Newspapers.com, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/320394523/>.

- States: “Proclamation. Whereas, Messrs. Hyde, Hodge & Co., of London, contractors with her Britannic Majesty’s government to furnish laborers from the African coast for the West Indies, have sent some of their ships to the coast of the Republic, offering an advance of ten dollars for every person who may be induced to emigrate: and whereas, the extinction of the slave trade has left large numbers of pre-dial and other laborers in the possession of the chiefs and principal men of the country, while the offer of ten dollars each is nearly equivalent to the amount for merely paid for slaves during the prevalence of the slave trade, and which operated mainly in producing and sustaining the wars by which the country was distracted: and whereas certain refractory chiefs are reported to have engaged with the agents of said company to furnish a number of laborers, and are further known to have in concealment near Grand Cape Mount a number of the unhappy victims of their predatory excursions; and whereas, complaint has been made to the government that persons are held, to be sent off without their voluntary consent, or the consent of their natural guardians: therefore, to prevent the abuses and evils which might otherwise result from the enterprise, Be it known by this proclamation to all whom it may concern, that the law regulating passports must be strictly observed, that vessels carrying, or intended to carry away immigrants, must come to this port with their immigrants on board, to obtain passports, in order that an

opportunity may be presented to the government to ascertain whether the emigration be free or constrained. Every violation of the law regulating passports will be visited with the utmost penalty of the law in that case made and provided. Done at Monrovia, this 26th day of February ... J.J. Roberts”

“Whar Did Ye Come From?” *Anti-Slavery Bugle* (New Lisbon, OH), Dec. 15, 1855. Chronicling America:
<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83035487/1855-12-15/ed-1/seq-3/>.

- “This question occasionally suggests itself to new comers in Texas on meeting with certain tattooed Africans, who bear upon their faces the lines of beauty traced by fish bones in the jungles of Africa. The comparatively young look of some of these sable sons of the third continent occasionally leads to surmises that somebody has violated the laws of the United States or the former Republic of Texas, declaring the African trade to be piracy. Such a suspicion is unjust, so far as we are informed. While Texas was a part of Mexico, these strange people are said to have dropped down on the coast occasionally in a somewhat mysterious way like frogs in a shower. No statistics, however were preserved previous 1835. In that year it is shrewdly suspected that the American schooner Shenandoah landed 183, and the schooner Harriet 40 African negroes from Cuba, at the mouth of San Bernard. The next year it is surmised that an unknown schooner landed 40 somewhere between Velasco and Caney, and another vessel 200 at the Sabine; the latter being carried into Louisiana. All this was amid the confusion of the Texas revolution. There was a suspicion that 41 others were landed in the neighborhood of the Brazos, in the winter of 1837-1838, but this needs confirmation. — Galveston (Texas) Civilian.”

“Importation of Africans,” *The Nevada (CA) Democrat*, April 13, 1859. Chronicling America:
<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026881/1859-04-13/ed-1/seq-3/>.

- States: “A letter from Texas states that six hundred slaves from Africa have been brought into that State within the last few weeks, and that more are soon expected.”

“Another Importation of Native Africans,” *Des Arc (AR) Citizen*, June 22, 1859. Chronicling America,
<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn89051343/1859-06-22/ed-1/seq-2/>.

- States: “The Richmond (Texas) Reporter, of the 14th inst., contains the following advertisement: For Sale.—Four hundred likely African negroes, lately landed upon the coast of Texas. Said negroes will be sold upon the most reasonable terms. One third down, the remainder in one and two years, with eight percent. Interest. For further information inquire of C.K.C., of Houston, or L.R.G., Galveston.”

“The Slave Trade in Full Blast,” Muscatine (IA) Weekly Journal, May 11, 1860. Chronicling America, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84027253/1860-05-11/ed-1/seq-2/>.

- States: “The Government has received reliable information that a cargo of Africans has been successfully landed upon the coast of Texas very recently, and a secret agent from the Land Office has been dispatched to that quarter for more definite information.”

Richmond (VA) Daily Whig, July 18, 1860. Chronicling America, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84024656/1860-07-18/ed-1/seq-2/>.

- States: “A letter from Brownsville to the New Orleans Crescent says that there is considerable talk in the community about three or four hundred negroes sold to have been landed on this coast, within thirty or forty miles of Brazos Santiago. It is positively asserted to be a fact, and there is no reason to disbelieve it, for the rich farmers in the central districts of Texas are known to have a large number of Africans who do not understand how to speak the American tongue, such has been the case for the last ten years.”

Congressional Documents

Adams, Ephraim Douglass, ed. *British Diplomatic Correspondence Concerning the Republic of Texas, 1838-1846* (Austin, TX: Texas State Historical Association, 1918. Library of Congress source link:

<https://www.loc.gov/resource/gdcmassbookdig.britishdiplomati00grea/?st=pdf&r=-0.3%2C0%2C1.6%2C1.6%2C0&pdfPage=278>.

Link to PDF: <https://tile.loc.gov/storage-services/public/gdcmassbookdig/britishdiplomati00grea/britishdiplomati00grea.pdf>

- P. 12-14 Crawford to Pakenham, New Orleans, May 26, 1837. “That notwithstanding the declaration of piracy. Slaves have been imported directly into Texas I lament to say is but too true, and whilst I make this statement it is due to the Government and especially to the President, that I should declare my conviction of their having tried every means in their power to detect the perpetrators and bring them to Justice.—I have good reason to believe that there is still one or more American Vessels employed in this most detestable traffick, landing the Slaves on the East Side of the Sabine and so evading the Laws of Texas.”
- P. 257 “1836. “This year a Schooner (name unascertained) conveyed 40 Slaves from Cuba to the Port of Velasco, where part of them were landed, but a Collector of Customs being stationed at that Port, the Schooner was ordered off, and she landed the remainder at Caney Creek. In the Autumn of the same year (1836) a Schooner under the Spanish flag. Commanded by one Moro, a Spaniard, and owned by a person named Coigly, born of American parents at Matanzas, and supposed to have carried 200 Slaves from Cuba, ran up the liver Sabine, which divides the United States

and Texas. It is not known, here, whether the Slaves were landed or not. There is a story that the owner, Coigly, who was on board, was murdered, and that the Spanish Master went off with Cargo and Schooner.”

MAPS:

1840. “Sabine Pass and mouth of the river Sabine in the sea.” Washington: Corps of Topographical Engineers, 1840. Signed: J.D. Graham, Major, U.S. Top Engineers. Library of Congress:

[https://www.loc.gov/resource/g4032s.ct011476/?r=0.055,0.461,0.728,0.455,0.](https://www.loc.gov/resource/g4032s.ct011476/?r=0.055,0.461,0.728,0.455,0)