

GOODSPEED MUSICALS

AUDIENCE INSIGHTS

AMAZING GRACE

AN EPIC NEW MUSICAL



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The Max Showalter Center for
Education in Musical Theatre

AMAZING GRACE

The Norma Terris Theatre
May 17 - June 10, 2012

MUSIC AND LYRICS BY
CHRISTOPHER SMITH

BOOK BY
ARTHUR GIRON
&
CHRISTOPHER SMITH

SCENIC DESIGN BY
BEOWULF BORITT

COSTUME DESIGN BY
TONI-LESLIE JAMES

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MUSICALS BY
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AMAZING GRACE

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Audience Insights for *Amazing Grace* was prepared by
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SHOW SYNOPSIS

ACT I

On December 24, 1739, 14 year old John Newton is with his family and friends celebrating the Christmas season at his home in Chatham, England. Everyone is gathered around the piano singing a song that John has composed. Mary Catlett, 14, stands behind John as he plays, Mrs. Newton, John's mother, sits beside him in a wheelchair, and many others are among them enjoying the festivities. Mrs. Newton, gravely ill, speaks to John and Mary about their future and they all toast to Captain Newton, John's father, who is away on a sailing expedition.

The scene fades and John appears with Mary at Mrs. Newton's grave. Captain Newton enters with a sea bag slung across one of his arms and a gift in the other. The Captain shows little sympathy for the sadness that his son feels but hands him the gift. It is a small model of the ship, the *Greyhound*, which Captain Newton says is John's future. John becomes concerned because he had plans to pursue music at a conservatory. Captain Newton insists that John needs to forget this dream and become a man. John says goodbye to Mary and boards the ship with his father.

John and Captain Newton are at sea for several years. In December 1743, they approach the docks of Chatham, England. John and Mary greet each other, and Mary explains that she thought sailing was only temporary for John. John expresses that he wants to own a ship. As Mary notices a drastic change in John, the women are asked to leave the docks, but she stays and hides. A line of chained slaves are led down the plank of the ship that John and Captain Newton just docked. There are whips cracking as the slaves are led to a holding pen where they remain as John auctions them off one-by-one. When he opens up bidding for a pregnant slave, Mary, feels like she no longer knows him.

A group of hooded men hurry to the pregnant slave and unchain her. John is knocked to the ground in the chaos and notices Mary, who has been there the whole time. The hooded men rush the slave away from the scene and freeze in front of Mary as they are about to exit. Mary, showing compassion for the woman, unfastens her cloak and gently places it around the slave's shoulders. John struggles to his feet, the hooded men pass out of view with the female slave, and a gunshot is fired. The redcoats enter, followed by Major Gray, Captain Newton, and Hawies. The Redcoats accuse Mary of hiding and being on the lookout for the hooded men, but Captain Newton convinces Major Gray to let her go. Major Gray then offers Mary his cloak, noting that he will be by to retrieve it later, and authoritatively orders John to go find the pregnant slave.

Mary goes home and Mrs. Catlett, her mother, inquires about the foreign cloak that Mary is wearing. Mary informs her mother that it belongs to Major Gray and her mother begins to gush about how handsome and royal he is. Mary, uninterested in the prospect, refuses to join in on her mother's gushing but Mrs. Catlett insists that Mary be

accepting and receptive to Major Gray.

Nanna, Mary's maidservant, enters with Mary's cloak and says that she found it on the front porch. Mary goes to hang up her cloak and a letter from abolitionists of Chatham falls from the pocket. The abolitionists commend Mary for her compassion towards the pregnant slave at the dock and invite her to contact them. If she chooses to, she must "display something conspicuously yellow at the ball" that evening. Nanna tries to discourage Mary from joining the abolitionists, saying that slavery is now a part of life and that those people will die in jail cells. In response, Mary asks Nanna about what happened to her and how she became a slave. Nanna begins by telling Mary her real name, Ayotunde, and then tells the story of her capture.

At the ball, Mary, wearing a yellow dress, dances with Major Gray and John dances with Sophie, Mary's cousin. The Redcoats enter dragging two badly beaten abolitionists and the pregnant slave, who is in chains and bloodied. Major Gray approaches Newton rubbing in the fact that the Redcoats took care of the work that John and his civil authorities were unable to do. Major Gray asks if there is anything more that he can take care of for John and leaves with Mary. As she exits, a waiter slips Mary a note. She quickly reads it as the ball fades around her and she is on High Street, searching for an address.



Chris Peluso, Charles E. Wallace, Abdur-Rahim Jackson, Tyrone Davis, Jr. and Jonathan Burke. Photo by Diane Sobolewski.

SHOW SYNOPSIS

Mary finds the building that she is looking for and is welcomed by the abolitionists who helped the pregnant slave escape from the auction. They ask for Mary's help and request that she enter a relationship with Major Gray so she can spy. She agrees to join them.

Meanwhile, John is at the Chatham cemetery. A group of Navy sailors approach and attempt to force John into the service. The law states that the press-gang can impress service upon any man who isn't engaged in meaningful labor. John explains his position on the *Greyhound* and tells them who his father is, but the Navy sailors are unmoved. John tries to escape but the sailors club him and he falls unconscious.

Major Gray discusses John's capture with Captain Newton. Major Gray suggests that John's father leave him so that John can find "purpose and self-control in the service." Captain Newton agrees with Major Gray but decides to ask the captain of the Navy's ship to promote John to a midshipman rather than a common sailor.

Back in Chatham, Major Gray proposes to Mary. He expresses, since he is a relative of King George II, that in order to receive the consent to marry he must introduce Mary to the King. Mary meets Tyler, an emancipated slave who works as an abolitionist in Chatham, at St. Mary's Church and expresses that they have gone too far. She tells Tyler that Major Gray proposed to her and she has to meet the King so he can give his consent. Tyler strongly urges that Mary follow through so that she can confront the King publicly about the evils of slavery.

ACT II

John and Thomas, John's slave who serves on the ship with him, find their way to the jungle of Sierra Leone. John and Thomas are surrounded by African warriors with their Princess who welcomes the delirious John Newton to the island and strikes him with a whip. Princess Peyai is about to kill John, but Thomas informs her that John's father is head of the Royal Africa Company. She tries to get more information out of John but he refuses.

As suggested by one of her warriors, Princess Peyai sends a ransom letter for John to Captain Newton. She requests 5000 pound sterling for his safe release. Captain Newton orders Hawies to ready the ship and prepares to sail to Sierra Leone to rescue his son. Mary arrives at the dock to wish Captain Newton a safe trip and to give him a letter for John.

Out of necessity, John gives the Princess information

about the Royal Africa Company. The Princess keeps him alive and a month later, John now wears the garb of a slave trader. He is in charge of deciding how to break up families and assign slaves to ships. He also appears to have an amicable kinship with Princess Peyai.

Thomas approaches John and tells him that the Princess is displeased with him because he spoke up for one of her slaves and now she plans to sell Thomas as a slave bound for Barbados. Thomas asks John to help but John feels that if he shows compassion for a slave he will lose the Princess's trust. After years of loyalty to John, Thomas cannot believe that he will not help him in his greatest time of need.

Captain Newton arrives in Sierra Leone to bring John home. The Princess has her warriors seize John by the arms but, after a short scuffle, Captain Newton shoots one of the warriors and the others release John. As Captain Newton moves to John, the Princess reaches for a dropped pistol and shoots Captain Newton. John then takes his father's pistol from his hands and shoots Princess Peyai. Captain Newton's sailors take him back to the ship and John orders them to leave Princess Peyai to die in the dust and burn down the village. Back on board the ship, Captain Newton's wound has become septic and he dies. John lays his father's coat over the ship's rail and unexpectedly finds the letter from Mary in the coat pocket. His father's death and the letter cause John to have a change of heart. He alters the ship's course and heads towards Barbados to find Thomas.

Meanwhile, in England, Mr. Whitley, Mary's teacher, expresses concerns to Major Gray about Mary working with the abolitionists. Major Gray sends a message to Mary, asking her to meet him at the jail cells of the Royal Dockyards. He has locked up Ayotunde, Mary's maidservant, and threatens that if Mary does anything foolish when meeting the King, Ayotunde will be harmed.

Back in England, Mary and Major Gray attend the meeting with the King. Despite Gray's threats, Mary speaks openly to the room about her feelings on slavery. She is seized by Major Gray and the Redcoats. They hold her but she continues speaking, now directly to the King. As the King and Major Gray attempt to quiet her, John and Thomas enter. John joins in Mary's argument and admits he is one of the men with blood on his hands, but he learned that slaves have souls and that they are people. He also exclaims that Thomas was once his slave but that he is now a free man. Mary is touched by John's transformation and the two happily reunite.

Amazing Grace shows that a journey of faith can be extremely exciting (even harrowing) and yet still speaks to the deep yearnings of the human heart. In this way, the musical is much more than the story of a hymn. It is the saga of a boy becoming a man, and the sort of man he will choose to be. Will he be a reflection of his peers or of his successful but absent father? Will he allow himself to fall in love with a young woman for whom faith is everything, even though he himself has fallen far from God? What of his innate talent of songwriting and persuasion? Will this be used to amuse the raucous residents of his boarding school or will he rediscover the simple yet powerful faith his deceased mother sought to bequeath him?

CHARACTER SUMMARY

JOHN NEWTON: A brilliant, young composer who, upon the death of his beloved mother, is taken to sea by his father. John chooses to turn his back on both his talent and faith during his journeys at sea but finds his way back home to his true love, Mary Catlett.

MARY CATLETT: A beautiful, up-and-coming soprano from the English shipping town of Chatham. Strong in her convictions, she sympathizes with the abolitionists.

CAPTAIN NEWTON: John's father who is head of the Royal Africa Company, a successful slave trading business. He owns the prized ship, the *Greyhound*, which was the first ship that he and his son worked on together.

NANNA / AYOTUNDE: A West African woman who was abducted from her home in Sierra Leone where she lost her daughter, Konah. She is the Catlett's house slave/ maidservant.

THOMAS / KEITA: A West African man who is a slave to the Newton family. He serves as John's valet and accompanies him everywhere.

HAWIES: John's boarding school friend who now works at the shipping office.

MRS. NEWTON: John's devout mother.

MAJOR GRAY: The young military commander of the Chatham garrison, a position he was given due to his relation to King George II.

THE PRINCESS: A beautiful and seductive African slave trader who is a traitor to her own people in West Africa.

KONAH: Ayotunde's daughter who is enslaved by the Princess in Sierra Leone.

SOPHIE: Mary's dim-witted cousin.

MR. WHITLEY: Mary's vocal tutor and conductor of the town orchestra.

MRS. CATLETT: Mary's controlling mother. She is stolid, traditional, and seeks to preserve the status quo and keep Mary's behavior within society's expectations.

BILLINGSLEY: Captain of the *HMS Harwich*.

MONSIEUR CLOW: A French administrator who is an advisor and ally of Princess Peyai.

QUIGLEY: Leader of the underground abolitionist movement in Chatham.

TYLER: An emancipated slave who is a firebrand for the liberation of his people.

BRIGGS: An acquaintance of Major Gray and First Mate of the *HMS Harwich*.

DR. FORBES: Surgeon aboard the *Greyhound*.

GEORGE II: King of Great Britain, distant cousin to Major Gray.



Photo of Abdur-Rahim Jackson
by Diane Sobolewski.

MEET THE WRITERS



CHRISTOPHER SMITH (*Music, Lyrics, Book*) wrote his first musical at the age of 17. That musical was performed at the University of Delaware when Smith was a senior in high school. Smith had left theatre behind to work as a police officer and as a youth director at his local church when the idea of *Amazing Grace* fell into his lap. A chance stroll through the church school library led him to pick up a book about a person he hardly knew: John Newton. Chris became convinced that his was a story that could bridge the gap between ordinary experience and deep struggles of the soul.



ARTHUR GIRON (*Book*)

Arthur Giron has written 15 plays which are performed continuously around the country. Arthur's shows have broken the box office records of three theaters: the Pittsburgh Public Theater (*Edith Stein*); Urban Stages in New York (*A Dream of Wealth*); and Ensemble Studio Theatre (*EST*), also in New York (*Flight*). For many years Arthur helped develop the next generation of playwrights as he served as Head of the Graduate Playwriting Program at Carnegie Mellon University, home of the first drama degree in history.

In addition to his work in theatre, Arthur has received a commission to write an opera libretto for the Metropolitan Opera Guild. Arthur continues to teach and lecture at such places as Sarah Lawrence College.

Authors' Notes

The theatre has a rich tradition of using history as a jumping-off point to tell larger stories. From Shakespeare's *Henry V* to Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Evita*, liberties have always been taken to adapt history and make the past vivid and relevant. With *Amazing Grace* we have endeavored to not only tell the story of John Newton but also illuminate the struggles of ordinary men and women who risked everything to end slavery in Britain. Slavery still exists in our world today on a scale that early abolitionists could not have imagined. A new generation of abolitionists has risen up to join their forefathers in standing for the life and dignity of all people. The faith and courage of these men and women, both historical and contemporary, demand our highest respect and it is to them that we dedicate this work.

This production will be marks the first time that our musical is seen in its entirety by the public. It will also be the first time that we have dealt with the movement issues of what is a very active show. We have dancing, fighting, a chase, a battle. We will finally have the opportunity to flesh out those elements. Seeing the larger cast move within the environment of new set designs may show us opportunities we didn't realize were there. Goodspeed's sound team will also give us the opportunity to explore the soundscape of our various locations helping to draw the audience into our world. This is all new territory for this production brand new musical and the possibilities are enticing.

-Christopher Smith & Arthur Giron.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Creating the Set: A Ship at Sea



SCENIC DESIGN BY
BEOWULF BORITT

Behind a Goodspeed production is a wealth of technical and engineering expertise. The Scene Shop on the Goodspeed campus is one of the largest and best-equipped workshops in the country. In this facility, numerous craftsmen and women build, weld and paint all the scenery and props used in each Goodspeed show. Below are the set models for *Amazing Grace*. These models are built by the Scenic Designer to show the creative team and artisans how the set should look once it is complete.



THE VOYAGE TO GOODSPEED

By Christopher Smith and Arthur Giron

CRAFTING AMAZING GRACE: A NEW MUSICAL

Amazing Grace is an adventure/romance musical set within a backdrop of 18th century England, Africa and the Caribbean. We believe that people of all backgrounds are hungry for uplifting experiences that have relevance and authenticity. So, within all of the storms, battles, laughter and tears we hope to deliver a story of love conquering adversity and of characters awakening to a world in need.

THE ACCIDENTAL PLAYWRIGHT



Christopher Smith. Photo by Diane Sobolewski.

Writing *Amazing Grace* has been an adventure in itself. Our journey began when Chris, quite by accident, came across the story of a deeply conflicted Englishman named John Newton. A chance stroll through a library led Chris to find the story of this little-known English boy whose world was ripped apart by the loss of his mother and his father's insistence that he join the family business, which included slavery. John's moral and spiritual decline is all the more fascinating when viewed in light of the fact that he would later confront his own conscience and go on to help dismantle the vile institution he once served. Chris immediately felt that this story could become something unique in the Broadway pantheon and began to hear in his mind a triumphant, largely symphonic score which would match the epic nature of the story and harken back to the stage and film scores of the past.

The only complication was that Chris had never written anything professionally. His experience of the theatre had only been through high school and college productions, and though he loved the art, most of his amateur compositions were folk songs which didn't require him to read or write music. Despite a lack of credentials to support his dream, Chris decided to ignore the voices of doubt and proceed on faith alone. He wrote five songs and an outline of the story he wished to tell, then made a demo recording, playing the orchestra instruments one at a time through a keyboard and into a computer program he borrowed from his brother. He would then sing along in the best British accent he could muster.

These private efforts took on an entirely different tone when Chris mentioned his part-time mission (he was a police officer at the time) to a local business leader named Rich Timmons. Rich became so taken with the

idea that he offered to go with Chris to other business leaders in Bucks County, Pennsylvania. What followed was a scenario as unlikely as the plot of the show. Chris would sing the songs and act out his vision in a variety of places, including the head offices of wealthy potential investors.

Despite a climate of intense economic fear (the Great Recession of 2008 had already begun), it worked. People found the vision so compelling that they invested in the fledgling enterprise and pulled in others.

Encouraged by this response, the team decided to test the material on the public. Chris partnered with several area musicians who helped arrange and copy the music into a form that could be taught to others. A chance encounter led him to meet and explain the show to several cast members from *Les Misérables*, which was then in its second year of a Broadway revival. The first event, which featured three stars from *Les Miz*, drew 1250 people in a venue designed for only 600. Even more impressive than the size of the audience was the outpouring of emotion which followed. This convinced the team that more was at work than simple theatrics; the story had tapped into something deep in the hearts of people. Chris left police work to write full time.

NEW YORK, NY

The team decided to place the business of the show into professional hands. They hosted a reading in borrowed space inside the Empire State Building. The room was filled and the reception was very positive but only one producer actually attended. But that one was impressed. Carolyn Rossi Copeland, who has brought almost 30 musicals to the stage and served as Producing Artistic Director of the highly successful Lamb's Theatre in New York City, began to build the team which would take the show to the next level. Gabriel Barre was brought aboard as the director and Arthur Giron came in as both mentor to Chris and co-author of the book. Over the next two years the script underwent revision. It shed some of its more documentary-like aspects and deepened emotionally. It was during this time that the story transcended the life of John Newton and became a wider saga of humanity's fight against the darkest parts of its own nature.

Chris had always envisioned the musical as a love story between John and his childhood friend Mary Catlett (who would become his wife). The problem was that almost nothing was known about her. Carolyn, Arthur and Gabriel encouraged Chris to stretch beyond the limits of the historical record and pull in his own experiences of love, failure, and forgiveness. Mary became the one character who always believed in

THE VOYAGE TO GOODSPEED

By Christopher Smith and Arthur Giron

and prayed for John, even when he had rejected his faith and surrendered to the darkness within him. These reflections of Chris' own life experiences opened a floodgate which led to the creation of other characters and the crafting of story elements which made the musical applicable to the struggles and desires of people everywhere. The show began to grapple with the true nature of freedom and slavery both in the world and in the human heart. Arthur began to teach Chris from his experience gained through decades of crafting compelling stories for the theatre.

Over the years Arthur has written numerous works which explore the lives of historical figures. Upon joining the team, he set out to probe what becoming an adult really means and how misunderstanding society's expectations can lead the young into a host of evils. Chris had always felt that the story of John's relationship with his father was pivotal to understanding his deeper issues of faith. Arthur now encouraged the team to return to this focus, which had been minimized because it seemed to compete with the love story. Chris and Arthur worked for months to find the balance between the two.

PREPARING FOR THE GOODSPEED PREMIERE

Gabriel Barre guided the entire *Amazing Grace* development process and tested the results through a series of staged readings in New York City. It was at one of these readings that the Tony Award-winning producing team from Goodspeed Musicals first saw the show. The production was about to get the chance to prove itself in front of a paying audience. Gabriel, who has directed productions all over the world, has a keen sense of context and how one moment within a story can be enhanced or diminished by events around it. This led to some painful cuts in the material, not because the elements were not valuable in and of themselves, but because they drew focus away from critical points that needed to move to the forefront. In addition to crafting the story it was now time to assemble a larger team to bring the script to life on stage.

Preparation of all music elements moved into the capable hands of Kimberly Grigsby who serves as Music Supervisor. Kimberly's work on *A Light in the Piazza*, *Spring Awakening*, *Grease*, and, most recently, *Spiderman Turn Off The Dark* has given her a deep knowledge of how to work with actors and musicians to support the composer's vision. She worked with Chris to create a musical landscape which flowed from the action and kept the dramatic tension over the entire piece. As the Goodspeed premiere approached, Jodie Moore was brought aboard as Musical Director and Kenny J. Seymour (who is currently the music

director of *Memphis on Broadway*) was given the task of orchestrating the piece for the five musicians who will accompany the show from the pit and the numerous actor/musicians on stage.



First read-through at Goodspeed. Photo by Diane Sobolewski.

The Spring 2012 developmental production at Goodspeed's Norma Terris Theatre also afforded the first chance to explore scenic and costume design as well as choreography. The Tony-nominated designer Beowulf Boritt worked for months to craft a design that would do justice to epic scale of our story but would not overwhelm the limited size of the facility. His innovative use of elements that can be transformed for a variety of uses and the addition of dynamic movement, encompassing both actors and sets, actually allows the audience's perspective to change with the action. Benoit-Swan Pouffer joined the production as choreographer and began to tackle the dance and movement elements, which span two continents and two very different styles. His dedication to authenticity and artistry has produced key elements necessary for transporting the audience across time and cultural divides. Another vital part of drawing the audience in and establishing credibility lies in the period costumes. Tony nominee Toni-Leslie James took on the important task of envisioning and creating costumes for 27 cast members many of whom play multiple roles. The research that has gone into this and indeed all of the creative elements has been a monumental undertaking.

THE FUTURE

The Goodspeed premiere represents a chance to prove and test what we have been working toward for so long. We have a three and a half week rehearsal process during which the cast will learn the material and we will learn from the cast. We hope to refine our script and plan to continue trying new solutions through both the rehearsal period and the run. We hope to gain feedback from audience members that we can use to inform and fuel the next step in this odyssey to Broadway and beyond.

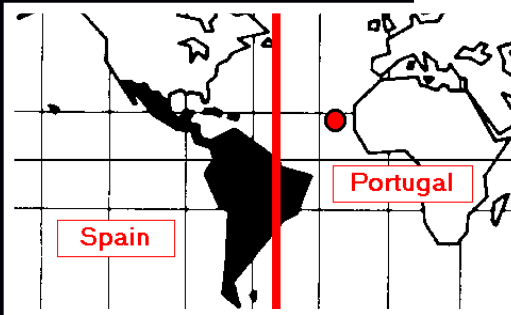
Glossary

Prince Henry of Portugal:

A Portuguese prince and soldier who sent many ships to explore and create maps of Africa. Also known as Henry the Navigator, he is known to have created the path for European overseas trading.



Treaty of Tordesillas: A treaty signed by Spain and Portugal which agreed upon the split of the Atlantic Ocean in order to make the Transatlantic Slave Trade more efficient.



Stronghold: A safe place dominated and protected by a specific group of people with similar beliefs.

Temporary Imprisonment Sites:

Temporary holding sites which Africans were locked in while waiting to be transported across the Atlantic Ocean by ship.

Slave Trader: A person who partakes in the capturing, transporting, and selling of people in order to make a profit.

THE SLAVE TRADE

THE TRANSATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE

In the 1400s, **Prince Henry of Portugal**, also known as Henry the Navigator, sent his ships to explore the coast of West Africa. While exploring, the ship stopped in Africa to trade goods such as gold and animal skins. It was here, in 1441, that the Portuguese captured their first group of slaves. They captured twelve Africans and brought them back to Portugal to be sold for their labor.

Capturing slaves was a growing trend for Portugal and Spain. Year after year, these two countries brought back increased numbers of African men, women and children. By the end of the 15th century, the Portuguese and Spanish had abducted nearly 200,000 Africans and sold them as slaves. This marked the beginning of the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

Both Spain and Portugal wanted full power and control over the sea. To avoid an approaching war, Pope Alexander commanded that they split the seas between Portugal and Spain, leaving the other European nations excluded. As a result, the **Treaty of Tordesillas** was signed in 1494. The treaty created an imaginary line which ran north and south through the Atlantic Ocean and South America. Portugal was given control of Africa and most of Brazil. Spain was given control of everything else. Since Portugal controlled Africa, it controlled the African slave trade for the next two centuries.

Later in the 1490s, as other nations began to hear of Portugal's profits from the African slave trade, they began to question the effectiveness of the Treaty of Tordesillas on the rest of the world. European countries observed Portugal's enhanced economy and wanted to similarly benefit from the profits of the slave trade. In the mid 1500s, France joined the African slave trade and created a **stronghold** on the coast of Senegal in western Africa. Britain joined France and exported a large number of slaves from there and the areas surrounding the mouth of the Gambia River.

During the 1600s, the Netherlands also decided that they wanted to benefit from the slave trade. In 1620, they started a war with Portugal so they could begin capturing slaves from the west coast of Africa. Slowly, Belgium, Germany, Denmark, and nearly all of the European nations followed the Netherlands' example and fought for power in the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

At the time when more European nations were joining the Transatlantic Slave Trade, the demand for slaves was increasing.

As more Africans were captured to meet the demand, they were often marched to assorted **temporary imprisonment sites** along the coast of Africa. These marches often lasted for weeks or months so by the time the slaves had approached their destinations, the ones who lived were often gravely weak and ill. At these imprisonment sites, European **slave traders** would bid on and buy Africans. Their intent was to sail the purchased Africans back to Europe and sell them for even more money as slaves.



In 1738, English slave trader Francis Moore observed the treatment of slaves as they were marched to temporary imprisonment sites, or holding pens, in Africa. He wrote, the raiders' "way of bringing [captives] is, tying them by the neck with leather thongs, at about a yard distance from each other, 30 or 40 on a string." Due to these conditions and the lack of water and food, many Africans died from hunger, illness, exhaustion, injury, or thirst. The Africans who survived the march were often rejected by slave traders because a weak or ill slave had no worth to them. Alexander Falconbridge, a surgeon on a British ship, reported on the severe treatment of Africans who proved to have no worth to slave traders. He wrote, "It matters not whether they are refused on account of age, illness, deformity or for any other reason...The traders have frequently been known to put them to death. Instances have happened...when negroes have been objected to, that the traders have...instantly beheaded them."

The healthy captives were sold to plantation owners. On these plantations, the slaves would work from sunrise to sunset picking coffee and cocoa beans, hauling tobacco, planting and harvesting rice, and cultivating sugar. They were forced to work extremely hard after receiving little food and water. John Newton, British slave ship captain and protagonist of *Amazing Grace*, compared the many methods of managing slaves. He questioned whether it was more economical "to appoint them moderate work, plenty of provision, and such treatment as might enable them to protract their lives to old age? Or, by rigorously straining their strength to the utmost, with little relaxation, hard fare, and

Spanish West Indies: An area of land that separated the Caribbean Sea from the Atlantic Ocean. It was explored mainly by Christopher Columbus and consisted of the present day countries, Trinidad, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Cuba, Caiman Islands, Jamaica, the Bay Islands, and Puerto Rico.

Clause: A section of a legal document stating some form of contract.

Act to Prohibit the Importation of Slaves: A law, enacted in 1808 by the United States, which stated that the capture and transport of slaves overseas was illegal.

hard usage, to wear them out before they became useless and unable to do service and then, to buy new ones, to fill up their places?" Newton found that the second option was, "much the cheaper." To replace the sick and dying with new slaves was cheaper and more productive than giving the slaves the appropriate amounts of food, water, and workloads that would keep them alive for longer.

BRITAIN SAILS AHEAD

While many countries were involved in the slave trade, none had as significant an impact as Great Britain.

In 1562, John Hawkins of Great Britain sailed to West Africa to capture a group of slaves. Hawking captured 300 slaves on this journey and took them to the **Spanish West Indies** where he sold and traded them for products that he could bring back to England. Over the next ten years, Hawkins embarked on at least 3 other slaving trips, all of which brought significant profit to England. Queen Elizabeth I was so pleased with Hawkins' work that she appointed him to knighthood in reward for his service to England.

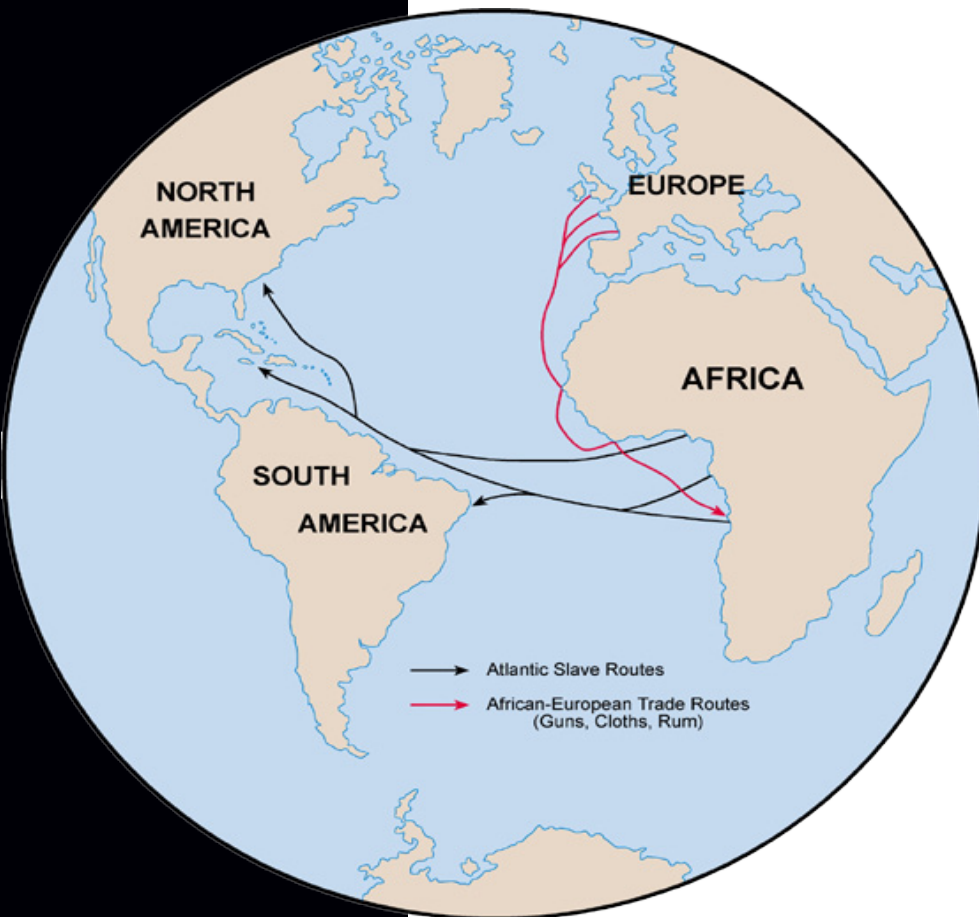
After Hawkins' trips, Queen Elizabeth I authorized the creation of a British colony in the New World. After several failed attempts at beginning a British settlement in North America, the first permanent settlement was established in 1607 in Jamestown, Virginia.

Jamestown was a thriving economy for Great Britain. It was mainly inhabited by English citizens, indentured servants, and African slaves. Jamestown became a "boomtown" from the delivery of thousands of slaves to North American colonies and the export of tobacco to England. Jamestown gained the legal right to import slaves to the Spanish West Indies and was also one of the main suppliers of slaves for the Dutch and the French. By 1700, Great Britain was the largest slaving nation in the world and had captured more than half of all captives taken from Africa.

END OF THE TRANSATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE

In the United States, there was a significant amount of debate about the controversial issues that came from slavery and the slave trade. While the northern United States were veering away from slavery, the southern states relied on the strong labor force keeping their plantations alive and their economies prosperous. There were many arguments between the North and the South, which led to a divided country and a civil war. In 1787, as a compromise between the North and the South, the Constitution adopted a **clause** which stated that Congress was prohibited to abolish the slave trade for a period of 20 years. After this 20 year period, on January 1, 1808, the **Act to Prohibit the Importation of Slaves** took effect immediately. This act officially ended America's participation in the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

Great Britain, the country that had dominated the slave trade, was the first European nation to abolish it. In 1807, just before the United States ceased their involvement in the Transatlantic Slave Trade, the British Parliament passed the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act, making it illegal to capture or transport slaves. Though slow to follow, Austria, Sweden, the Netherlands, Spain, Belgium, France, and Russia all passed the same law by 1820.



Transatlantic Trade Routes

MODERN-DAY SLAVERY

Types of Modern-Day Slavery

Debt Bondage/Bonded Labor: When labor is required as a way of repayment for a payment advance or loan.

Chattel Slavery: One person is owned by another person and can be inherited as property.

Restavec: A form of slavery in which parents send their child to another household to be a domestic servant. The parents often cannot provide proper care for the child and must send the child away for his or her own survival.

Trafficking: When people are transported or traded from one place to another and then forced into a form of slavery.

Forced Labor: People who are illegally recruited by individuals, governments, or political parties, and are forced to work under threats of physical violence.

Indentured Servitude: A form of slavery in which a person agrees to work for a specific period of time to repay money that she or he borrowed. Often indentured servants must pay for the cost of travel to a new country and the cost of living in that country.

Modern-day slavery exists in almost every single country in the world. There are approximately 27 million people who are enslaved today and 15-20 million of them are enslaved in India, Pakistan, and Nepal. The remaining numbers of modern-day slaves are from different countries all over the world; however, the majority of them are located in Southeast Asia, northern and western Africa, South America, the United States, Canada, and Japan.

14,500 and 17,500 people are trafficked into the United States each year.



THE DIFFERENCES IN SLAVERY TODAY

Slavery is much different than it was in the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries. Slavery today is cheaper and more temporary than it has been historically. In some parts of the world, a person could purchase a slave for as low as \$10 and keep that person in bondage for any period of time. During the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries, slaves were mostly sentenced to an entire lifetime of slavery. An owner today could require a slave to work for as little as a few days to a couple of years. While the terms are shorter, the risks for the enslaved person are greater. With a shorter time to serve comes less incentive for the owners to keep their slaves healthy and alive. Slaves are much more expendable in modern-day slavery.

The most common forms of modern-day slavery include debt bondage/bonded labor, chattel slavery, restavec, indentured servitude, forced labor, and human trafficking. Human trafficking is the most popular form of slavery amongst the group.

Human trafficking is the third largest international crime industry in the world, with arms trafficking being the second and illegal drug trafficking being the first. It is also estimated that between



CLICK THE LINKS
to learn more about
modern-day slavery:

- thecnnfreedomproject.blogs.cnn.com/
- discoverhumanrights.org/



JOHN NEWTON

EARLY LIFE

John Newton was born in 1725 in Wapping, London. The son of John Newton Sr. and Elizabeth Newton, John was homeschooled for the first seven years of his life. In 1732, John's mother died of Tuberculosis and, shortly after his father's remarriage, he was sent away to boarding school. When he was 11 years old, John left school and went to sea with his father who was a Sea Captain for the East India Company.

A LIFE AT SEA

In 1743, at age 18, Newton was captured and forced into service by the Royal Navy. During this time, the Royal Navy used false advertising and incentives to trick people into enlisting. They made it seem like the ports had plenty of rum, sugar, and money to go to all crew members and were like sandy resorts. These lies, however, did not work. Due to the continued lack of interested men, Royal Navy ship captains sent groups of shipmen to poor towns and coastal taverns. The shipmen would choose victims at random who they would kidnap and physically force onto the ship. John Newton was one of these victims and was forced onto the *HMS Harwich*. Newton's father, however, would not stand for this. Being that he held a position of such high authority, Captain John Newton attempted to have his son released. Although he could not get John completely released, he had him promoted from a common sailor to a midshipman, a cadet-in-training for a promotion as an officer.

John Newton attempted to desert his position as midshipman but was caught. He was publicly put in irons, whipped, and demoted to a common sailor in front of the entire crew of the *HMS Harwich*. Newton wrote, "I was now in my turn brought down to a level with the lowest, and exposed to the insults of all."

Newton later chose to exchange his position as a seaman on the *HMS Harwich* for a position on a slave ship heading for West Africa. The ship carried goods to Africa that would be traded for African slaves. Newton's job consisted of manipulating and capturing Sierra Leone natives so that they could be taken to European and American countries to be sold. Since his job was completely legal at this time and there was a growing demand for slaves, Newton felt that he was doing what was right for Britain by adhering to the demands. Once the ship arrived on the Plantain Island, just off the coast of Sierra Leone, Newton was

abandoned by his ship and left to work with Amos Clowe, a slave dealer. Newton was not a slave; however, he was treated like one and was frequently abused by Clowe's wife.

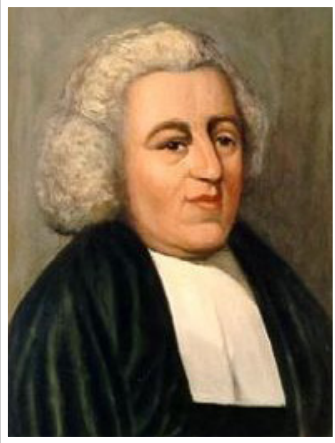


In 1748, after Newton had written home about the horrible conditions in Sierra Leone, his father sent a friend and fellow sea captain to rescue him. The journey to Sierra Leone was successful but on their journey home a horrendous storm hit and nearly sunk the ship. Newton "was awaked from a sound sleep by the force of a violent sea, which broke on board us." After the hard hit of the storm, Newton spent hours bailing out water and fixing leaks to keep the ship above water. After a night of trying to save the ship, Newton then steered the ship for roughly 12 hours. Nearly all of their supplies had gone overboard and many members of the crew were lost. The remaining crew members fought to stay alive while hoping they would make it to a port before the ship sunk. They docked at an Irish port and after making that voyage Newton found his religious faith. He stated in his journal, "On that day the Lord sent from on high and delivered me out of the deep waters." Newton celebrated that date, March 10, 1748, every year for the anniversary of when he found his religion.

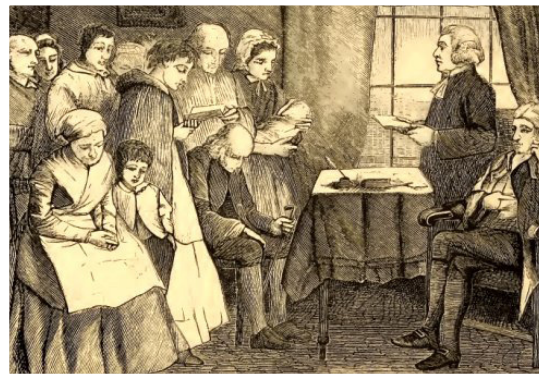
Though Newton had a new interest in religion, he continued transporting slaves until 1754. It was said however, that he showed more compassion to his slaves than most slave traders. Just before his fourth journey to Africa, Newton became quite ill. He resigned command of the journey the day before it was set to sail.

MARY CATLETT

Mary Catlett, most commonly called Polly, was John Newton's childhood sweetheart. In 1742, after years of friendship with the Newtons, the Catletts had sent an invitation to John to visit their home in Kent. When John knocked on the door to the Catletts'



JOHN NEWTON



home, their eldest daughter, Mary (or Polly) opened the door. He wrote later "Almost at first sight of this girl, I felt an affection for her that never abated." John married Polly Catlett on February 11, 1750, the same year his father passed away. In August 1750, John set sail as Captain on the *Duke of Argyle*, leaving Mary at home but writing her letters frequently. These letters often focused on John's experiences as a first-time captain and his love for Polly.

John wrote 127 letters to Mary during his slaving journeys. Two such letters that were sent to Mary during his voyage on the *Duke of Argyle* stated:

"My condition when abroad, and even in Guinea, might be envied by multitudes who stay at home. I am as absolutely in my small dominions (life and death excepted) as any potentate in Europe. If I say to one, Come, he comes; if to another, Go, he flies. If I order one person to do something, perhaps three or four will be ambitious for a share in the service. Not a man in the ship must eat his dinner till I please to give him leave; nay, nobody dares to say so first. There is a mighty business of attendance when I leave the ship, and strict watch kept while I am absent, lest I should return unawares, and not be received in due form. And should I stay out till midnight, (which for that reason, I never do without necessity) nobody must presume to shut their eyes, till they have had to honour of seeing me again. I would have you judge from my manner of relating these ceremonials, that I do not value them highly for their own sake; for, without a strict discipline, the common sailors would be unmanageable."

"I am sitting by a person in his last agonies who only five days since was healthy and florid. I fear he must go, cut short in the vigor of life....I have often found some relief by venting my mind to him in talking about you. I have none with me now but mere sailors to whom I should degrade your name if I mentioned it and shall therefore keep my pleasures and pains to myself."

In 1754, Newton left the slave trade business and spent the remaining forty years with Polly until her death in 1794.

RELIGION

After resigning from what would have been his fourth journey, Newton became attracted to a new type of religion that was preached by George Whitefield and John Wesley, founders of the Methodist Church. He also took interest in evangelical religions, which were based on the Church of England.

At age 39, John Newton became the curate of the Parish Church of St. Peter and St. Paul in Olney, England. It was here that John wrote **The Olney Hymns**, the hymnal which included his most famous hymn, Hymn 41, or "Amazing Grace."



Newton continued to minister until 1780 when he was sent to be the rector of the Parish of St. Mary Woolnoth in London. It was at the Parish of St. Mary Woolnoth that Newton was first introduced to William Wilberforce. Newly elected to Parliament and devoted to social reform, Wilberforce was instantly inspired by Newton's sermons. It was through Newton's inspiration that Wilberforce became an advocate for abolishing slavery.

LATE LIFE

In 1788, Newton wrote a pamphlet, "**Thoughts Upon the African Slave Trade**," which was about the horrors he witnessed while working in the slave business. He reflected on his involvement with the slave trade and named himself a sinner who had realized the wrongs that he had done. He wrote, "Disagreeable I had long found the trade; but I think I should have quitted it sooner, had I considered it as much as I now do..."



CLICK HERE to read John Newton's pamphlet "Thoughts Upon the Slave Trade."

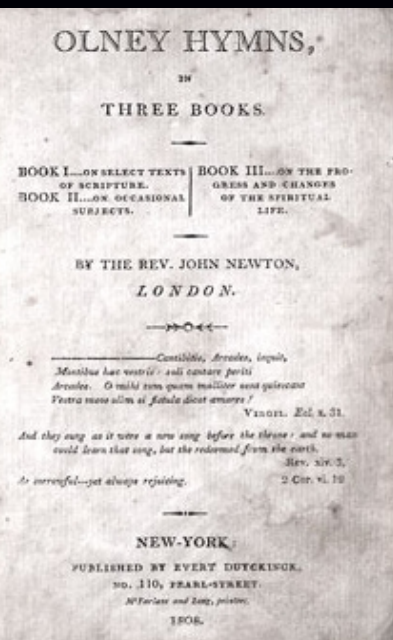
Newton presented "Thoughts Upon the African Slave Trade" to Parliament and by 1792, nearly half a million British citizens had signed assorted petitions to end the slave trade. The slave trade ended in Britain in 1808 but slavery itself remained legal in Britain until 1838.

John Newton died at the age of 82 in 1807, the same year that Britain abolished the slave trade. Newton's tombstone reads:

JOHN NEWTON
CLERK
ONCE AN INFIDEL AND LIBERTINE
A SERVANT OF SLAVES IN AFRICA
WAS
BY THE RICH MERCY OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR
JESUS CHRIST
PRESERVED, RESTORED, PARDONED,
AND APPOINTED TO PREACH THE FAITH
HE HAD LONG LABORED TO DESTROY



CLICK HERE to read Newton's Olney Hymns



Newton's OLNEY HYMNS

Glossary

Hymnal: A collection of religious songs that have been compiled into a book.

Sheet Music: Music that has been published in a printed format which shows the musical notes in their written form.

AMAZING GRACE

John Newton spent a large portion of his life lacking a religious identity. After struggling through several difficult life experiences, however, he found solace in the Church of England in 1764. It was there in Olney, England that Newton found his faith and met long time friend, William Cowper.

Newton and Cowper began writing the hymnal, *Olney Hymns*, together but they did not finish it together. Cowper suffered from reoccurring mental illness and Newton had to finish writing the collection alone. The collection included 281 hymns written by Newton and 67 hymns written by Cowper. "Amazing Grace," which was written for a New Years Day sermon in 1773, was first published in the *Olney Hymns*.

During Newton's lifetime, **hymnals** did not have **sheet music**. Instead, they only had lyrics. *Olney Hymns* actually looks like a book of poems rather than a book of songs. Before hymnals had sheet music, hymns were repeated by chanting after following a leader's singing. The leader was the only person who had the musical notation.

When the words of "Amazing Grace" were first published, it was still considered to be an obscure piece of music in England. After its publication in England in 1764, "Amazing Grace" was published in New York in 1790 and Philadelphia in 1791.

In 1835, the sheet music of "Amazing Grace" was published for the first time in *The Southern Harmony*. The lyrics to "Amazing Grace" were matched with the song "Great Britain," creating the version that is used today. It is unknown where the "Great Britain" tune came from, but *The Southern Harmony* sold six hundred thousand copies in the first decade after its publication.

Today, "Amazing Grace" is frequently used at parties, church services, funerals, weddings, baptisms, sporting event openings, and many other functions. It is one of the most popularly performed and recorded songs in history. While some of the lyrics have changed over time, they have maintained Newton's message of forgiveness. With its many versions, arrangements, and adaptations, the song has become one of the most recognizable songs in the world.

Lyrics from Goodspeed's Amazing Grace



CLICK HERE to listen to a demo recording of the song from the show.

Amazing Grace! (How sweet the sound)
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear,
The hour I first believed

Thro' many dangers, toils and snares,
I have already come;
'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promised good to me.
His word my hope secures'
He will my shield and portion be,
As long as life endures.

When we've been there ten thousand years
Bright shining as the sun
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we'd first begun

Amazing Grace (how sweet the sound)
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost, but now am found
Was blind but now I see

81

Amazing Grace.

John Newton.

McIntosh. C. M.

Arr. by E. O. Excell.



1. A - maz - ing grace! how sweet the sound, That saved a wretch like me! I
2. 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, And grace my fears re-lieved; How
3. Thro' man - y dan-gers, toils and snares, I have al - read - y come; 'Tis
4. When we've been there ten thousand years, Bright shin-ing as the sun, We've



once was lost, but now am found, Was blind, but now I see.
pre - cious did that grace ap - pear The hour I first be-lieved!
grace hath bro't me safe thus far, And grace will lead me home.
no less days to sing God's praise Than when we first be - gun. A - MEN.



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