

Source: Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano Written by Himself*, 1789

I was soon put down under the decks, and there I received such a salutation in my nostrils as I had never experienced in my life: so that with the loathsomeness of the stench and crying together, I became so sick and low that I was not able to eat, nor had I the least desire to taste anything. I know wished for the last friend, death, to relieve me; but soon, to my grief, two of the white man offered me eatables, and on my refusing to eat, one of them help me fast ... and tied my feet while the other flogged me severely ...

... [T]he whole ship's cargo were confined together and became absolutely pestilential. The closeness of the place and the heat of the climate, added to the number and the ship, which was so crowded that each had scarcely room to turn himself, almost suffocated us. This produced copious perspirations, so that the air soon became unfit for respiration former variety of loathsome smells, and brought on a sickness among the slaves, of which many died, thus falling victims to the improvident avarice [greed], as I may call it, of their purchasers. ... The shrieks of the women and the groans of the dying rendered the whole a scene of horror almost inconceivable.