The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database

Voyages

www.slavevoyages.org

GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

Instructions for Submitting New Data to the Voyages Database

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Introduction

Every three years, beginning in 2011, an editorial board will produce a revised edition of the Voyages Database, incorporating new slaving voyage information located in primary or secondary sources. Contributions may concern new voyages not currently in the database, or details on some of the 34,941 ventures currently searchable in the set. The Voyages Database functions like an academic journal: contributions must proceed through a peer-reviewed editorial process, and must therefore be documented thoroughly to enable the editors to verify the information. All individuals whose data are accepted for inclusion in the Voyages Database will be acknowledged by name in the "About the Project" section of the Voyages website.

This guide provides instructions and recommendations for contributing new data via the Contribute section of the Voyages website (located under "The Database" in the top navigation bar). In order to submit new data through this section, users are asked to first register for an account and provide an email address for communication. Upon confirmation of this registration, each user will be provided with a username and password for accessing the Contribute section.

Once logged in, users will be given the option of either contributing information about a new voyage, editing an existing voyage, or merging existing voyages. The following pages walk the user through these processes. Any questions not answered in this guide or in the FAQ area of the Voyages website may be addressed directly to the Editorial Board by emailing voyages@emory.edu, with "Contribute" in the subject line.

Getting Started

Before submitting data, search the Voyages Database to determine whether you have located a new voyage. The editors recommend searching names of ships and captains, keeping in mind that variant spellings occur in the documentary record. If the new data pertains to an existing voyage(s), you will need to provide the **Voyage identification number(s)**.

The Contribute section consists of five steps:

1) Type of contribution

2) Your voyage information

3) Your Sources

4) Summary

5) Finish

Buttons at the top of the screen track your progress through the data contribution process. You can move forward and backward through the submission process using the "Next" and "Previous" buttons. *Do not use the browser "Back" button to return to a previous step*.

If you need to end your session but have not finished entering data, you can save your submission by clicking the "Save & logout" button. Only one submission may be saved at a time. If you have data on more than one voyage, you must finish and submit one set of voyage data before you can start a new submission.

TYPE OF CONTRIBUTION

As your first step in submitting data for review, indicate the nature of your submitted data:

■ **New voyage**
(data on a voyage not currently listed in the Voyages Database)

■ **Edit an existing voyage**
(additions or corrections to a voyage already listed)

■ **Merge existing voyages**
(recommendations for merging separate voyages)

Once you decide which process best describes the nature of your submission, click the appropriate button to move to the next step. [More detailed information on the three types of submissions is provided later in this guide.]

YOUR VOYAGE INFORMATION

Depending on which button you clicked in step 1, you will retrieve a screen that allows you to either begin adding data for a new voyage(s) or to indicate which existing voyage(s) you will correct or merge. If you are editing or merging voyages, you will need the Voyage identification number(s) in order to get started.

On the screen for adding, editing, or merging voyage information, variables are collapsed into groups roughly corresponding to those found in the Voyages Database (e.g., Voyage Outcome or Voyage Itinerary); exceptions are noted below. To expand a group, click on the category label; to collapse the group, click on the label again.

Voyage information is organized according to the variable groupings found in the Voyages Database, with the following exceptions:

- "Slaves (Characteristics)" is separated out into a table, to make it easier to enter data on the number and types of captives who embarked, disembarked, or died on a voyage.

- "Other" is used for data on infants.

- Data on "Sources" are entered separately in the next step of the submission process.

For a more detailed explanation of what data to include for each variable, click the "?" next to the variable name. Other questions about variables may be answered by consulting the Variable List or the Methodology, both of which are located in the "Understanding the Database" section of the Voyages website (under "The Database" in the top navigation bar).

YOUR SOURCES

The screen "Specify sources for your submission" prompts you to identify the primary or secondary source(s) of the new data you are submitting for review. Please provide the editorial team with complete source details, and check whether a source has been used previously to document voyage information. [A complete listing of sources employed in creating the Voyages Database dataset may be found in the "Understanding the Database" section of the Voyages website (under the "The Database" in the top navigation bar): http://www.slavevoyages.org/tast/database/sources.faces?type=documentary.]

You may add multiple sources. After each source is entered, it appears in a list organized by "Source type" and "Source details."

SUMMARY

Before you submit your data for review, you will have an opportunity to review the complete submission, including sources. If you find an error or omission, click the "< Correct information" button at the bottom of the screen to revisit previous steps. Once you've verified the data is correct and ready to send, click the "Submit" button.

FINISH

A "Submission completed" message confirms that your submitted data has entered the review process. From this screen you may either logout or click the "Submit next request" link to provide information on another voyage.

New voyage

The Voyages Database contains information on 34,941 transatlantic slaving voyages, 1514-1866. The editors estimate that the file contains 90-95% of all transatlantic ventures, and there are thus between 1,750 and 3,500 slaving voyages not recorded in the set.

Many of the "missing" slave-trading ventures departed from Brazil or Lisbon in 1520-1670, a period when few sources survive. Smaller gaps in the database likely occur for the following branches of the slave trade:

- British trade before 1662

- British trade, 1689-1698

- French trade before 1708

- Spanish trade before 1641

- North America/United States trade before 1808

Users are encouraged to review those primary and secondary sources employed in creating the Voyages Database dataset (located in the "Understanding the Database" section of the Voyages website, under "The Database" in the top navigation bar).

Enter data for new voyages corresponding to the appropriate variable by either typing the data in a text box or selecting the appropriate data from a drop-down menu of values. For every new item of data entered about a voyage, you may choose to add a note that provides some explanation of that data (for example: how the data originally appeared in the source; discrepancies across sources; measurements used for quantifiable data).

Edit an existing voyage

For many of the 34,941 voyages documented in the set, users may locate additional information on sailing dates, markets, ship details, or data on numbers of slaves or slave characteristics. Users may provide this new voyage data by selecting the "Edit an existing voyage" in the Contribute section. Choosing this contribution category requires the **Voyage identification number**, or Voyage ID**.**

After entering the Voyage ID, click the "Lookup…" button. Three basic details about the voyage will appear on the screen: the Captain's name, Ship name and Year of Arrival. Confirm that you have retrieved the correct voyage by clicking the appropriate button.

The Edit voyage information screen presents nine groupings of variables, such as "Ship, nation, owners" or "Voyage outcome." Click on these labels to expand the full list of editable voyage details; click on a label again to collapse the list. For each variable, two columns appear. The first column, "Current voyage," contains the voyage information currently available in the database. For many variables that information is "unknown." The second column, the contributors' column, allows new information to be entered. Contributors also can add supplemental information or pose questions to the editors in the "Add note" box, one of which appears below each variable.

REMOVING VOYAGES

In editing an existing voyage, users may have located information that warrants removing the voyage from the dataset. Some voyages bound for Africa, for example, may have been non-slavers. If you have found information that suggests a voyage currently listed in the Voyages Database was not part of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, use the "Edit an existing voyage" to provide data that supports your claim and use the adjacent "Add note" box(es) to indicate why the data supports the voyage's removal from the dataset.

Merge existing voyages

A user who chooses to merge voyages has detected two or more partially documented voyages that overlap: in other words, they include similar voyage details that suggest they may be the same voyage.

After clicking the "Merge voyages >" button, you will be prompted to enter the first Voyage identification number for the voyages you are merging. Enter the appropriate Voyage ID in the text box, then click the "Lookup…" button. The ship, captain, and year of arrival appear on the screen. Confirm that you have retrieved the correct voyage by clicking the appropriate button.

Once you have confirmed the first voyage, a summary of this voyage will remain on the screen and a new text box will appear for selecting the next voyage. Enter the appropriate Voyage ID number in this text box, then click the "Lookup…" button. You may select up to five voyages to merge. To remove previously selected voyages from the merge list, simply click the "Remove" link. Once you have retrieved all voyages for merging, click the Next button.

The merge screen presents a table of variables and voyage data, with columns showing data for existing voyages and a final column providing space for merging that data. Click the "Copy>" link under the correct data value for one of the existing voyages or enter new data using the textbox or drop-down menu in the "Changed voyage" column. For every detail entered about a voyage, you may choose to "Add note" that provides some explanation of that data (for example, why the name of the slave ship may have appeared under different names and thus lead to the assumption of different voyages).

CHECKLIST

Is your potential slaving venture already listed in the Voyages Database?

If not, double-check the names of captains and ships, keeping in mind that spellings can vary, to ensure that your voyage data is not already listed. If so, make a note of the **Voyage identification number**.

Have you checked whether your source(s) are included in the Voyages Database?

Provide as much specific detail as possible about your source. If your source is among those already included in the database, use the citation details provided on the site when describing your source.

Thank you for your time and contribution.