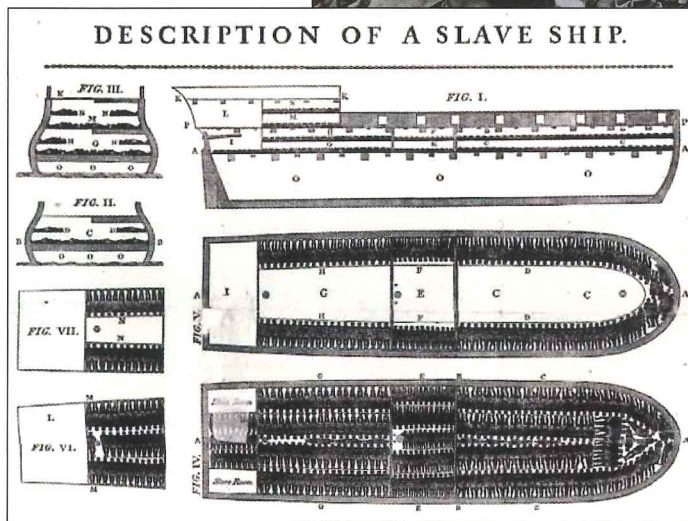
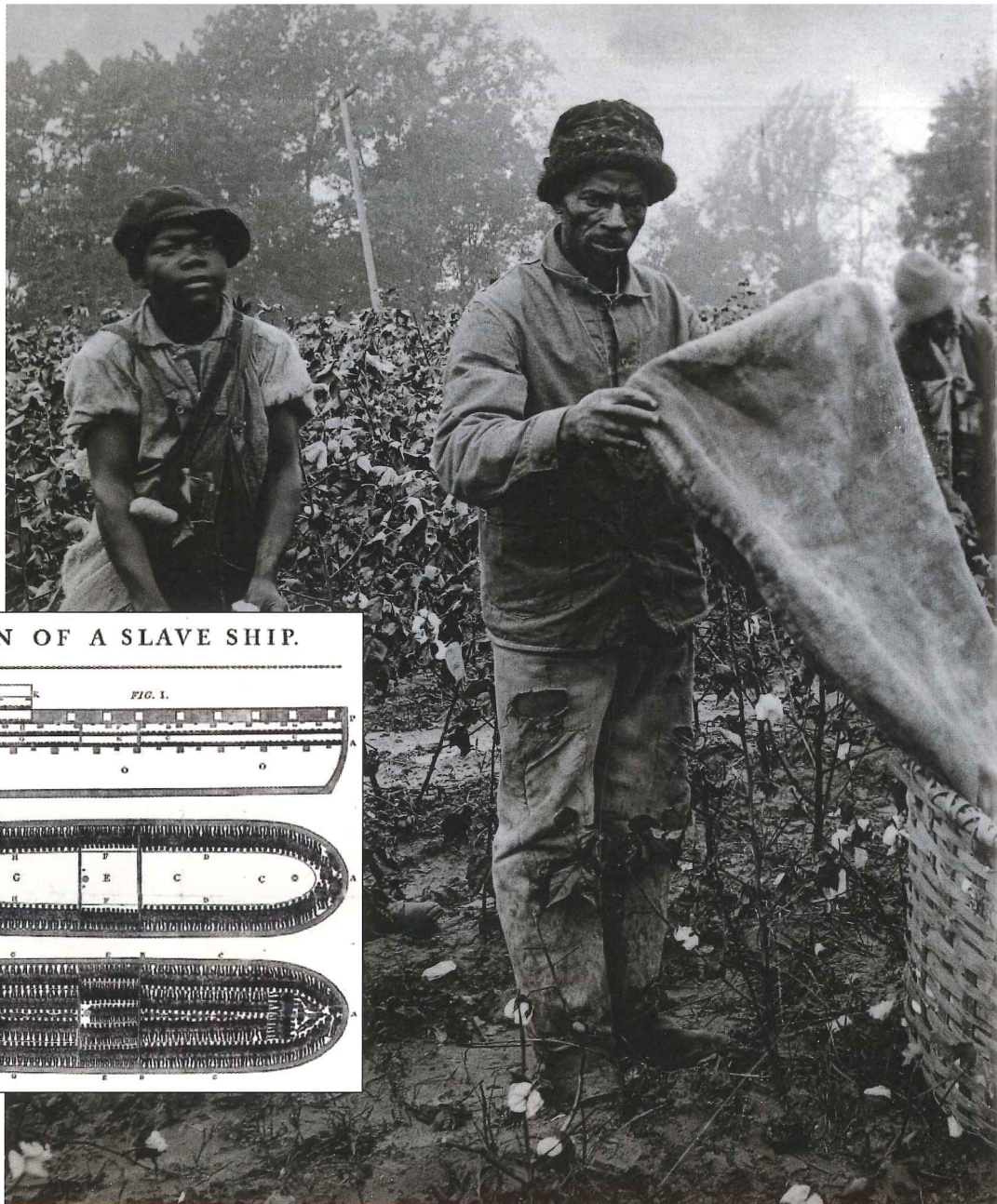


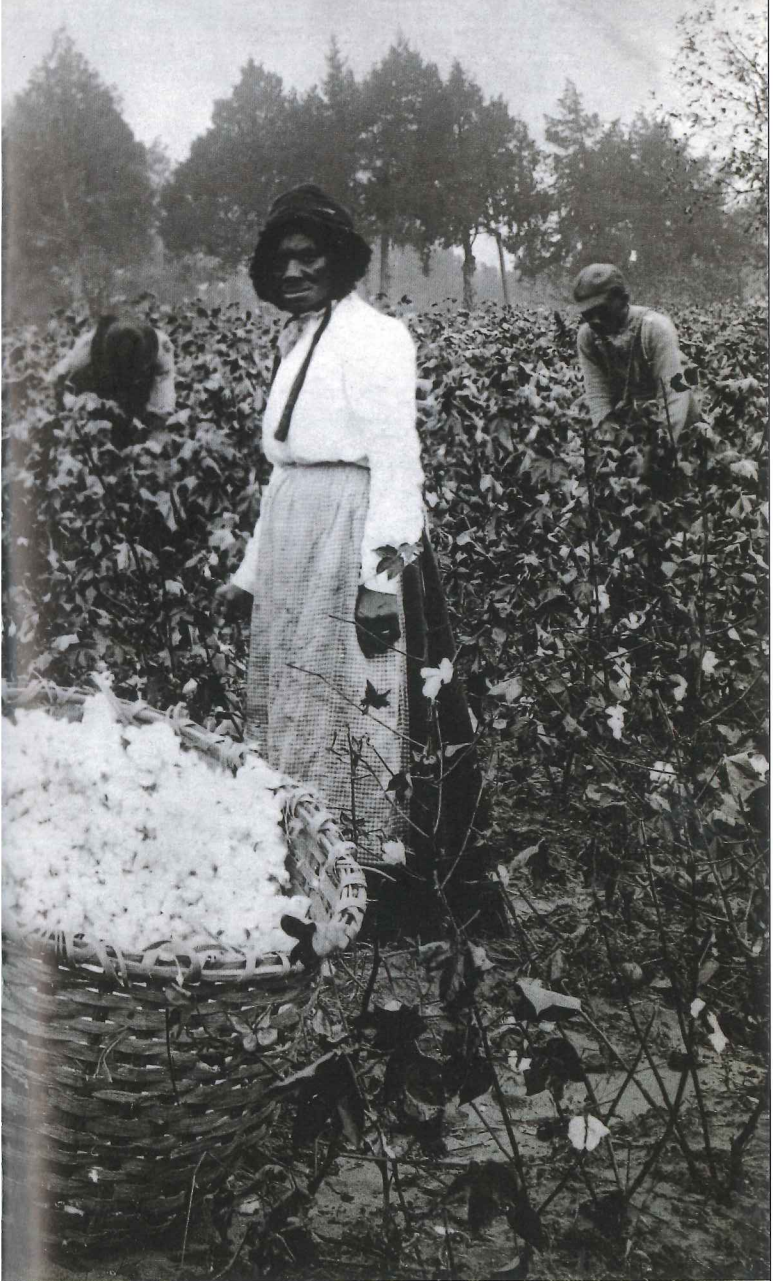
The British *Brookes* slave-ship from 1788 was built to carry max. 450 but in fact carried over 600 slaves, chained by hands and feet. Many died of illness and starvation and only half of them became effective workers.



2] SLAVERY

At the bank where she worked, Toot (Barack's white grandmother) made the acquaintance of the janitor, a tall and dignified black World War II vet she remembers only as Mr. Reed. While the two of them chatted in the hallway one day, a secretary in the office stormed up and hissed that Toot should never, ever, "call no nigger 'Mister'." Not long afterward, Toot would find Mr. Reed in a corner of the building weeping quietly to himself. When she asked him what was wrong, he straightened his back, dried his eyes, and responded with a question of his own. "What have we ever done to be treated so mean?"

Barack Obama, Dreams from My Father



FROM 1502 TO 1580 the Portuguese and Spanish sailed slaves from West Africa to their colonies in South America. All black Brazilians, such as the famous soccer player Pelé, are descendants of these slaves.

Between 1540 and 1850 about 15 million slaves were transported to North, Central, and South America as well as to the Caribbean islands. From 1650 until 1848 Denmark was also involved in the slave trade. As the seventh largest slave-trading nation Denmark exported 100,000 slaves from the Gold Coast (now Ghana) to North America. However, as the first nation in the world Denmark forbade the import of slaves from 1802. But it was not until 1848 that Denmark forbade the slave trade itself. Altogether, about 15 million Africans were transported to

the Americas between 1540 and 1850.

In America, at first the whites regarded the slaves as servants who could work to be free, but in 1640 Maryland became the first state to allow slaves to be bought and sold and never to be free. Slaves were treated much better in the Northern States than in the South. Most of the white settlers in the Southern states came from Britain or Germany. They set their slaves to work especially in the cotton or tobacco fields.

A VISIT TO A PLANTATION

In the early 1850s Frederick Olmsted wrote the following for the *New York Daily Times* about a plantation in Mississippi which he visited together with the white overseer:

“Throughout the Southwest the Negroes, as a rule, appeared to be worked much harder than in the Eastern and Northern Slave States ... They are constantly and steadily driven up to their work, and the stupid, plodding, machine-like manner in which they labor, is painful to witness. This was especially the case with the hoe-gangs. One of them numbered nearly two hundred hands (for the force of two plantations was working together), moving across the field in parallel lines, and not one of them lifted an eye from the ground ... I think it told a more painful story than any I had ever heard, of the cruelty of slavery.

As we were crossing a gully the overseer suddenly stopped his horse exclaiming, ‘What’s that? Hallo! Who are you, there?’

It was a girl lying at full length on the ground at the bottom of the gully, evidently intending to hide herself from us in the bushes.

‘Who are you, there?’

‘Sam’s Sall, sir.’

‘Have you been here all day?’

‘No, sir.’

‘How did you get here?’

The girl made no reply.

‘Where have you been all day?’

The answer was unintelligible. After some further questioning, she said her father accidentally locked her in, when he went out in the morning.

‘How did you manage to get out?’

‘Pushed a plank off, sir, and crawled out.’ ➔

The overseer was silent for a moment, looking at the girl, and then said, 'That won't do; come out here.'

The girl arose at once, and walked towards him. She was about eighteen years of age. A bunch of keys hung at her waist, which the overseer saw, and he said, 'Your father locked you in; but you have got the keys.' After a little hesitation, she replied that these were the keys of some other locks; her father had the door-key.

Whether her story was true or false, could have been proved in two minutes by riding on to the gang with which her father was at work, but the overseer had made up his mind.

'That won't do,' said he; 'get down.' The girl knelt on the ground; he got off his horse, and struck her thirty or forty blows across the shoulder with his raw-hide whip. At every stroke the girl winced and exclaimed, 'Yes, sir!' or 'Ah, sir!' or 'Please, sir!' not groaning or screaming.

At length he stopped and said, 'Now tell me the truth.' The girl repeated the same story.

'You have not got enough yet,' said he; 'pull up your clothes, lie down.'

The girl without any hesitation without a word ... drew closely all her garments under her shoulders, and lay down upon the ground with her face toward the overseer, who continued to flog her with the raw-hide, across her naked loins and thighs, with as much strength as before. She now shrunk away from him, not rising, but writhing, groveling, and screaming, 'Oh, don't, sir! Oh, please stop, master! Please, sir! Please, sir! Oh, that's enough, master! Oh, Lord! Oh, master, master! Oh, God, master, do stop! Oh, God, master! Oh, God, master!'

A young gentleman of fifteen was with us; he had ridden in front, and now turning on his horse, looked back with an expression only of impatience at the delay.

The overseer laughed, 'She meant to cheat me out of a day's work, and she has done it, too.'

It was the first time I had ever seen a woman flogged."

1. WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT SLAVES?

Make a fact file about slaves. Write down all the facts you know about slaves. Compare your notes with a partner. Write the new information down. You might even find more facts on the Internet.

2. INTERVIEW – IN PAIRS

Imagine that the girl in the story is given the opportunity to tell her version of the story to the *New York Daily Times*. Write an interview with the girl. It must be between 350-450 words.

Slave quarters on a plantation on Cocks spur Island, Georgia, in the mid-19th century.

