On ye 2d of October 1639, about 9 of the clock in the morning Mr. Maverick's negro woman came to my chamber window and in her own country language and tune sang very loud and shrill; going out to her she used a great deal of respect toward me, and would willingly have expressed her grief in English (had she been able to speak the language); but I apprehended it by her countenance & deportment. Whereupon I repaired to my host, to learn of him the cause & resolved to intreat him in her behalf, for I understood before that she had been a Queen in her own Country & observed a very humble & dutiful garb used towards her by another negro who was her maid. Mr. Maverick was desirous to have a breed of negroes; & therefore seeing she would not yield by persuasions to company with a Negro young man, he had in his house, he commanded him, will'd she, nill'd she, to go to bed to her; which was no sooner done, but she kicked him out again. This she took in high disdain, beyond her slavery, & this was the cause of her grief.” – Queries respecting slavery in Massachusetts with Answers, Jeremy Belknap, April 1795. Massachusetts Historical Society.
LEGAL TRANSATLANTIC TRADE TO ILLEGAL TRADE: 1807/1808

- The legal transatlantic slave trade was abolished by the British in 1807 and the Americans in 1808.

- Some ships sailed to the American mainland illegally. Most entered ports in the Gulf and SE coasts. There were few, however, in comparison to the illegal slave trading that occurred in Cuba and Brazil. There are a few reasons why:
  
  1. American ports were largely trafficked and patrolled by naval forces.
  2. Slaves at auction would have been suspect if they did not speak English or they had an accent, as by the 1830s and 1840s nearly all slaves in the United States were born here.
  3. American ships entering ports had to pay taxes and tariffs. Illegal slavers would have been found out.

- Conventionally, "illegal" slave trading has been taken to cover arrivals in the British Caribbean after May 1807, in the U.S. after January 1, 1808, in the French Americas after 1818, in the Spanish Caribbean after 1820, and in Brazil after 1830. By this definition, about 1.5 million Africans — a large number of them children — arrived illegally in the Americas—that is, about 15 percent of the people who remained alive at the end of the Middle Passage during the whole slave-trade era. In fact, the decade from 1836 to 1845 was actually one of the busiest, and as this suggests, the slave trade did not decline gradually, nor did slave owners decide they no longer wanted enslaved labor. Rather, some form of prohibition was essential to the trade's disappearance.
THE ILLEGAL SLAVE TRADE TO CUBA AND BRAZIL

Sloop U.S.S. Jamestown, captured two slavers as an Africa Squadron ship.

H.M.S. Brisk capturing the Emanuela

THE PORPOISE AND PEDRO: A CASE STUDY IN RESISTANCE TO THE ILLEGAL SLAVE TRADE

Pedro Tovookan Parris, ca. 1860. Courtesy of Historic New England
SPATIAL DIMENSIONS
New York, October 10, 1840

Mr. Monroe,

Secretary of State.

Mr. President of the Senate.

In reply to your note of this morning relating to the treaty of peace, we beg to state, that not having seen the treaty, we are unable to say what his intentions may be as to claiming that right. In our opinion, the treaty was not intended to give any rights of war to the United States; and it is our opinion, that the United States having committed acts of hostility against the United States, for the purpose of the foreign war, we do not claim to hold and exist without further instructions from the President.

We remain, &c.

[Signature]

[Signature]
DEPOSITIONS OF PEDRO AND GUILHERME
TWO SLAVE BOYS

EXAMINATION OF PEDRO AND GUILHERME, TWO SLAVE BOYS, who were brought from the island of St. Thomas, in the West Indies, and were sold to Capt. Jas. Peters, of this city, in the month of May, 1851, were yesterday taken before the Hon. Geo. W. C. Babcock, Esq., Recorder of the City of New York, on the charge of being slave boys, and were examined by Mr. H. T. Tappan, Esq., Attorney General of the State of New York, and Mr. A. B. Bingham, Esq., Assistant District Attorney. The examination was conducted in a quiet and orderly manner, and the testimony given was of the highest importance.

PEDRO, one of the boys, testified as follows:

"I am an African, and was born in the island of St. Thomas, in the West Indies. I was sold to Capt. Peters, of this city, in the month of May, 1851, and have been in his service ever since." His testimony was brief, but he appeared to be a truthful and straightforward boy.

GUILLHERME, the other boy, also testified as follows:

"I am an African, and was born in the island of St. Thomas, in the West Indies. I was sold to Capt. Peters, of this city, in the month of May, 1851, and have been in his service ever since." His testimony was similar to Pedro's, and he also appeared to be a truthful and straightforward boy.

In conclusion, the Recorder expressed his satisfaction with the testimony given by both boys, and observed that their evidence was of the utmost importance in establishing the facts of the case. He directed that the deposition be taken down and preserved for future reference.
MATERIAL CULTURE AND THE STUDY OF THE AFRICAN DIASPORA
FURTHER READING