

Name: _____

Miss Crossley

__ LA Period: _____

Date: _____

Nonfiction Article 1: Maritime Trade in 1450-1800

Directions: Read the following article. Underline or highlight information you might be able to use in your own informational essay. Then complete and turn in the last sheet in this packet.

Web of Connections Smithsonian National Museum of American History

After 1500, a web of maritime trade linked Western Europe, Africa, and the Americas.

Thousands of ships carried explorers, merchants, and migrants from Europe to the Americas. They also transported millions of enslaved men and women from Africa. Vessels bound back to Europe carried gold, silver, sugar, tobacco, rice, and other cargoes, along with returning travelers. Every crossing brought new encounters between people, customs, and ways of life, ultimately creating entirely new cultures in the Americas. The maritime web connected the lives of millions of people on both sides of the Atlantic.

Ships, boats, and sailors tied the Atlantic world together. Native peoples and colonists depended on boats for fishing, communication, and trade with the wider world. Warships, merchant ships, and the thousands of sailors who sailed them allowed European nations to manage their empires and profit from the far-flung lands they controlled. These models represent some of the many types of watercraft people used in commerce around the Atlantic world.

Birchbark Canoe (Lent by the Peabody Essex Museum)



Native Americans depended on North America's rivers and lakes for food and transportation. They fashioned tough, lightweight bark canoes for fishing, hunting, fur trading, and warfare. By the early 1600s, the French had adopted Indian canoes for their own fur trading.

This model, made by an unknown native maker around 1803, represents the type of canoe built

by the Micmac people in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, Canada.

South American Canoe (Lent by the Mariners' Museum)



Native peoples in coastal South America and the Caribbean made canoes of logs, bark, and reeds. This model shows a type of canoe used by the Akawai Indians on the Demerara River, which empties into the Atlantic in Guyana.



Náo (round ship) *Santa María*
Built in Galicia, Spain, before 1492

Crew: 40

Gift of Lawrence H. M. Vineburgh

The Santa María

Christopher Columbus sailed across the Atlantic in 1492 hoping to find a shorter route to the riches of Asia. Instead, he found the islands of the Caribbean Sea, which he claimed for Spain, though they were already inhabited. Waves of conquerors and colonists—both free and enslaved—followed. What was a triumph for Spain was a catastrophe for native peoples. New livestock, plants, diseases, and beliefs unsettled centuries-old communities and ecosystems, changing and destroying the lives of millions of native people.



Bark *Susan Constant*
Built near London, England, about 1605

Gift of John W. Chapman

The Susan Constant

In May 1607, men from the *Susan Constant* and two other ships founded Jamestown, Virginia, the first permanent English settlement in North America. They made the dangerous 3,000-mile voyage in slow, uncomfortable cargo vessels, hoping to find gold and spices. The next month, when they sent the ship home, it was filled with timber.



Ketch, name unknown

Built in the 1600

Ketch

Magnificent catches of fish drew colonists to New England's shores, and some made their fortunes selling fish in overseas markets. Salt-preserved cod was the region's main product. It fed plantation slaves in the West Indies and was traded there for molasses. During the 1600s, New England fishers set out in small boats like this two-masted vessel called a ketch.



Sloop *Mediator*
Built in Virginia, about 1741
The Mediator

Coastal commerce linked North America's largest cities and towns. Fast Chesapeake Bay sloops such as the *Mediator* regularly called at ports from New Hampshire to Georgia, and in many British, French, and Dutch harbors in the Caribbean. The sloop's design was adapted from small, swift vessels developed in the West Indies.

Square-topsail schooner *Chaleur*
Built in New England, before 1764
Purchased by the British Royal Navy, 1764
The Chaleur

Great Britain was often at war in the 1600s and 1700s, and Britain's enemies attacked ships from the American colonies. To outrun danger, New England shipbuilders developed fast-sailing schooners. The *Chaleur*, a Marblehead schooner, represents a common type in the Massachusetts fishing fleet.



Colonial sloop, name unknown
Built in Virginia, about 1768
Sloop

Sloops formed the backbone of the trade along the coasts and to the West Indies. They often sailed as smugglers and warships, too. This armed example from the 1760s, with oars to maneuver in calms, is similar to craft used by Caribbean pirates a century earlier.

Ship *London*
Built at New York, 1770 or 1771
The London

Settlers exported vast amounts of timber cut from forests in the Americas, and such naval stores as turpentine and tar. With so much wood close at hand, colonial shipbuilding prospered, and American ships sold well overseas. English owners ordered the *London*, a fast-sailing general-cargo ship, directly from builders in New York.





Brigantine, original name uncertain
Built in North America, 1778
Taken into British Royal Navy, 1779, and named *Swift*

The Swift

The *Swift* was designed for speed and had little cargo capacity. The vessel may have been a packet, which carried mail and government dispatches.



Schooner, original name unknown
Built in North America, before 1780
Captured by the British, 1780, and renamed *HMS Berbice*

The Berbice

Connected by the sea, farmers and fishermen in the continental colonies fed the residents of the Caribbean islands in exchange for molasses, sugar, and rum. The British captured this merchant vessel in the West Indies during the American Revolution.



Slaver brig *Diligente*
Built in United States, before 1839

The Diligente

The slave trade created vast misery and wealth. For nearly 400 years, merchants in Europe and America financed slaving voyages, some African peoples sold their enemies into bondage, and American planters exported valuable crops without paying their workers. Even after international treaties banned slave importing, vessels like the *Diligente* continued this lucrative, inhuman trade.

