

The Impact of the American Revolutionary War on the Slave Trade to Cuba

*By Alex Borucki and José Luis Belmonte Postigo*

Scholars intent on considering the American Revolution's relationship to and influence on systems of slavery must be sure to look outside of the United States. In mid-September 1783, the schooner *Eagle*, captained by David Miller, landed 104 enslaved Africans in Charleston. This is the first known U.S.-flagged transatlantic slave voyage arriving in the United States after independence. Before bringing these captives from Africa, Miller had conducted a previous voyage on the *Eagle*, which landed fifty other captives in Havana in May 1783. The latter group of enslaved men, women, and children, whom Miller brought from the Danish colony of Saint Thomas in the eastern Caribbean, were some of the nearly 14,500 captives we have found who were shipped to Havana, mainly from other Caribbean ports, by merchants based in Cuba, the Danish West Indies, and the United States from 1781 to 1785. Examining the actions of U.S. slave traders in Cuba during the American Revolution also opens up the chance to dramatically increase our understanding of the broader traffic in enslaved people to the island during this period, emphasizing the merchant networks connecting Saint Thomas, Saint Domingue, and Charleston with Havana.