

# The Big Goree Project:



# Healing The Horrors Of The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade

The discussion of The Trans-Atlantic slave trade is very difficult to tackle on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. In the Americas, we have yet to fully comprehend the inhumanity suffered by countless millions who lost everything of significance right down to their sense of self-worth and purpose for living. In Africa, no effort to explain the why and how millions of souls were forcibly ripped from the continent is ever sufficient, leaving generation after generation to stumble through these dark pages of an otherwise glorious history.

In Senegal, a group of middle, high school, and university students are attempting to solve a problem that historians, researchers, and political thinkers have struggled with for decades. *The Big Goree Project* is an effort by over 200 young people to learn about the Trans-Atlantic slave trade, link globally with other students and organizations, and support one of Africa's most important slavery memorial sites.

Sitting in the Atlantic Ocean

about a mile off the coast of Dakar Senegal, Goree Island was one of many ports established by European slave merchants along West Africa that fueled the need for slave labor in the New World and Europe. A small patch of earth with little vegetation, Goree was once home to members of the Lebu ethnic group. In 1444, with the arrival of Portuguese seamen, everything changed on the meager 88 acre stretch of land, and its role in history would eternally be connected to human suffering.

By Gene Adams

For more than 300 years - between 1536 and 1848, Goree Island shuffled between Dutch, French, and British rule and played an active role in the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. "Once the captured Africans arrived at the Atlantic, they were taken to one of the many slave forts that could be found along the coastline, where they would wait to be transported by ship to the Americas" (Understanding Slavery Initiative, 2011). For more than a year, students and teachers at eight middle and high schools and universities have been conducting research, holding events, and meeting