

277 Redoshi

West African Redoshi was only 12 years old in 1860, when she was grabbed and thrown aboard the *Clotilda*, the last known ship to illegally smuggle kidnapped individuals into the United States.

Of the estimated 12.5 million Africans captured and shipped to the Americas during the four centuries of the slave trade, 1.8 million never made it and died in route. Horrific conditions prevailed aboard these slave ships, including hunger, thirst, and disease, but these stressors were but an introduction to the brutal life of forced labor, violence, and dehumanization awaiting them.

Redoshi slaved in the house and fields of an Alabama plantation until Emancipation Day on June 19, 1865. While she initially chose to remain on the plantation, she later joined a group of previously enslaved Africans who, through their strength, courage, tenacity, and hard work, independently established a 6,000-acre settlement known as Africatown.

Despite her cruel early years, she lived to 89, long enough to see the beginnings of the civil rights movement and a glimmer of change.

This pale figure is the ghost of Redoshi. The braided collar around her neck attests to her suffering, but she holds weapons with which she will defend her freedom.