

Focus Questions:

1. What was the beginning of slavery in America?
2. What were the effects of slavery?
3. What were the conditions that slaves faced?

Summary Outline:

The use of Africans as slaves originated in Hispaniola. However, after tobacco became a cash crop in Virginia, African slaves were brought to America through the Triangular Trade Route on ships, where they faced horrible conditions. Once in America, they were forced to work in tobacco or cotton fields, in the homes of the slave owner, or they were taught a trade.

Impact on Africans

- 1505 small number of Africans were working in copper mines in Hispaniola
- With the decline of native labor due to “mainly disease” Europeans turned to Africa for slaves
 - Following years ships would transport hundreds of thousands of Africans
- La Casas, along with others saw slaves as a solution to colonies labor shortage, as more natives died the demand for Africans grew, the price for them grew
- 1515, first Africans arrived in Spain along with sugar
- Traded by strength and endurance, one estimate of enslaved Africans in the 1500s alone is 250,000, another of 200,000 between 1601 and 1602, before the 1800s there were at least 12 million

Search for the supply of labor

- In order to grow tobacco in Jamestown, Virginia company was missing laborers
 - The demand for workers increases in the New World (the Americas)
- To lure settlers, they introduced the headright system in 1618, a granted land of 50 acres
- Most didn't come under the system but as indentured servants, food and shelter were given for an agreed term of servitude, 4 to 7 years

The New World

- Slaves were brought from African Slave traders
 - Portugal and Spain dominated the slave trade in the 16th century
 - Dutch dominated in the 17th century
 - English dominated in the 18th century
- The Caribbean, South America, and the Southern colonies of British North America had a warm climate which provided long growing seasons, ideal for plantation crops
 - Slaves were subjected to brutal treatment at the hands of the slave owners
- Slaves were traded for the raw materials of the Americas such as sugar, tobacco, rice, and cotton.
- Once people sold their human cargo, the ships were drained and cleaned to become more “suitable for shipping cargo”

First African Laborers

- First arrived aboard a dutch merchant ship in 1619
- Records suggest that they treated them as indentured servants who later received land and freedom, several years later English colonists would begin the systematic use of Africans as slave labor

Indentured Servants

- Indentured servants differ because they can earn their freedom, but they must work for a specific amount of time. This is agreed upon a term of work wherein the slave/servant will serve
- Both slavery and indentured servants had long term effects on the northern, middle, and southern colonies. They mainly helped the colonies further develop economically, but also stimulated the growth and expansion of the areas.
- Indentured servitude was introduced to the new world in 1607.
- Indentured servitude: a form of debt bondage, they were not paid wages but generally housed, clothed, and fed
- Servants themselves were not considered property and were free when their indenture ended. (usually a 5-7 year time period)
- During the 18th century, these contracts became less necessary and slaves became more appealing to landowners and prospering colonies

Antislavery

- The petition to the Massachusetts legislature was written by a group of slaves after the American Revolution in Massachusetts. The group had learned the language of the constitution and used it in their petition for freedom.

The triangular trade

- Trade developed from American colonies, Africa and west indies
- Over 200 years, middle passage brought millions of Africans to work as slaves in the Americas
- Majority of slaves brought were bound for plantations in southern colonies such as Virginia
- Slaves were led through the “Door of no return” on to the ships waiting in the harbor.
 - Slaves were packed tightly onto ships, shackled, and fed very little for the three-to five-month journey
 - Slaves rode on planks 66” x 15” (only 20”-25” of headroom)
 - Males chained together in pairs
 - Kept separate from women and children
 - Food: had a poor and insufficient diet that consisted of vegetable pulps, stews, and porridge, and denied meat or fish
 - 10 people would eat from 1 bucket

