

Holt House Table Of Contents

History Of Slavery, 1790 to 1829

History Of Slavery, 1830 To The End

Chronology on the History of Slavery and Racism

Compiled from Archive, library and Internet source documentation, this timeline on Slavery and in part the History of Racism, has been used to guide the direction of independent research into the history of enslaved Americans of African descent at historic sites located at the National Zoo, in Washington, DC. Hopefully, this compilation of American history will help others who undertake similar tasks.

This project has been conducted totally independently from research conducted by the Office of Architectural History and Preservation at the Smithsonian and the National Zoo. Visit the Holt House Web Site for periodic updates. Be sure to go to the bottom of the page and hit "Contents" to enter. This research was compiled by Eddie Becker who will be happy to give advice on similar undertakings.

Citation information and credit: (Chronology on the History of Slavery, Compiled by Eddie Becker 1999, see on line at <http://innercity.org/holt/slavechron.html>)

The Chronology is broken up into three parts:

- 1.1619 – 1789
- 2.1790 to 1829
- 3.1830 - the end

For pre-17th century timeline see Cora Agatucci's African Timeline.

Chronology Of The History Of Slavery: 1619-1789

1619

The other crucial event that would play a role in the development of America was the arrival of Africans to Jamestown. A Dutch slave trader exchanged his cargo of Africans for food in 1619. The Africans became indentured servants, similar in legal position to many poor Englishmen who traded several years labor in exchange for passage to America. The popular conception of a racial-based slave system did not develop until the 1680's. (A Brief History of Jamestown, The Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, Richmond, VA 23220, email: apva@apva.org, Web published February, 2000)

The legend has been repeated endlessly that the first blacks in Virginia were "indentured servants," but there is no hint of this in the records. The legend grew up because the word slave did not appear in Virginia records until 1656, and statutes defining the status of blacks began to appear casually in the 1660s. The inference was then made that blacks called servants must have had approximately the same status as white indentured servants. Such reasoning failed to notice that Englishmen, in the early seventeenth century, used the work servant when they meant slave in our sense, and, indeed, white Southerners invariably used servant until 1865 and beyond. Slave entered the Southern vocabulary as a technical word in trade, law and politics. (Robert McColley in Dictionary of Afro-American Slavery, Edited by Randall M. Miller and John David Smith, Greenwood Press, 1988 pp 281)

Jamestown had exported 10 tons of tobacco to Europe and was a boomtown. The export business was going so well the colonists were able to afford two imports which would greatly contribute to their productivity and quality of life. 20 Blacks from Africa and 90 women from England. The Africans were paid for in food; each woman cost 120 pounds of tobacco. The Blacks were bought as indentured servants from a passing Dutch ship low on food, and the women were supplied by a private English company. Those who married the women had to pay their passage--120 pounds of tobacco. (Gene Barios, Tobacco BBS: tobacco news)

With the success of tobacco planting, African Slavery was legalized in Virginia and Maryland, becoming the foundation of the Southern agrarian economy. (The Concise Columbia Encyclopedia, 1995 by Columbia University Press from MS Bookshelf.)

Although the number of African American slaves grew slowly at first, by the 1680s they had become essential to the economy of Virginia. During the 17th and 18th centuries, African American slaves lived in all of England's North American colonies. Before Great Britain prohibited its subjects from participating in the slave trade, between 600,000 and 650,000 Africans had been forcibly transported to North America. ("Immigration," Microsoft Encarta 98 Encyclopedia. Microsoft Corporation.)

Following the arrival of twenty Africans aboard a Dutch man-of-war in Virginia in 1619, the face of American slavery began to change from the "tawny" Indian to the "blackamoor" African in the years between 1650 and 1750. Though the issue is complex, the unsuitability of Native Americans for the labor intensive agricultural practices, their susceptibility to European diseases, the proximity of avenues of escape for Native Americans, and the lucrative nature of the African slave trade led to a transition to an African based institution of slavery. During this period of transition, however, the colonial "wars" against the Pequots, the

Tuscaroras, the Yamasees, and numerous other Indian nations led to the enslavement and relocation of tens of thousands of Native Americans. In the early years of the eighteenth century, the number of Native American slaves in areas such as the Carolinas may have been as much as half of the African slave population. During this transitional period, Africans and Native Americans shared the common experience of enslavement. In addition to working together in the fields, they lived together in communal living quarters, produced collective recipes for food and herbal remedies, shared myths and legends, and ultimately became lovers. The intermarriage of Africans and Native Americans was facilitated by the disproportionality of African male slaves to females (3 to 1) and the decimation of Native American males by disease, enslavement, and prolonged wars with the colonists.

As Native American societies in the Southeast were primarily matrilineal, African males who married Native American women often became members of the wife's clan and citizens of the respective nation. As relationships grew, the lines of distinction began to blur. The evolution of red-black people began to pursue its own course; many of the people who came to be known as slaves, free people of color, Africans, or Indians were most often the product of integrating cultures. In areas such as Southeastern Virginia, The Low Country of the Carolinas, and Silver Bluff, S.C., communities of Afro-Indians began to spring up. The depth and complexity of this intermixture is revealed in a 1740 slave code in South Carolina: all Negroes and Indians, (free Indians in amity with this government, and Negroes, mulattos, and mustezoes, who are now free, excepted) mulattos or mustezoes who are now, or shall hereafter be in this province, and all their issue and offspring...shall be and they are hereby declared to be, and remain hereafter absolute slaves. (Patrick Mingos, *Beneath the Underdog: Race, Religion and the "Trail of Tears"* Union Seminary Quarterly Review Email: pm47@columbia.edu Union Theological Seminary, New York)

Millions of Native Americans were also enslaved, particularly in South America. In the American colonies in 1730, nearly 25 percent of the slaves in the Carolinas were Cherokee, Creek, or other Native Americans. From the 1500s through the early 1700s, small numbers of white people were also enslaved by kidnapping, or for crimes or debts.

SUGGESTED READINGS:

Herbert Klein's, *African Slavery in Latin American and the Caribbean* (1986); Ramon Gutierrez's *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away: Marriage, Sexuality, and Power in New Mexico 1500-1846* (1991); *Great Documents in American Indian History* (1995), edited by Wayne Moquin; J. McIver Weatherford's *Native Roots: How the Indians Enriched America* (1991); *Native Heritage: Personal Accounts by American Indians 1790-Present* (1995), edited by Arlene Hirschfelder; Robert Edgar Conrad's *Children of God's Fire: A Documentary History of Black Slavery in Brazil* (1983); and Sidney Mintz's and

Richard Price's *An Anthropological Approach to the Afro-American Past: A Caribbean Perspective* (1981). (Ten Myths, Half-truths and Misunderstandings about Black History, Ethnic NewsWatch SoftLine Information, Inc., Stamford, CT) (For more information about the history of the contact between Native Americans, Africans and Americans of African descent, see the work done by Patrick Mingos, Union Theological Seminary)

Also see: Winthrop Jordan's *White Over Black* (see the index to find the relevant pages), and in an old publication by Almon Wheeler Lauber called *Indian Slavery in Colonial Times within the Present Limits of the United States*, Columbia University Studies in History, Economics, and Public Law, Columbia University, 1913

In the Americas, there were added dimensions to this resistance, especially reactions to the racial characteristics of chattel slavery. This fundamental difference from the condition of slaves in Africa emerged gradually, although the roots of racial categories were established early. Acts of resistance that combined indentured Irish workers, African slaves, and Amer-Indian prisoners did occur, although in the end these alliances disintegrated. Furthermore, slaves did not consolidate ethnic identifications on the basis of color, but it was widely understood that most blacks were slaves and no slaves were white. Although there were black, mulatto and American-born slave owners in some colonies in the Americas, and many whites did not own slaves, chattel slavery was fundamentally different in the Americas from other parts of the world because of the racial dimension. (Hilary McD. Beckles, "The Colors of Property: Brown, white and Black Chattels and their Responses to the Colonial Frontier", *Slavery and Abolition*, 15, 2 (1994), 36-51. Cited by Paul E. Lovejoy in "The African Diaspora: Revisionist Interpretations of Ethnicity, Culture and Religion under Slavery" . *Studies in the World History of Slavery, Abolition and Emancipation*, II, 1 (1997))

Tobacco was considered powerful medicine by native Americans. Cigarettes of today have been adulterated to enhance their addictive properties. Though ritual varied, "Smoking [by native Americans] was chiefly done after the evening meal, in the sweathouse, before going to sleep. It was a social ritual, and the pipes were passed around the group. A man never let his pipe out of his sight. Occasionally he would stop for a smoke when on a journey or when meeting someone on the trail." (Early Uses of Indian Tobacco in California, *California Natural History Guides: 10, Early Uses Of California Plants*, By Edward K. Balls, University Of California Press, Copyright 1962 by the Regents of the University of California ISBN: 0-520-00072-2)

In fact, the first twenty "Negar" slaves had arrived from the West Indies in a Dutch vessel and were sold to the governor and a merchant in Jamestown in late August of 1619, as reported by John Rolfe to John Smith back in London. (Robinson, Donald L.

Slavery and the Structure of American Politics, 1765 - 1820. NY: Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich, 1971) By 1625, ten slaves were listed in the first census of Jamestown. The first public slave auction of 23 individuals, disgracefully, was held in Jamestown square itself in 1638. What were to become the parameters and properties of the "peculiar institution" were defined in the Virginia General Assembly from about 1640 onwards. Negro indenture, then, appears to have been no more than a legal fiction of brief duration in Virginia. Black freedmen would live in a legal limbo until the general emancipation in 1864, unable to stand witness in their own defense against the testimony of any Euro-American. The General Court dispositions that appear after 1640 seem to support this contention. Barbados was the first British possession to enact restrictive legislation governing slaves in 1644, and other colonial administrations, especially Virginia and Maryland, quickly adopted similar rules modeled on it. Whipping and branding, borrowed from Roman practice via the Iberian-American colonies, appeared early and with vicious audacity.

One Virginian slave, named Emanuel, was convicted of trying to escape in July, 1640, and was condemned to thirty stripes, with the letter "R" for "runaway" branded on his cheek and "work in a shackle one year or more as his master shall see cause." .

(Robinson, Donald L. Slavery and the Structure of American Politics, 1765 - 1820. NY: Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich, 1971) Shades of

Rome! This was most certainly not a contractually obligated indentured servant, however oppressed but consistent with English common law, that could expect release from his contract after a time. Rather, this was an abject slave, subject to the court's definition of him as mercantable and movable "property," as chattel or res, and to his master's virtual whim. Indeed, the general

assembly of Virginia in 1662 passed an act which directly and consciously invoked Justinian code: *partvs seqvitvr ventram*,

whereby a child born of a slave mother was also held to be a slave, regardless of its father's legal status.

(Greene, Lorenzo

Johnston. The Negro in Colonial New England. NY: Athaneum Press, 1971) A few years later, the population of Africans in bondage in

Virginia reached about 2,000, and another statute (1667) established compulsory life servitude, *de addictio* according to

Roman code, for Negroes ... slavery had become an official institution. (Whitefield, Theodore Marshall.

Slavery Agitation in Virginia,

1829 - 1832. NY : Negro Universities Press, 1930 Securing the Leg Irons: Restriction of Legal Rights for Slaves in Virginia and Maryland,

1625 - 1791. Slavery In Early America's Colonies-- Seeds of Servitude Rooted in The Civil Law of Rome by Charles P.M. Outwin)

1620

The Pilgrims settled at Plymouth Massachusetts. ". Plymouth, for the most part, had servants and not slaves, meaning that most

black servants were given their freedom after turning 25 years old--under similar contractual arrangement as English

apprenticeships." (Were there any blacks on the Mayflower? By Caleb Johnson member of the General Society of Mayflower Descendants)

1624

New Amsterdam- The Dutch, who had entered the slave trade in 1621 with the formation of the Dutch West Indies Co., import blacks to serve on Hudson Valley farms. According to Dutch law, the children of manumitted (freed) slaves are bound to slavery. (Chronology: A Historical Review, Major Events in Black History 1492 thru 1953 by Roger Davis and Wanda Neal-Davis)

1638

The price tag for an African male was around \$27, while the salary of a European laborer was about seventy cents per day. (Willie F. Page. _The Dutch Triangle: The Netherlands and the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1621-1664_. Studies in African American History and Culture. New York: Garland Publishing, 1997. xxxv + 262 pp. Bibliographical references and index. \$66.00 (cloth), ISBN 0-8153-2881-8. Reviewed for H-Review by Dennis R. Hidalgo , Central Michigan University)

1640

Whipping and branding, borrowed from Roman practice via the Iberian-American colonies, appeared early and with vicious audacity. One Virginian slave, named Emanuel, was convicted of trying to escape in July, 1640, and was condemned to thirty stripes, with the letter "R" for "runaway" branded on his cheek and "work in a shackle one year or more as his master shall see cause." Charles P.M. Outwin, Securing the Leg Irons: Restriction of Legal Rights for Slaves in Virginia and Maryland, 1625 – 1791, footnote taken from Catterall, Helen Honor Tunnicliff. Judicial Cases Concerning American Slavery and the Negro, vol. I, Cases from the Courts of England, Virginia, West Virginia, and Kentucky, and vol. IV, Cases from the Courts of New England, the Middle States, and the District of Columbia. Washington, D. C., Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1926 & 1936. Page 77)

1641

Massachusetts colony legalizes slavery. (Underground Railroad Chronology, National Park Service, <http://www.nps.gov/boaf/urrtim~1.htm>)

1642

Virginia colony enacts law to fine those who harbor or assist runaway slaves. (Underground Railroad Chronology, National Park Service). The Virginia law, penalizes people sheltering runaways 20 pounds worth of tobacco for each night of refuge granted. Slaves are branded after a second escape attempt. (African American History, Chronology: A Historical Review Major Events in Black History 1492 thru 1953)

1649

Black laborers in the Virginia colony still number only 300 (see 1619; 1671). (The People's Chronology 1995, 1996 by James Trager from MS Bookshelf)

Tobacco exports bring prosperity to the Virginia colony.(The People's Chronology 1995, 1996 by James Trager from MS Bookshelf)

1650 For centuries the issue of equal rights presented a major challenge to the state. Virginia, after all, had been the primary site for the development of black slavery in the Americas. By the 1650s some of the indentured servants had earned their freedom. Because replacements, whether black or white, were in limited supply and more costly, the Virginia plantation owners considered the advantages of the "perpetual servitude" policy exercised by Caribbean landowners. Following the lead of Massachusetts and Connecticut, Virginia legalized slavery in 1661. In 1672 the king of England chartered the Royal African Company to bring the shiploads of slaves into trading centers like Jamestown, Hampton, and Yorktown. (Compton's Encyclopedia Online. <http://www.comptons.com/encyclopedia/>)

1650
World population estimated 500 million. (General Chronology Of Events 1994/1995 Leading Edge Research Group)

1660
Slavery spread quickly in the American colonies. At first the legal status of Africans in America was poorly defined, and some, like European indentured servants, managed to become free after several years of service. From the 1660s, however, the colonies began enacting laws that defined and regulated slave relations. Central to these laws was the provision that black slaves, and the children of slave women, would serve for life. This premise, combined with the natural population growth among the slaves, meant that slavery could survive and grow even after slave imports were outlawed in 1808. ("Slavery in the United States," Microsoft Encarta 98 Encyclopedia. Microsoft Corporation.)

1660
Despite this growth in tobacco production, problems in price-stability and quality existed. In 1660, when the English markets became glutted with tobacco, prices fell so low that the colonists were barely able to survive. In response to this, planters began mixing other organic material, such as leaves and the sweepings from their homes, in with the tobacco, as an attempt to make up by quantity what they lost by low prices. The exporting of this trash tobacco solved the colonists' immediate cash flow problems, but accentuated the problems of overproduction and deterioration of quality.[8] As the reputation of colonial tobacco declined, reducing European demand for it, colonial authorities stepped in to take corrective measures. During the next fifty years they came up with three solutions. First, they reduced the amount of tobacco produced; second, they regularized the trade by fixing the size of the tobacco hogshead and prohibiting shipments of bulk tobacco; finally, they improved quality by

preventing the exportation of trash tobacco. These solutions soon fell through because there was no practical way to enforce the law. It was not until 1730, when the Virginia Inspection Acts were passed, that tobacco trade laws were fully enforced (Middleton, Arthur Pierce. Tobacco Coast. Newport News, Virginia: Mariners' Museum, 1953.. P. 112-116, Finlayson, Ann. Colonial Maryland. Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Inc. 1974. P. 66-679. On line at From Economic Aspects of Tobacco during the Colonial Period 1612-1776)

1661

A reference to slavery entered into Virginia law, and this law was directed at white servants -- at those who ran away with a black servant. The following year, the colony went one step further by stating that children born would be bonded or free according to the status of the mother. (Timeline from the PBS series Africans In America)

1662

A Virginia law assumed Africans would remain servants for life. ." (Slavery in America Grolier Electronic Publishing, 1995)

Citing 1662 Virginia statute providing that "[c]hildren got by an Englishman upon a Negro woman shall be bond or free according to the condition of the mother"). Throughout the late 17th and early 18th century, several colonial legislatures adopted similar rules which reversed the usual common law presumptions that the status of the child was determined by the father. See id. at 128 (citing 1706 New York statute); id. at 252 (citing a 1755 Georgia Law). These laws facilitated the breeding of slaves through Black women's bodies and allowed for slaveholders to reproduce their own labor force. (See Paula Giddings, When And Where I Enter: The Impact Of Black Women On Race And Sex In America 37) (1984) (noting that "a master could save the cost of buying new slaves by impregnating his own slave, or for that matter, having anyone impregnate her"). For a discussion of Race and Gender see Cheryl I. Harris, Myths of Race and Gender in the Trials of O.J. Simpson and Susan Smith -- Spectacles of Our Times)

1662

The Laws of Virginia (1662, 1691, 1705) These statutes chart the development of regulations on the sexual and reproductive lives of indentured servants and slaves, the growing institutionalization of slavery, and the construction of racism. Note the increasingly harsh penalties and how punishments differed by gender. (To view the laws visit (America Past and Present On Line)

Slavery in the United States was governed by an extensive body of law developed from the 1660s to the 1860s. Every slave state had its own slave code and body of court decisions. All slave codes made slavery a permanent condition, inherited through the mother, and defined slaves as property, usually in the same terms as those applied to real estate. Slaves, being property,

could not own property or be a party to a contract. Since marriage is a form of a contract, no slave marriage had any legal standing. All codes also had sections regulating free blacks, who were still subject to controls on their movements and employment and were often required to leave the state after emancipation. (American Treasures of the Library of Congress: MEMORY, Slavery in the Capitol)

1663

Maryland, Settlers pass law stipulating that all imported blacks are to be given the status of slaves. Free white women who marry black slaves are to be slaves during the lives of their spouses, Ironically, children born of white servant women and blacks are regarded as free by a 1681 law. (The Negro Almanac a reference work on the Afro American, compiled and edited by Harry A Ploski, and Warren Marr, II. Third Edition 1978 Bellwether Publishing)

1663/09/13

First serious recorded slave conspiracy in Colonial America takes place in Virginia. A servant betrayed plot of white servants and Negro slaves in Gloucester County, Virginia. (Major Revolts and Escapes, Lerone Bennett, Before the Mayflower)

1664

Slavery sanctioned by law; slaves to serve for life. (MD info from Maryland A Chronology & Documentary Handbook, 1978 Oceana Publications, Inc. And Maryland Historical Chronology)

Throughout most of the colonial period, opposition to slavery among white Americans was virtually nonexistent. Settlers in the 17th and early 18th centuries came from sharply stratified societies in which the wealthy savagely exploited members of the lower classes. Lacking a later generation's belief in natural human equality, they saw little reason to question the enslavement of Africans. As they sought to mold a docile labor force, planters resorted to harsh, repressive measures that included liberal use of whipping and branding. ("Slavery in the United States," Microsoft Encarta 98 Encyclopedia. Microsoft Corporation.)

One characteristic which set American slavery apart was its racial basis. In America, with only a few early and insignificant exceptions, all slaves were Africans, and almost all Africans were slaves. This placed the label of inferiority on black skin and on African culture. In other societies, it had been possible for a slave who obtained his freedom to take his place in his society with relative ease. In America, however, when a slave became free, he was still obviously an African. The taint of inferiority clung to him. Not only did white America become convinced of white superiority and black inferiority, but it strove to impose these racial beliefs on the Africans themselves. Slave masters gave a great deal of attention to the education and training of the ideal

slave, In general, there were five steps in molding the character of such a slave: strict discipline, a sense of his own inferiority, belief in the master's superior power, acceptance of the master's standards, and, finally, a deep sense of his own helplessness and dependence. At every point this education was built on the belief in white superiority and black inferiority. Besides teaching the slave to despise his own history and culture, the master strove to inculcate his own value system into the African's outlook. The white man's belief in the African's inferiority paralleled African self hate. (Norman Coombs, *The Immigrant Heritage of America*, Twayne Press, 1972. Chapter 3, Chapter 3, *The Shape of American Slavery*)

The psychological impact on the individual of slavery contrasted to that of individuals who survived the Nazi holocaust, In Stanley M. Elkins thinking, the concentration camps were a modern example of a rigid system controlling mass behavior. Because some of those who experienced them were social scientists trained in the skills of observation and analysis, they provide a basis for insights into the way in which a particular social system can influence mass character. While there is also much literature about American slavery written both by slaves and masters, none of it was written from the viewpoint of modern social sciences. However, Elkins postulates that a slave type must have existed as the result of the attempt to control mass behavior, and he believes that this type probably bore a marked resemblance to the literary stereotype of "Sambo." Studying concentration camps and their impact on personality provides a tool for new insights into the working of slavery, but, warns Elkins, the comparison can only be used for limited purposes. Although slavery was not unlike the concentration camp in many respects, the concentration camp can be viewed as a highly perverted form of slavery, and both systems were ways of controlling mass behavior

The concentration camp experience began with what has become labeled as shock procurement. As terror was one of the many tools of the system, surprise late-night arrests were the favorite technique. Camp inmates generally agreed that the train ride to the camp was the point at which they experienced the first brutal torture. Herded together into cattle cars, without adequate space, ventilation, or sanitary conditions, they had to endure the horrible crowding and the harassment of the guards. When they reached the camp, they had to stand naked in line and undergo a detailed examination by the camp physician. Then, each was given a tag and a number. These two events were calculated to strip away one's identity and to reduce the individual to an item within an impersonal system. (see work of Stanley M. Elkins in Norman Coombs, *The Immigrant Heritage of America*, Twayne Press, 1972. Chapter 3, *Slavery and the Formation of Character*)

Slavery introduced into law in Maryland, the law also prohibited marriage between white women and black men. This particular