***Slavery***

Slavery (Americas)

**3 populations-**

**Indigenous**

**Indentured**

**African**

The Portuguese brought slaves from Africa directly to Portugal beginning in 1441

After 1441 African slave trade becomes common

Initially the Portuguese procured slaves from Africa by raiding but later relied predominantly on trade with other African peoples

**Slavery in British colonies** in what is now the US and the Caribbean

1619, 20 African slaves are brought to Jamestown (Virginia)

By 1776 slavery, (non-existent in England itself) spread throughout the English colonies (What would become the United States and the Caribbean)

In ***colonial America*** it is clear to many settlers that survival depended on working the land

European settlers/colonists were in a land well suited for growing a variety of crops

And- there was great demand abroad for these crops

*So planters could grow wealthy if they capitalized on this demand*

In the *upper south*-**Tobacco**

**Rice** in the *lower south*

**Sugar** in the *Caribbean*

The desire to develop commercial agriculture under conditions of population scarcity gave rise in North America, as it did in the Caribbean and South America, to ***forced labor***

17th century – colonists experimented with *Indigenous population* and *Europeans* before their widespread importation of Africans

EXAMPLE-In ***South Carolina*** in *1708* there were *1,400* Indian slaves in a colonial population of 12,580

Small numbers of Indian slaves persisted into the 19th century

***European laborers***- Europeans desiring to come to America but unable to afford passage sold themselves into temporary slavery in exchange for free transatlantic transportation

**INDENTURED SERVANTS**

While most **indentured servants** came to America voluntarily some were kidnapped or sentenced to servitude for criminal behavior

Most adults served **4-5** years but children often served **7** years or more

*Indentured servants* could find the years of service extended for criminal behavior (like disobedience, flight, and childbearing)

**Indentured servitude** flourished because it simultaneously met the needs of labor-hungry colonial landholders and those of would be European migrants

For landowners Indentured servitude was a gold mine- because it not only provided a solution to their labor problem but it allowed them to increase their landholdings………..

…..because, early colonies provided those who paid for the transatlantic passage with a “head right” or land allotment- often **50 acres** for each person (including oneself) transported

EXAMPLE-One planter, John Carter imported 80 indentured servants in 1665 to work for him in Virginia and he received 4,000 acres

In short, indentured servitude provided cheap labor, more land (for the plantation owner), and the honor that accrued to those with authority over other humans

Most early servants were English and came voluntarily

Severe economic hardship in England during the first half of the 17th century, combined with the **political disruption** of the 1640s and 1650s **civil war** and dictatorship of **Oliver Cromwell**, provided an abundant supply of would be servants

**Indentured servants** were overwhelmingly young **men**

Male servants outnumbered female servants by more than **3-1**

Once in the colonies Indentured servants engaged in skilled trades and in domestic positions…

…but the majority wound up as ***agricultural laborers***

In the Chesapeake colonie**S** almost half of all servants died while still under indenture

Female servants that survived and served out the contract generally faced a brighter future than men- the surplus of males enabled most women to improve their status by marrying up

1619 first black slaves arrive in Jamestown

**Until the 1680s** the non-Indian population of the British mainland colonies remained overwhelmingly white

As long as a ready supply of indentured servants existed -colonists saw little reason to go to the expense and bother of importing large numbers of Africans

The Portuguese and the Dutch dominated the African slave trade until the British triumph in the Anglo-Dutch war of 1664-1667

**beginning in the 1680s the mainland colonies underwent a massive shift from indentured to slave labor**

Between **1680** and 1700 the population of Virginia more than triples due to the influx of African slaves

Between 1680 and 1750 the estimated proportion of Africans in the population increased from 7 percent to 44 percent (Virginia)

And from 17 percent to 61 **percent in South Carolina during that same time period**

In the 18th century Indentured Servants declined and almost disappeared

WHY? Changing conditions on both sides of the Atlantic were responsible for this development

In ***England*** after 1660 the *Monarchy* was restored after…

English Civil War 1640s Interregnum 1649-1660

And England experienced an economic upturn

Also African slaves seemed like a better ***long term investment***

The initial investment in African slaves brought a lifetime of service

Reduced flight risk

Offspring born into slavery-natural labor supply increase

Racial distinction began to facilitate enslavement

The great majority of the English work force (indentured servants) arrived voluntarily

African slaves did not

By ***1850*** It is estimated that around 12 million Africans were shipped across the Atlantic

10-20% died on the ships

In *1781* running short on water, the captain of the slave ship *Zong* ordered 132 Africans thrown overboard because his insurance covered death from drowning but not from starvation

Between **10** and **11** million Africans arrived in the Americas

The overwhelming majority of African Slaves arrive during the ***18th*** century

More than 7 million slaves arrive in the Americas between 1700-1800

Slave **mortality** was high and fertility low

More ***men*** were brought than women

Most American slaves came from the coastal region of West Africa

European and American traders dubbed this region “Guinea” and assigned various portions of it descriptive designations such as “Ivory Coast” “Gold Coast” and “Slave Coast” that suggested the nature of their appeal

High mortality rates

The only way to maintain or expand the number of slaves was to import more

By 1860 almost 6 million slaves worked in the Americas

***4 million slaves*** in the southern United States by 1860

The US depended more on natural population growth than the Atlantic Slave trade in the 19th century

1807 legislation enacted that prohibited new slaves from being brought into the US

**In 1808 it took effect**

80-90% of the population in the British and French Caribbean were slaves

Between 1550 and 1850 Brazil alone imported 3.5 – 5 million slaves from Africa

Estimated slave imports between 1519-1866

Brazil 3.9 million

British Caribbean 2.2 million

Spanish America 1.2 million

French Caribbean 400K

Guianas 400K

British North America 361K

Dutch Caribbean 129K

Danish Caribbean 73K

Total – about 9.5 million

Why were the majority of slave imports men?

Women and children were a financial risk because of high mortality rates

Slave populations in the Americas (in some locations) grew because of the diet

**Triangular trade**

Slaves carried to America

Sugar and Tobacco etc.

Carried to Europe

European products sent to

Coast of Africa

Some scholars believe that the practice of polygamy increased in Africa because of the slave trade

Women’s status suffers as a result

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Almost from the beginning America was heavily dependent on coerced labor

By the early 18th century slavery, legal in all of British America, was the dominant labor system of the Southern colonies- but also existed in northern colonies

Most of the founding fathers were large scale slave owners

George Washington had over 300

Patrick Henry “Give me Liberty or give me death”

Thomas Jefferson – who proclaimed in the Declaration of Independence that all men are created equal

8 of the first 12 US presidents were slave holders

By the end of the 17th century Indentured servants could no longer fulfill the labor demand in the Southern colonies

British Naval supremacy made bringing slaves over much easier (1588 Spanish Armada)

British dominate Slave trade in 17th century

Middle Passage (Transatlantic voyage)

First slaves experience capture

Marched to the coast in captivity

Sold to strange looking men who spoke a foreign language

Held in dark, damp, dungeon like forts

Examined

Sold

Put on a canoe to go out to larger ship

Often crammed into ships with only 2 ½ feet of space

Could barely move

If the weather was good the slaves were brought to the deck to combat scurvy

If weather was bad they had to remain below deck

If water supply ran low some were thrown overboard

Arrival in Americas brought an end to the Middle Passage but then they were subjected to a new terror- the sale

Once again- poked, prodded etc.

The import of slaves to the US ended in 1808

Natural population growth made this easier to deal with for planters

During the next 50 years – the slave population tripled to nearly 4 million by 1860