**History of Slavery in America**

**1400** Portugese sailors begin raiding African west coast for slaves.

**1492** Columbus discovers America.

**1619** First indentured servants—twenty black men brought to Jamestown, Virginia on a Dutch ship. They were supposed to be freed after 7-10 years and given a land grant from the colonies. This didn’t happen.

**1619** Tobacco fields extended from Jamestown. Native Americans are forcibly employed to work these plantations along the James River.

**1634** First English colony in the Caribbean islands.

**1640** Most Africans brought into Virginia now receive no indentures or contracts.

**1645** First successful planting of sugar cane in the British isles.

**1662** Virginia law declares that, for enslaved persons, the status of the child shall follow the status of the mother. Any children born to an enslaved woman are likewise enslaved. Therefore, male slaveowners might have sexual intercourse with female slaves and receive an economic benefit by increasing their property.

**1685** The first anti-slavery law is passed in Rhode Island.

**1775** American Revolution begins.

**1776** Two black American soldiers cross the Delaware River with George Washington.

**1778** American Revolution ends with American victory.

**1787** Society for the Abolition of Slave Trade is founded in London.

**1790** 757,000 blacks in U.S. Nine out of ten of them are enslaved.

**1793** Invention of the cotton gin in America.

**1800** Gabriel Prosser’s planned rebellion in Richmond, Virginia is foiled by a violent thunderstorm. Eventually, Prosser is captured, tried, convicted, and hanged.

**1803** Slave revolt led by Toussant L’Ouverture in French colony of Haiti ends after much violence with freedom for slaves.

**1807** America and Great Britain abolish the Atlantic slave trade, but both countries continue illegally to import captured Africans as slaves.

**1820** Missouri Compromise provides for the admission of Maine to the Union as a free state and Missouri as a slave state the following year. The balance between slave and free states in Congress remains.

**1831** Nat Turner’s uprising in Virginia fails, and he is captured, tried, and executed.

**1850** Compromise of 1850 passes Congress, part of which was the Fugitive Slave Act, requiring anyone who found a runaway slave to return him/her to the owner. Other parts of the Compromise include the admission of California to the Union as a free state, the postponement of deciding slave or free status in New Mexico and Utah territories, and the federal government’s support of slavery where it already existed.

**1852** *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe, a powerful and highly sentimental anti-slavery novel, is published, sells 300,000 in a year.

**1857** Dred Scott Case—US Supreme Court, led by Roger B. Taney, declares that slaves, former slaves, and children of slaves cannot be citizens and therefore can have none of a citizen’s rights under the law. Congress must protect the rights of property owners in American territories by not outlawing slavery in those territories. Chief Justice Taney says, Africans were not considered by the founding fathers who wrote the Constitution; thus, they cannot benefit from the Constitution.

**1860** Four million enslaved persons in the U.S, one third of total population of U.S. South.

**1861** Civil War begins, with slavery as its central conflict.

**1863** Emancipation Proclamation is signed by Abraham Lincoln, freeing slaves who live in slaves currently in rebellion against the U.S. No mention is made of outlawing slavery in all states.

**1865** North wins the Civil War. Slavery abolished. All former slaves granted full citizenship in U.S. through 14th Amendment to the Constitution.