

Introduction to Nigerian History

GNS 102 / CGNS

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The Trans- Saharan Trade & effects on Nigeria

- Slavery is an institution where people are forcefully taken as properties or chattels.
- The Trans-Sahara Slave trade simply means slavery across the Sahara Desert area of Nigeria. It was a trade that cut across other powerful states in Africa such as Asante, Mali and the Hausa City states.
- It has its significance. It introduced Islam, Camels, horse, new architecture, Maraba (Islamic physicians) etc, silks, cotton and internationalized Pre-colonial Nigeria societies.



- The use of beast of burden was used in the trade. This includes horses, camels, oxen etc. Caravan was also used by wealthy merchants.
- The money for the trade was generated by merchants and wealthy kings/princes in Africa and Arab.
- With time, it paved way for another slave trade known as Trans-Atlantic trade.

What then is the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade

- First, get a world map and locate the Atlantic Ocean.
- But before we look at this trade, we must understand slavery and its history. It had existed in pre-colonial Africa as pawnship.
- Prince Henry of Portugal was offered 10 slaves by Captain Antam Goncalves in 1441.
- On October 12, 1492, Christopher Columbus discovered America. But it was called new world then until Amerigo Vespucci change its name.
- Slave trade was abolished in 1807 but not slavery itself. Slavery caused the American Civil war, 1861-65
- The trans-Atlantic slave trade can be defined as the transport in humans (slaves) from Africa to the new world.

Captain Antam Goncalvez & Prince Henry



Sources of Slaves

- Condemned criminals
- Political prisoners
- Victims of kidnapping eg. Olaudah Equiano
- Relatives sold to redeem debts

Red Indians of Americas





Significance of the Trade

- Depopulation. About 10 million slaves were taken away from West Africa up to 1860
- Development of the American continent.
- New diseases and spread of cultures. Brazil, Cuba, Haiti
- New crops were introduced – cassava, rice, potatoes, lettuce, cereals etc.
- Human suffering and degradation
- Loss of the African identities
- Dialectical relationship between the blacks in diasporas and the blacks at home
- Manpower drain. The most energetic people who could have contributed to economic development of Nigeria were carried away.
- Left the once powerful empires defenseless/ vulnerable to attack.

- By the time we come next week, we shall then look at how these would impact on the scramble and partition of Africa or the balkanization of the continent. Before then, who benefited from the trans-Atlantic Slave trade, Americans or Africans?