Slavery in Colonial America

**THIRTY DOLLARS REWARD:**

*Run Away from the Subscriber, the 16th of September last, a Negro Man named BOOD, about 38 Years old, 5 Feet 10 Inches high, yellow Complexion, thin Vigna, has had the Small Pox; his great Toes have been froze, and have only little Pieces of Nails on them; he is much addicted to strong Liquor, and when drunk very noisly and troublesome. Whoever takes up said Slave, and brings him home, or secures him in Gaol, so that his Master may get him again, shall be intitled to the above Reward of THIRTY DOLLARS, paid by WILSON HUNT.

Any Person who takes up said Negro, is cautioned to be particularly careful to he does not make his Escape, as he is a remarkable stout, cunning, artful Fellow.  
_Hunterdon-County, Maidenhead, December 20, 1766._*

**Cruelties of Slavery.**
Origins of the Slave Trade

- As old as Civilization itself
- Occurred as a result of tribal conflicts
- Helped ensure weakness of your enemies
- Relatively inexpensive source of manual labor
- No particular bias toward race or ethnicity

- Arabs began African slave trade around 700 CE
- Obtained slaves mostly from tribes south of the Sahara Desert
- Relatively a small business
- Likely involved only 1000 to 1500 slaves annually
Origins of the Slave Trade

- Portuguese (and later Spanish) slave trade began around 1502
- Early slaves were predominantly taken from Western Africa to Latin America
- Largest number of slaves were transported to the Portuguese colony of Brazil
- Most slaves in Latin America working in mines or on plantations

- Dutch, English, and French traders eventually joined trade
- Slaves became an important commodity in the Trans-Atlantic Trade Network (Triangular Trade)
- Many died during the Middle Passage
- Only 5% came to North America
Visual Reflections on the Slave Trade

- Almost half the captives died on forced marches to coastal trade forts

Captives were:
- Tied Up
- Chained
- Whipped

Slaves were:
- Stripped
- Inspected
- Auctioned

- Most slaves were traded to ship’s captains for guns, gunpowder, and rum
Visual Reflections on the Slave Trade

- The journey across the Atlantic lasted between six weeks and three months
- The average slave ship carried between 200 and 450 slaves in the cargo hold
- Approximately 15% of all African’s transported across the Middle Passage died
Visual Reflections on the Slave Trade

Treatment on the Slave Ship

• To increase their profits, slave ship captains crammed the maximum number of captives into the ship’s cargo hold

Slaves were:

• Chained to each other to prevent escape
• Beaten if they refused to eat
• Muzzled if they talked back or ate too much
Slavery in Colonial America

Indentured Servitude vs Slavery

• Indentured Servants were the first means used to meet the need for labor
  - Headright System: Plantation owner received 50 acres for every servant they sponsored in the new colonies
  - Indentured Contract: Servants were obligated to work seven years in return for their passage to America
• Indentured Servants gained freedom and land upon completion of their obligation

• Slaves were property and were not obligated freedom for their services
  - They had previous experience and knowledge in agriculture
  - They had immunity to European disease due to prolonged contact
  - Their skin color and lack of knowledge of the land made them less likely to attempt escape
Slavery in Colonial America

• The Dutch arrived in Jamestown with the first African slaves in 1619
  ➢ Many early slaves in Colonial America were actually treated as indentured servants

• Antonio “Anthony Johnson”
  ✓ Arrived in 1621
  ✓ Indentured Servant to Edward Bennett
  ✓ Gained Freedom in 1635
  ✓ Acquired 250 acres under headright system
  ✓ He had one slave and several indentured servants

• The number of slaves in Colonial Virginia remained small until the mid-1600’s
• By 1670, fewer Europeans were willing to come as indentured servants
• As the need for cheap labor grew, colonies turned to slavery
Slavery in Colonial America

- In 1616, a farmer named John Rolfe developed a good strain of tobacco in Jamestown.
- From 1616 to 1619, Jamestown’s Tobacco Crops grew nearly twenty-fold.
- By the mid-1600’s, small tobacco farmers owned two or three slaves to help with the crop.

However, slavery was only profitable if slaves were kept busy all year long:
- Because they had to be housed, fed, and clothed.
- Tobacco had a long growing season and required intense labor:
  - Therefore slaves were kept working all year giving their owner a good investment.
Slavery in Colonial America

• New England Colonies
  ➢ No large plantation system
  ➢ Limited number of slaves on small farms or in cities

• Chesapeake Bay Colonies
  ➢ Small to large tobacco farms
  ➢ Became the center of the domestic slaves trade

• Southern Colonies
  ➢ Development of large rice and cotton plantations
  ➢ Became largest purchasers of slaves

• Growth of slavery was also influenced by the growth of British slave traders
  ➢ 1660: Parliament passed a law requiring all slaves to be purchased from British merchants

• By 1670, the British slave trade was increasing rapidly in the Americas
Slavery in Colonial America

- 1663: King Charles II granted a royal charter for the Carolina Colony to eight proprietors
- 1670: Charlestown became the first settlement in Carolina
  - The colony grew rapidly and eventually spilt into two parts
  - Free white labor remained dominant until the 1680’s

- 1680’s: Collapse of the sugar market caused Carolina farmers to look for a new crop
- Rice became the new crop:
  - Perfectly suited for the climate
  - There was a strong market for it
  - Slaves from West Africa knew how to grow it
Slavery in Colonial America

- Rice growing caused a great increase in the colonial slave trade:
  - Required a large plantation
  - Worked by gangs of laborers
  - Standing in six inches of water and mud all day long

- By 1710: Slaves made up 65% of the population in the Carolinas

- Growing slave population frightened white colonists
  - Caused most colonies to enact repressive slave codes
  - Giving white masters great power over all their slaves
Slavery in Colonial America

• The right to inflict punishment on slaves made the whole system work
  ➢ Means for slaves to resist their masters were limited
• However, slaves did find ways to resist:
  ✓ They worked slow when not watched
  ✓ They acted dumb and broke tools
  ✓ They stole food, drink, and clothing

• Newly arrived African slaves were the most likely to run away
  ➢ But were usually easiest to catch
• American born slaves has a better chance of being successful
  ➢ Especially if they knew a trade and could make it to a town or city
• Many colonial governments required slaves to carry passes and posted rewards for runaways
Slavery in Colonial America

• The ultimate fear of white slave owners was the possibility of revolt

• 1739: The Stono Rebellion occurred
  ➢ 30 newly arrived slaves from Angola
  ➢ Broke into store and armed themselves
  ➢ Killed about 24 white planters
  ➢ Mob of about 100 tried to escape to Fla.
  ➢ White vigilantes stopped them

• 1741: The New York Slave Conspiracy
  ➢ Some fires were started by slaves in New York City
  ➢ Whites believed it was a conspiracy by black slaves to kill all white inhabitants
  ➢ More than 100 slaves were arrested on charges of arson, burglary, & insurrection
  ➢ 13 were burned at the stake (70 were sold)
# Slavery in Colonial America

## Slave Populations by 1770

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colony</th>
<th>Slave Population</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Hampshire</td>
<td>654</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>4,754</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecticut</td>
<td>5,698</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhode Island</td>
<td>3,761</td>
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<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>19,062</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>8,220</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>5,561</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delaware</td>
<td>1,836</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>63,818</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>187,600</td>
<td>42%</td>
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<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>69,600</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>75,168</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>