

Why Slavery?

We all know something of the nature of slavery, mostly in the southern US, how it was finally ended, and how its existence still harms our society almost 150 years later. But what idiot thought it would be a good idea to start it in the first place?

In 1526, Lucas Vazquez de Ayllon led a new expedition of 2 ships and 600 colonists and founded San Miguel de Guandape (near Jamestown) The colony was the first to use negro slaves in what would become the United States. Lucas Vazquez de Ayllon died 18 October, 1526 of a fever. The colony failed.

We don't think of Europe before the discovery of the New World as being a slave-holding culture, but it was not devoid of it.

"In the early Middle Ages the Church condoned slavery - opposing it only when Christians were enslaved by 'infidels'. Vikings raided Britain from 800 AD and sold their captives to markets in Istanbul and Islamic Spain. Religion was no barrier to the slave trade - Christians, Muslims and Jews all partook. In the 16th century Pope Paul III tried to stem Protestantism by threatening those who left the Catholic Church with enslavement." [A Brief History Of Slavery](#)

Portugal and Spain enslaved the natives they encountered in their colonies, but found they did not survive well under forced labor. They began importing Africans as slaves; 900,000 had landed by 1600.

"After 1619, when a Dutch ship brought 20 Africans ashore at the British colony of Jamestown, Virginia, slavery spread throughout the American colonies."

As the British began to participate in the slave trade, Queen Elizabeth I voiced moral objections at first. Then, she became aware of the immense profits to be made, and pretended to believe the excuse that enslavement would serve to Christianize the Africans, so it was actually a "blessing".

"it is said that Queen Elizabeth's scruples were so far removed that she shared in the profits of the traffic carried on by Englishmen. The Stuart kings of England chartered companies for the trade; and Charles II. and his brother James were members of one of them.

After the revolution of 1688 the trade was thrown open, and in 1713 an English company obtained the privilege of supplying the Spanish

colonies in America, South and Central, for thirty years, stipulating to deliver 144,000 negro slaves within that period. One quarter of the stock of the company was taken by King Philip V. of Spain, and Queen Anne of England reserved for herself the other quarter. So the two monarchs became great slave-dealers."

In 1662 the Virginia Assembly passed a law that children should be held, bond or free, " according to the condition of the mother."

This contradicted English law that had applied to serfs, that it was according to that of the father, and meant that children of black mothers impregnated by white men were still slaves.

Laws were also passed that Christianization did not bring freedom, and that killing a slave was "extreme correction", not murder.

In 1682 a law was added that runaway slaves could be killed if they refused to return. They were denied any kind of weapon, and from defending themselves in any way if attacked by a white person. "All servants, whether negroes, Moors, mulattoes, or Indians, brought into the colony by sea or land, whether converted to Christianity or not, provided they were not of Christian parentage or country" were defined as slaves.

In 1663 , Maryland passed a law that "all negroes and other slaves" in the colony, then or in the future, would be slaves for life, and so would their children. Also, if a white woman married a black slave, she must serve the slave's master as long as her husband lived, and her children would also be slaves for life.

In 1681, because some slaveowners were using that law to bind female servants to them, and to breed mixed-race slaves, a new law made those servants and their children immediately free, and fined the owner 10,000 pounds of tobacco

So, slavery was not only becoming a central part of the economy, but being firmly established in law as well, and harsh, cruel law at that. Then, as now, greed trumped morality and humanitarian principles.

Georgia resisted legalizing slavery until 1749, but gave in under pressure to compete economically with the other colonies.

Southern American society had evolved into dependence on human bondage. Success came not from hard work but from owning land and slaves to do the work. Increasingly, over the decades, the desire for wealth and power, and the fear of losing it, destroyed the character of Southern plantation owners, their families, and those who profited by them. It was not just the financial greed, but their sense of racial and

social superiority. It was an acquired cultural trait that, even after defeat, clung to them for generations afterward, and is not entirely erased to this day.

History of Slavery

Naturally, a number of slaves escaped from time to time, and some of them managed to avoid recapture by banding together in remote areas. Colonial militias were formed to hunt down fugitive slaves and sometimes to deal with these outlaw slave groups.

Runaway Slave Communities

Greed, of course, is nothing new, but it is fascinating to see how the desire for wealth overcame all morals and principles 500 years ago, from the slave-shippers, the kings and queens of Europe, and the exploiters of slave labor, and the way it changed the course of history and the nature of our nation.

--cosmicrat April 2 2013