

Slavery in the British Colonies

Theme: Work, Exchange, Technology

Learning Objective Unit 2.F: Explain the causes and effects of slavery in the various British colonial regions

KC-2.2.II.A: All the British colonies participated to varying degrees in the Atlantic slave trade due to the abundance of land and a growing European demand for colonial goods, as well as a shortage of indentured servants...

- Indentured Servitude
 - Tobacco was poor man's crop vis a vis sugarcane
 - As land grew scarce, indentured servants stopped receiving land at the end of their contract
 - Bacon's Rebellion underscored unhappiness
- _____
 - First enslaved Africans arrived in Virginia in _____
 - Cost too high for most farmers until late 1600s
- Factors that increased demand of enslaved labor
 - Higher profit margins of rice and indigo, required larger fields
 - Higher wages in England = fewer indentures
 - Lower cost after _____ loses monopoly in 1684

KC-2.2.II.A: ...Small New England farms used relatively few enslaved laborers, all port cities held significant minorities of enslaved people, and the emerging plantation systems of the Chesapeake and the southern Atlantic coast had large numbers of enslaved workers...

- Enslaved population increased in colonies from North to South
 - At least half of Virginia and S. Carolina's population was enslaved by 1750
 - Georgia was last colony to be chartered and at first did not allow it
- Slavery and fear of insurrection did exist in the North (see: _____ in NY)

KC-2.2.II.A: ...while the great majority of enslaved Africans were sent to the West Indies.

- Between 10-12.5 Million enslaved people taken from Africa
 - _____ went to West Indies, _____ went to N. America
 - Life expectancy was lower in Caribbean sugar colonies
 - _____ trade and breeding develops in N. America

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KC-2.2.II.B: As chattel slavery became the dominant labor system in many southern colonies, new laws created a strict racial system that prohibited interracial relationships and defined the descendants of African American mothers as black and enslaved in perpetuity.

- As colonists became outnumbered, they enacted laws to maintain control
 - Codes imported from W. Indies - _____
 - Massachusetts first to pass a law recognizing enslavement
 - _____ slave codes put restraints on enslaved population,
 - Fined white population for failure to enforce codes
 - Virginia slave codes made slavery a status to be _____

Learning Objective Unit 2.G: Explain how enslaved people responded to slavery

KC-2.2.II.C: Africans developed both overt and covert means to resist the dehumanizing nature of slavery and maintain their family and gender systems, culture, and religion.

- Overt resistance
 - New York Slave Revolt 1712
 - _____ in S. Carolina in 1739 - led to harsher slave codes
 - _____ - punishment for fleeing and providing cover
- Covert resistance
 - Broke tools, feigned sick, worked slowly
 - Incorporated traditional religions into Christianity

Recap

- British colonies began to adopt enslaved labor as a major source of labor, especially southern colonies
- Majority of enslaved people sent to West Indies
- Slave codes adopted by colonial governments to maintain control
- Overt and covert ways of resistance

Part II

Short Answer Response

Answer each prompt using at least THREE sentences.

1. Explain the causes of slavery in the various British colonial regions.

2. Explain the effects of slavery in the various British colonial regions.

3. Explain the effects of slave codes on race relations in the British colonies.

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Runaway Ads

<p>Ran-away from Capt. Nathanael Cary, of Charlston, on Saturday the 17th. Currant, a well set middle sized Maddagascar Negro Woman, called Penelope, about 35 years of Age: With several Sorts of Apparel: one whereof is a flowered damask Gown: she speaks English well. Whoever shall take up said Negro Servant, and her convey to her above-said Master, shall have sufficient Reward.</p> <p>-Boston News-Letter, 1704</p>	<p>There is a Negro man taken up, supposed to be a Runaway from his Master: he said he was a free Negro, and lived at Bristol, but upon being sent to Prison, he owned he was a Servant and made his escape from his Master Matthew Howard at Seaconet, about 5 Weeks ago: he is a Lusty Fellow, says his name is George: upon paying the Post-master for this Advertiment the owner may be informed where he is, and also upon paying the charge and reward for taking him up, may have said Negro again.</p> <p>-Boston News-Letter, 1704</p>
<p>Ran-away from his Master William Pepperil Esqr. at Kittery, in the Province of Maine, a Negro Man-Slave named Peter, aged about 20, speaks good English, of pretty brown Complexion, middle Stature, has on a mixt gray home-spun Coat, white home spun Jacket and Breeches, French fall Shoes, fad coloured Stockings, or a mixt worsted pair, and a black Hat. Whosoever shall take up said Negro, and bring or convey him safe to his said master, or secure him and send notice of him either to his Master, or to Andrew Belcher Esqr. at Boston, shall be well rewarded for his pains, and all reasonable charges paid besides.</p> <p>-Boston News-Letter, 1705</p>	<p>Run Away the 21st Day of May last, from James Leonard of Somerset in New Jersey, a Negroe Man named Will, aged about 26 years and has with him an old Lightish color'd Great Coat and Leather Breeches, and two Shirts and old pair of black and white Stockings and 'tis supposed that he has a Gun with him, he speaks good English. Whoever takes up the said Negroe and secures him so that his said Master may have him shall be well Rewarded, by said James Leonard.</p> <p>The American Weekly Mercury, 1727</p>
<p>Ran-away from Mr. Joseph Knowlton of Newport on Rhode-Island, Housewright, on the 1st of April last, a Negro Man Servant, named Cuffee, about 28 Years of Age, a pretty tall Fellow, speaks broken English, is of a very black colour, & has several marks in his Face, wears a Cap & a good Hat, he took with him a large Bundle of Clothing, a broad Cloth Coat lin'd with blue a dark colour'd Duroy Fly, a light colour'd Duffle great Coat white Flannel Jacket, a Seersucker one, a Silk one &c. Whoever shall take up said Runaway, & him safely convey to his said Master at Newport or to Mr. Joseph Brown Distiller, near Mr. Waldo's Stillhouse in Boston, shall have Forty Shillings Reward & all necessary Charges paid. Tis suppos'd the said Negro has a forg'd Pass & designs to get off to Sea.</p> <p>-New England Weekly Journal. 1731</p>	<p>TAKEN up by Benjamin Corham, a Run away Negro, who is confin'd in his Majesty's Goal in Providence, George Taylor, Esq; his Dialect hardly intelligible, calls himself Tom, and says he belongs to Master Waddam, but don't tell of what Place: He is a slim, tall strait limb'd Fellow, seems about 30 Years old, a Scar in the Middle of his Forehead, his Cheeks mark'd with his Country Scars. Has on a Crimson short Jacket, a ragged blue Coat, an Homespun old grey Great Coat. Has with him in an Oznabrigs Wallet, a dark brown Broad Cloth Coat about half wome, a new Dowlas Shirt, and a Flannel one, and old course red Pair of Breeches, which is all the Description we can give his Master. Providence, July 18, 1759.</p> <p>-The Boston Gazette, 1759</p>

1. What are the common elements that would be included in runaway slave ads?
2. What does the physical description of the runaways reveal about life in bondage?
3. How do these ads help/hurt in including enslaved people into the historical record?

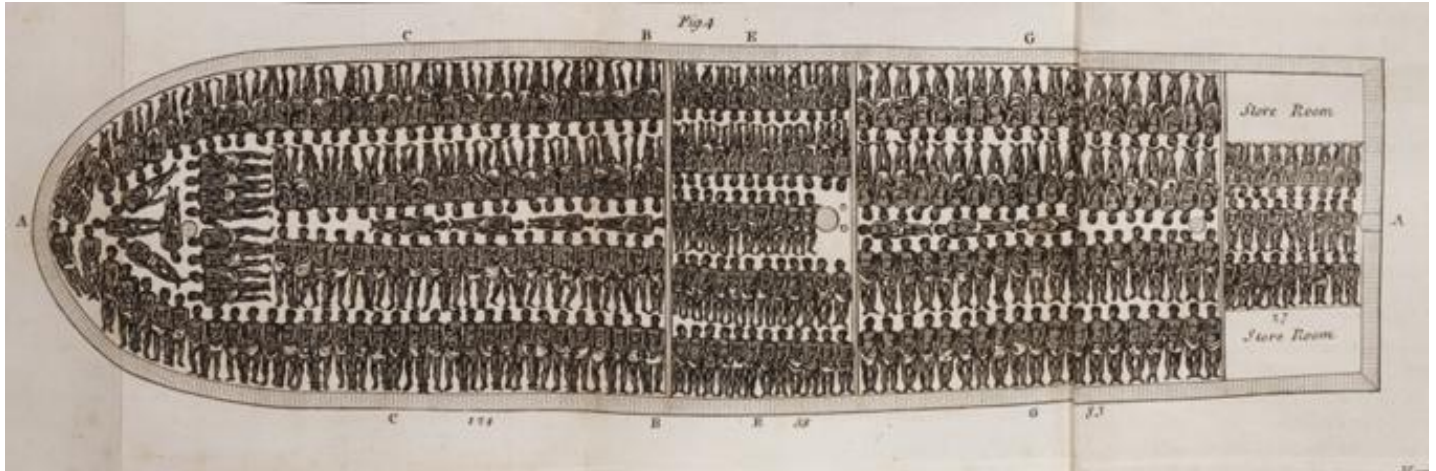
Secondary Source Document Analysis

Read the essay and fill in the chart below. Identify one claim for each subsection of the essay and provide a piece of evidence that corresponds to the claim.

Title:	
Author:	
Historical Period and Topic:	
Thesis:	
Claims	Evidence
Identify an alternative viewpoint to the author's thesis.	
Does the author address this viewpoint by refuting or conceding to it?	

The Origins of Slavery

Retrieved from: <http://ap.gilderlehrman.org/essay/origins-slavery-0?period=2>



Sketch of the hold of a slave ship from Thomas Clarkson, *The History of the Rise, Progress and Accomplishment of the Abolition of the African Slave-trade* (London, 1808). (Gilder Lehrman Collection)

African American life in the United States has been framed by migrations, forced and free. A forced migration from Africa—the transatlantic slave trade—carried black people to the Americas. A second forced migration—the internal slave trade—transported them from the Atlantic coast to the interior of the American South. A third migration—this time initiated largely, but not always, by black Americans—carried black people from the rural South to the urban North. At the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first, African American life is again being transformed by another migration, this time a global one, as peoples of African descent from all parts of the world enter the United States.

While each of these massive movements shaped and reshaped African American life, none was more important than the first, the so-called Middle Passage from Africa to America. More than any other single migration the Middle Passage has come to epitomize the experience of people of African descent throughout the Atlantic world. The nightmarish weeks and sometimes months locked in the holds of stinking slave ships speak to the traumatic loss of freedom, the degradation of enslavement, and the long years of bondage that followed. But the Middle Passage also represents the will to survive, the determination of black people not to be dehumanized by dehumanizing circumstances, and the confidence that freedom would eventually be theirs and that they would take their rightful place as a people among peoples.



Detail of a map of Costa Damina from “*Taboas geraes de toda a navegação*,” by João Teixeira Albernaz, 1630. (Library of Congress) *The Discovery of the Americas and the Transatlantic Slave Trade*.

The transatlantic slave trade had its beginning in the middle of the fifteenth century when Portuguese ships sailed down the West African coast. The intention was to trade for gold and spices, but the voyagers found another even more valuable commodity—human beings. Over time, the trade in men and women supplanted other commerce, and the slaves’ destination changed from Europe to the Americas, where plantations growing commodities for the international market initiated

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the massive transfer of African peoples. In all, some eleven to twelve million Africans were forcibly carried to the Americas. Of those, roughly one-half million (or about 4.5 percent) were taken to mainland North America or what became the United States.

The first black men and women arrived in mainland North America in the sixteenth century, often accompanying European explorers. For the next century or so, they continued to trickle onto the continent in small numbers, often not from Africa itself but from Europe, the Antilles, or other parts of the Atlantic littoral. Dubbed “Atlantic Creoles” because of their connection with the ocean that linked Africa, Europe, and the Americas, many of these first arrivals spoke the language of their enslavers and were familiar with the various religions, commercial conventions, and systems of jurisprudence of the Atlantic. Entering frontier societies in which Europeans also worked in some form of bound labor (indentured servitude being the most prominent), black men and women employed their knowledge of the Atlantic world to integrate themselves into the European settlements. Much like other settlers, free and unfree, they joined churches, participated in exchange economies, and formed families.

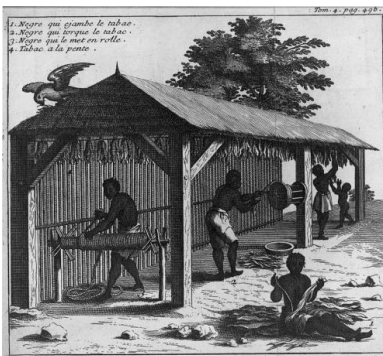


Detail of El Mina from a portolan chart of the Atlantic Ocean published in 1633. (Library of Congress) Read more from Ira Berlin on The Discovery of the Americas and the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

With the advent of the plantation in mainland North America, the nature of slavery and then the slave trade changed. The beginnings of plantation production—tobacco in the Chesapeake in the late seventeenth century and rice in the Lowcountry in the early eighteenth century—increased the level of violence, exploitation, and brutality in these regions. Slaves worked harder, propelling their owners to new, previously unimagined heights of wealth and power. As they did, slave owners expanded their plantations and demanded more and more slaves, as slaves proved to be an extraordinarily valuable form of labor. Not only were they workers, but they reproduced themselves, adding to the owners’ wealth. Rather than arriving in ones and twos from the Atlantic littoral, boatloads of captives—generally drawn from the African interior—crossed the ocean. Although slavers deposited their human cargoes in ports from Providence to New Orleans, the vast majority of slaves who disembarked in mainland North America did so in the Chesapeake (largely Virginia and Maryland) and the Lowcountry (largely South Carolina, and Georgia).

Slaves imported directly from Africa—distinguished from Atlantic Creoles—first landed in the Chesapeake in large numbers during the last decades of the seventeenth century. Following the legalization of chattel bondage in the 1660s, they slowly replaced European and African indentured servants as the main source of plantation labor. Although black people never challenged white numerical dominance in the region, they achieved majorities in a few localities. For many European settlers, it seemed as if the Chesapeake would “some time or other be confirmed by the name of New Guinea.”

Just as the Chesapeake was about to become an extension of West Africa, the dynamics of black life changed dramatically. Slaves in the Chesapeake, in the words of one European observer, proved “very prolific among themselves.” By the 1730s, births to slave women outnumbered imports, and the black population was increasing naturally. Although transatlantic slavers continued to deliver their cargoes to the great estuary, the proportion of Africans declined as the indigenous African American population increased. By mid-century, the majority of enslaved men and women in the Chesapeake had never seen Africa. At the start of the American Revolution, the first Great Migration was over in the Chesapeake. A native people began to sink deep roots in soils of mainland North America.



Four people working with harvested tobacco in shed. 1700-1800 (Library of Congress) Hear historian Philip Morgan on the development of slave culture.

The slave trade continued, however, in the Lowcountry of South Carolina and Georgia. There the forced migration from Africa followed a trajectory similar to that of the Chesapeake, but it started later and continued longer. As a result, the number of Africans who entered the Lowcountry—almost 400,000—was more than double the number of Africans who came to the Chesapeake. Sullivan’s

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Island, a tiny quarantine station in Charleston harbor, became the Ellis Island of black America. Although importation again slackened during the American Revolution, at war's end the pent-up demand for slaves pushed importation to new heights. Lowland slave owners purchased over 100,000 Africans between 1787, when South Carolina reopened the African trade, and 1808, when the legal trade to the United States ended. Thereafter, American planters continued to smuggle slaves into the country, although the illegal imports composed but a small portion of the slave population.

For much of eighteenth century, black people in South Carolina and Georgia—unlike those in Maryland and Virginia—resided in an immigrant society, more an extension of Africa than of Europe. With the slave trade open and the influx of “saltwater slaves” nearly continuous, lowland slaves had great difficulty forming families and reproducing themselves. The gender ratio among the newly arriving saltwater slaves was usually dramatically skewed, and acculturated slaves sometimes were reluctant to create families with the new arrivals. But by the middle of the eighteenth century, the black population of the Lowcountry began to reproduce itself and the number of African Americans grew, although it did so in tandem with newly arrived Africans. If at mid-century slaves in the Chesapeake had few opportunities to converse with Africans, Africans and African Americans in the Lowcountry knew each other well.

Slavers also deposited their cargoes in other parts of the mainland North America—New England, the middle colonies, the Floridas, and the lower Mississippi Valley. Everywhere planters preferred so-called “men-boys,” along with “women-girls,” young adults whom they could put to work immediately and who would reproduce the labor force. “Negroes from 15 to 25 years of Age suite this market best,” observed one Charleston slave trader. Among the young, planters preferred men over women.

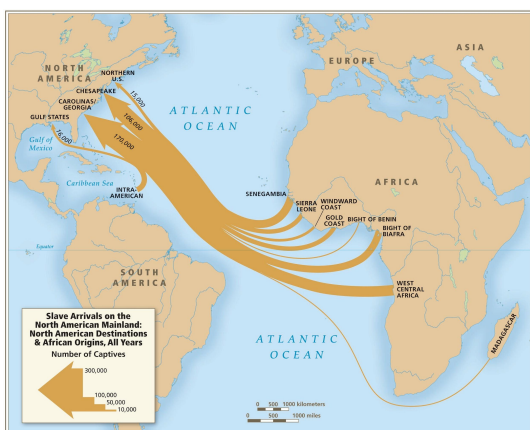


The land of the free and the home of the braves. (slave market) by Henry Byam Martin, 1833. Library and Archives Canada, Acc. No. 1981-42-42 Source: Dr. Nigel Davies, Gelati, Mexico.

The captives' nationality was no more random than their age or sex. Europeans slavers developed specialties, in some measure to meet the demands of their customers on both sides of the Atlantic, whose preferences and needs grew increasingly well defined over time. Preferences on both side of the Atlantic determined, to a considerable degree, which enslaved Africans went where and when, populating the mainland with unique combinations of African peoples and creating distinctive regional variations in the Americas. Igbo peoples constituted the majority

of African slaves in Virginia and Maryland, so much so that some historians have denominated colonial Virginia as “Igbo land.” A different pattern emerged in Lowcountry South Carolina and Georgia, where slaves from central Africa predominated from the beginning of large-scale importation, so that if Virginia was Igbo land, the Lowcountry might be likened to a new Angola.

But if patterns of African settlement can be discerned, they never created regional homogeneity. The general thrust of the slave trade was toward heterogeneity, throwing different people together in ways that undermined the transfer of any single culture. Mainland North America became a jumble of African nationalities. Their interaction—not their homogeneity—created new African American cultures.



Slave Arrivals on the North American Mainland, map, Atlas of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, by David Eltis and David Richardson (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010). Hear more from Philip Morgan on the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1500-1800.

The reasons were many. Nationality or ethnicity in Africa did not follow neat geographic boundaries. Even before the beginnings of the transatlantic slave trade, African people were on the move. Numerous peoples—speaking a variety of languages, embracing different beliefs, and engaging in a multiplicity of domestic arrangements—shared the physical space that became catchment areas for slave traders. A raid on a particular

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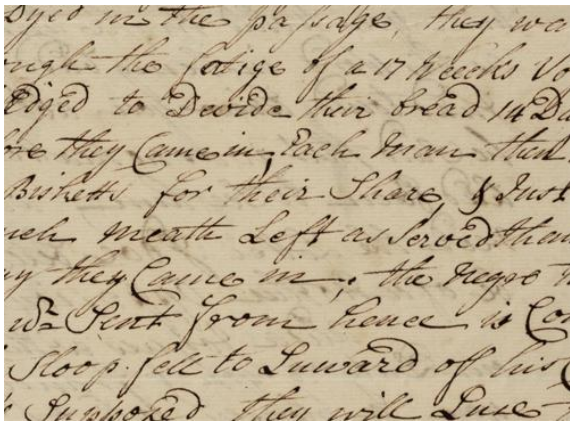
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village necessarily took many different peoples. The long march to the coast—during which some slaves died, others escaped, and still others were captured or purchased—added to the diversity of captives lodged in the seaside barracoons. Likewise, on the American side of the Atlantic not all slave purchasers knew or cared much about the origins of their slaves. As a result, the nature of the slave trade, particularly to mainland North America, only rarely allowed for transatlantic continuities.

No matter what their sex, age, and nationality, Africans shipped to the New World endured the trauma of enslavement. Captured deep in the African interior, Africans faced a long, deadly march to the coast. Traveling sometimes for months, they were passed from group to group, as many different African nations participated in the slave trade. But whoever drove the captives to their unwanted destiny, the circumstances of their travel were extraordinarily taxing. In some places, some forty percent of the slaves died between their initial capture in the interior and their arrival on the coast.

The captives then faced the nightmarish transatlantic crossing. The depths of human misery and the astounding death toll of men and women packed in the stinking hulls still remains difficult to fathom. Stripped naked and bereft of their every belonging, they boarded the ship and encountered—often for the first time—white men. Brandishing hot irons to mark their captives in the most personal way, these “white men with horrible looks, red faces, and long hair” left more than a physical scar. Many enslaved Africans concluded that the white men were in league with the devil, if not themselves devils. For other Africans, the trauma of having their skin seared confirmed that they were bound for the slaughterhouse to be eaten by the cannibals, who had stamped them in much the way animals were marked.



“30 [negroes] dyed in the passage” on a seventeen-week voyage to New York due to a shortage of food. Stephen Bayard to Robert Livingston, November 12, 1725. (Gilder Lehrman Collection)

Surviving the Middle Passage was but the first of the many tests faced by the forced immigrants. Once African peoples disembarked, new anxieties compensated for whatever relief they gained from the end of the shipboard journey. Indeed the shock of arrival only repeated the trauma of African enslavement. Staggering to their feet, bodies still bent from their weeks below deck, shaking with apprehension, the captives were fitted with a new set of shackles—a painful welcome to their new homeland. The captives again confronted the auction block and the prospect of being poked and prodded by strange white men speaking strange languages, intent on demonstrating their mastery. Marched in chains to some isolated, backwoods

plantation, forced to labor long hours at unfamiliar tasks, enslaved black men and women began their lives in mainland North America. It was a grim existence, as their debilitating work regime, drafty dormitories, and bland rations invited an early death. Within months of arrival, many of the new immigrants—ridiculed as “outlandish” by their owners—were dead.

But slowly, inexorably, the survivors made the new land their own. Transplanted Africans began to master the languages of North America, learned to traverse the countryside, formed friendships, pieced together new lineages from real and fictive kin, and created a new sacred world. Their children, who knew no other land, took root in American soil and made the land that had been forced on their parents their own. Like most other Americans, they too were the children of immigrants—but immigrants of a very different kind.

Ira Berlin, Distinguished University Professor at the University of Maryland, is a leading historian of the history of slavery in North America and the Atlantic World. His books include *Generations of Captivity: A History of Slaves in the United States* (2002); *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in Mainland North America* (1999), which received the Bancroft Prize and the Frederick Douglass Book Prize; and *Slaves Without Masters: The Free Negro in the Antebellum South* (1975).