THE AFRICAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCE:

A HISTORY OF BLACK AMERICANS

from 1619 to 1890

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Not to know what happened before one was born is to always remain a child.

--Cicero

I am not ashamed of my grandparents for having been slaves. I am only ashamed for having at one time been ashamed.

--Ralph Ellison

Awful as race prejudice, lawlessness and ignorance are, we can fight time if we frankly face them and dare name them and tell the truth; but if we continually dodge and cloud the issue, and say the half truth because the whole stings and shames; if we do this, we invite catastrophe. Let us then in all charity but unflinching firmness set our faces against all statesmanship that looks in such directions.

--W.E.B. DuBois

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THE MEANING OF BLACK HISTORY

In the following passage New York Sun columnist Frank Harris offers one reason for the study of African American history.

Years ago, when I was a college freshman and black studies was still alive and well on college campuses across America, I took a black history course that, as expected, drew a roomful of fellow blacks. But the sight of a white student among the bunch was unexpected. When the professor introduced herself and confirmed the name of the course, he remained seated. Why was a white guy taking a course in black history? My feeling then was that black history was for black people. I felt this way, first, because it was our history that had been so routinely skimmed over by the American educational system, and we were the ones who needed to learn about ourselves; second, because whites, when presented with the option of learning about black history, had opted against it. But my curiosity about this white student evolved into respect by semester's end. I respected him not simply because he was there, but because he took a sincere interest in bridging the gap in his knowledge about the history of people with whom he shared this nation.

In the 15 years since that course, I have come to believe that more whites should have been in that room learning about black history; since then, I can say unequivocally that black history is not for blacks only, it is for whites as well. Whites need to learn black history. Whites need to see history through the mist of fire of other eyes... I don't think that there is any American white who can ever know an American black, completely, until he has.....walked back into the sunlight of the history that, for so long, has been left in the shadows of the American conscious. In these changing times, when.....racial incidents are on the rise....it is important that white Americans know black Americans, and just as important for black Americans to know white Americans.

Our histories are intertwined by the blood of slavery and the spirit of freedom. Slavery and freedom have been the central points of reference in America's history, with the common perception that the history of black Americans begins with slavery and the prevalent view that blacks contributed little to American or world civilization. This, of course, ignores the fact that rich civilizations flourished in Africa while Europe was still in its infancy; that there were black explorers, conquerors, inventors, mathematicians, doctors, scientists before, during, and after slavery, and that from blacks came America's first clock, in 1754 by astronomer Benjamin Banneker; the world's first blood plasma, from Dr. Charles Drew; the world's first successful heart surgery, performed by Daniel Hale Williams, a Chicago surgeon, and numerous other achievements.

Black Americans already know the accomplishments and achievements of white Americans. It is in the fabric of the standard history of America, as seen through the eyes of white Americans. This is not to suggest that the learning of black history by white Americans would bring a quick and decisive end to racism, and the race issue, in America. But it is a critical pillar in the building of a bridge between the two Americas: a bridge of knowledge that spans the gulf of ignorance; a bridge of respect that spans the bay of disdain.

Source: Los Angeles Times, February 19, 1990.

INTRODUCTION

I have assembled in this manual instructional aids which will help enhance your understanding of the lectures and readings for this course, **African American History: 1619-1890**, or which explain and clarify the organization and requirements of the course. These aids include vignettes which are usually statements by important historical figures or commentary by observers of critical events and episodes in the history of black Americans in the United States, statistical tables, information sheets and maps.

Also included are lists of weekly terms introduced and emphasized during the lectures or discussed in the assigned readings. These terms reflect some critical event or development for a particular period of American history or refer to a concept which will help you better understand the historical process and our contemporary nation. Since I will randomly choose some of the terms for your midterm and final exams you should learn the definition and historical significance of each of them. Those terms not specifically discussed in class will be explained in your textbooks so it is particularly important that you do all of the assigned reading. All of the instructional materials are arranged in the approximate order in which they will be discussed during the quarter.

One final note: you should view the materials in this manual not simply as additional information you will have to learn for the exams but as data that will help you better comprehend and assimilate the varied issues addressed in the lectures and textbook reading assignments. If you have any questions about any of the information presented in this manual please contact me during my office hours which are listed on your course syllabus.

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AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORY
History 250
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The history of African-Americans has been a paradox of incredible triumph in the face of tremendous human tragedy. This course will present a detailed examination of the black experience in America from 1619 to 1890 in light of that paradox to provide an understanding of the role of black people have played in the history of the American nation and an assessment of why they were, until the relatively recent past, excluded from the promise of American democracy. This course will trace the African American historical experience from its beginnings in Africa to the 1890s. We will analyze the various political, economic, social and cultural methods African-Americans have employed to survive in an overwhelmingly hostile environment and describe how the issue of black slavery came to be central to the politics of the new nation.

Required Textbooks:

Donald R. Wright, African Americans in the Colonial Era: From African Origins Through the American Revolution
Donald R. Wright, African Americans in the Early Republic, 1789-1831
Sucheng Chan, Douglas Henry Daniels, Mario T. Garcia, and Terry P. Wilson, eds., Peoples of Color in the American West
Quintard Taylor, The African American Experience: A Manual for HSTAA 321 (online manual can be found at http://faculty.washington.edu/qtaylor/

Supplemental Readings:

I have placed some articles on reserve to help explain black America. As the need arises I may add other articles and books to the reserve room holdings.

Examinations/Grading:

Your course grade is based on three exercises: a midterm exam, a final examination and a 10-10 page research paper *(see manual for details on the paper)*. The midterm is scheduled for the end of the fifth week. Some students will be unable to take the midterm exam with the rest of the class. In that case I ask them to take a makeup exam scheduled for 5:00-6:00 p.m. on the last Friday of instruction during the quarter. The room will be announced later. Since the

makeup exam will be *penalized 10 points* on a 100 point exercise, all students should make every effort to take the exam at its scheduled time.

Those students who perform poorly on the midterm exam (69 or below) have the option of writing a book review to offset that grade. Should you choose to write the review, it can be handed in no later than the Friday of the **ninth** week of the term. Please read the page titled *Optional Book Review Assignment* in the manual before initiating your review.

My grading procedures are simple. Since each exam is worth up to 100 points I will average your numerical score. I will also assign a numerical score for your research paper, "C"=75, "C+"=78, etc. Your numerical scores will then be averaged to determine your course grade. Thus if your overall average is 76 your course grade will be the numerical equivalent of a "C" in the UW grading system.

I do not issue "incompletes" to students who by the end of the quarter have not taken an exam, handed in an assigned paper or otherwise met the course requirements. If you have not completed all of the course requirements by the end of exam week, and you have not, by that point, explained why, your grade will be lowered accordingly.

READING ASSIGNMENTS

Week 1: The African Background: Of Emperors and Slaves

Franklin and Moss, Chapters ___
Taylor, Chapter 1

Week 2: The Evolution of Black Society

Franklin and Moss, Chapters ---
Taylor, Chapter 2

Week 3: Revolution, 1776: American Slavery and American Freedom

Franklin and Moss, Chapter ____
Taylor, Chapter 3

Week 4: American Slavery: Accommodation and Resistance

Franklin and Moss, Chapter _____
Jacqueline Jones, Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow, Chapter 1 **[on reserve]**
Taylor, Chapter 4

Week 5: Free Blacks in a Slave Society

Franklin and Moss, Chapter _____
James Oliver Horton, "Freedom's Yoke: Gender Conventions Among Antebellum Free Blacks," in Darlene Clark Hine, Black Women in U.S. History, *Volume II*, pp. 667-690. **[on reserve]**
Taylor, Chapter 5

Week 6: The Campaign for Emancipation: Black Abolitionists

Franklin and Moss, Chapter _____

Jason H. Silverman, "Mary Ann Shadd and the Search for Equality," in Darlene Clark Hine, Black Women in U.S. History, *Volume IV*, pp. 1261-1274. **[on reserve]**
Taylor, Chapter 6

Week 7: The Civil War
Franklin and Moss, Chapter _____
Taylor, Chapter 7
Film: THE 54th MASSACHUSETTS INFANTRY

Week 8: Reconstruction: Economic Transformation?
Jacqueline Jones, Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow, Chapter 2 **[on reserve]**
Taylor, Chapter 8

Week 9: Reconstruction: The Politics of History
Franklin and Moss, Chapter _____.
Taylor, Chapter 9

Week 10: African-America on the Eve of the 20th Century: An Assessment
No Reading Assignment--Prepare for Final Examination

RESEARCH PAPER REQUIREMENT

Each student enrolled in HSTAA 321 will write a 10 page research paper (including footnotes) assessing some important question in the 18th or 19th Century history of African America.

Avoid simply describing some episode in black history such as slavery or Reconstruction. Instead pose a research question and, given the resources at your disposal, answer that question. Thus your paper should ask why significant African American migration to the Pacific Northwest did not occur, how and why African American women gained the vote in the West before their counterparts East of the Mississippi River, or the various ways in which Indian people interacted with African Americans.

I will accept a paper based largely on secondary sources if your research is centered outside the Pacific Northwest. However if you examinne questions of particular relevance to our region, I would expect you to use primary sources as evidence to support your argument.

Your paper should conform to Turabian's, A Manual for Writers (latest edition). Your paper should include at least 10 sources. Please note Turabian's footnote style and follow it. Papers with improper footnotes will be marked down.

Please observe the following deadlines:

Fourth Friday of the Term (5:00 p.m): Please present to me an outline of your paper that should be at least one page in length and no more than two pages. The outline should include the central research question of your paper as well as a selected annotated bibliography of primary and secondary sources to be used.

Seventh Friday of the Term (5:00 p.m.): Please give me a one page progress report on your paper. This is an opportunity for you to describe any difficulties you may be encountering. Your report should, if necessary, include a request for a meeting to discuss those difficulties.

Wednesday of Finals Week (Noon): Your paper should be completed and in my office. **I will not accept papers after that day and time.**

Suggested Topic Areas

The Post Civil War Exodus to Kansas
Slavery in Urban Areas
The Racism and the Origins of Slavery Debate
Frederick Douglass and the Politics of Race
Black Slaveholders in the South
Northern African Americans and Voting Rights
Sojourner Truth and Harriett Tubman: A Comparison
Black Freedom in the Age of Revolution
Seattle's 19th Century African American Community
Mary Ann Shad

Madam C. J. Walker
Africa and African American Leadership in the 19th Century
Peonage in the Post Civil War South
Slavery and African American Color Consciousness
Pre-Booker T. Washington Black Conservatism
Nineteenth Century African American Cultural Nationalism

OPTIONAL BOOK REVIEW ASSIGNMENT

As I indicated on the first day of class, each student in HSTAA 321 is required to read a book and write an appraisal of the work. As with most book "reviews," you will describe the book's major thesis or argument. But I also request that you follow these guidelines in your assignment:

1. Assess whether you were convinced by the author's argument.

2. Discuss the most important new information you learned about African American history from the book.

3. Describe how the book reinforced or challenged ideas about African American history that you have learned from the assigned readings, my lectures, and the discussions.

4. State whether you would recommend the book to others, and include specific reasons for your decision.

Your review should be approximately five typewritten pages, 1,500 words for those of you who use computers. I recommend that you devote the first three pages to a review of the book itself and the remaining two pages to respond to the four guidelines. Please number your pages. **I will not accept book reviews that are not typed.**

The first page of each review should have information on the book. Here is how it the information would appear if you were reviewing my book:

> *Quintard Taylor, The Forging of a Black Community: Seattle's Central District from 1870 through the Civil Rights Era (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994)*

You may choose, although you are not limited to, the books that appear on the following reading list. If you choose a book not on the list make sure that it is primarily a history of black America which covers the period between 1619 and 1900. Regularly assigned textbooks for this course (or for any other course you are currently taking with me) are not eligible for review. You should present your choice on a sheet of paper or a card to Kevin Hatfield by **Friday, October 25**. The completed book review should be handed in by **Friday, November 22**. Unless prior permission has been granted, no book review will be accepted after the due date.

AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORY READING LIST

The books and articles listed below are not part of your regular reading assignment. However they can serve as useful supplements should you decide to delve more deeply into a particular topic in African American history. They are also excellent sources of general information for research papers and for book reviews. I ask however that you not select any book from the "General" section of this list.

General:

Mary F. Berry and John W. Blassingame, Long Memory: The Black Experience in America, (1982)

Vincent Harding, There Is A River: The Black Struggle for Freedom in America, (1981)

Gerda Lerner, ed., Black Women in White America: A Documentary History (1972)

Jacqueline Jones, Labor of Love: Black Women, Work and Family From Slavery to the Present, (1985)

Lawrence Levine, Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom, (1977)

Eric Williams Capitalism and Slavery (1944)

Vincent Franklin, Black Self-Determination: A Cultural History of the Faith of the Fathers, (1984)

Leon Litwack and August Meier, ed., Black Leaders of the Nineteenth Century, (1988)

Forrest G. Wood, The Arrogance of Faith: Christianity and Race in America from the Colonial Era to the Twentieth Century, (1991)

Herbert Aptheker, Anti-Racism in U.S. History: The First Two Hundred Years (1992)

Portia James, The Real McCoy: African American Invention and Innovation, 1619-1930 (1989)

Russell C. Brignano, ed., Black Americans in Autobiography: An Annotated Bibliography of Autobiographies and Autobiographical Books Written Since the Civil War (1984)

John Blassingame, et. al. eds., The Frederick Douglass Papers. Series One: Speeches, Debates and Interviews (3 vols.) (1979-1985)

Richard Bardolph, ed., The Civil Rights Record: Black Americans and the Law, 1849-1970 (1970)

Herbert Aptheker, ed., A Documentary History of the Negro People in the United States: From Colonial Times to 1910 (1951)

Ira Berlin, et. al. eds., Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation 1861-1867: Selected from the Holdings of the National Archives of the United States (3 vols.) (1982-1990)

Howard University Library, Moorland Foundation, Dictionary Catalog of the Jesse E. Moorland Collection of Negro Life and History (12 vols.) (1976)

New York Public Library, Schomburg Collection of Negro Literature and History, Dictionary Catalogue of the Schomburg Collection (15 vols.) (1977)

Darlene Clark Hine, ed, The State of Afro-American History: Past, Present and Future (1986)

_____, Black Women in United States History (12 vols.) (1990)

Thomas R. Frazier, ed., Afro-American History: Primary Sources (1988)

Milton C. Sernett, ed., Afro-American Religious History: A Documentary Witness (1985)

Martin E. Dann, ed., The Black Press 1827-1890: The Quest for National Identity (1971)

Jacqueline Goggin, Carter G. Woodson: A Life in Black History (1992)

Colonial America:

Joseph E. Inikori and Stanley L. Engerman, eds., The Atlantic Slave Trade: Effects on Economies, Societies, and Peoples in Africa, the Americas, and Europe (1993)

Eric Williams, Capitalism and Slavery, (1944)

Winthrop Jordan, White Over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550-1812, (1968)

John Thornton, Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1680 (1992)

Alden T. Vaughn, Roots of American Racism: Essays on the Colonial Experience (1995)

Gary Nash, The Great Fear: Race in the Mind of America, (1970)

_____, Forging Freedom: The Formation of Philadelphia's Black Community, 1720-1840, (1988)

Benjamin Quarles, The Negro in the American Revolution, (1961)

Peter Wood, Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion, (1974)

David Kobrin, The Black Minority in Early New York (1975)

Karen Hess, The Carolina Rice Kitchen: The African Connection (1992)

Daniel F. Littlefield, Rice and Slaves: Ethnicity and the Slave Trade in Colonial South Carolina, (1981)

Alan Kulikoff, Tobacco and Slaves: The Development of Southern Culture in the Chesapeake, 1690-1800, (1886)

Timothy H. Silver, A New Face on the Countryside: Indians, Colonists and Slaves in the South Atlantic Forests, 1500-1800, (1990)

Norrece T. Jones, Jr., Born a Child of Freedom, Yet A Slave: Mechanisms of Control and Strategies of Resistance in Antebellum South Carolina, (1989)

Mechal Sobel, The World They Made Together: Black and White Values in 18th Century Virginia, (1989)

Billy G. Smith and Richard Wojtowicz, Blacks Who Stole Themselves: Advertisements for Runaways in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 1720-1790, (1990)

Thomas J. Davis, A Rumor of Revolt: The Great Negro Plot in Colonial New York, (1985)

K. Scott, The Slave Insurrections in New York (1961)

E. McManus, Negro Slavery in New York (1966)

Terry Alford, Prince Among Slaves (1986)

Gerald W. Mullen, Flight and Rebellion: Slave Resistance in Eighteenth Century Virginia (1974)

Betty Wood, Slavery in Colonial Georgia, 1730-1775, (1984)

David Eltis, Economic Growth and the Ending of the Transatlantic Slave Trade (1987)

Ira Berlin, "Time, Space, and the Evolution of Afro-American Society on British Mainland North American, American Historical Review, 85:1 (February 1980)

A. Leon Higginbotham, In the Matter of Color: Race and the American Legal Process: The Colonial Period (1978)

Maryse Conde, I, Tituba, Black Witch of Salem (1992)

Ira Berlin and Philip D. Morgan, ed., The Slaves' Economy: Independent Production by Slaves in the Americas, (1991)

Leland Ferguson, Uncommon Ground: Archaeology and Colonial African America (1992)

Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, Africans in Colonial Louisiana: The Development of Afro-Creole Culture in the Eighteenth Century (1992)

William D. Piersen, Black Yankees: The Development of an Afro-American Sub-Culture in Eighteenth-Century New England (1988)

Roger D. Abrahams, Singing the Master: The Emergence of African American Culture in the Plantation South (1992)
Graham Russell Hodges and Alan Edward Brown, eds., "Pretends to be Free": Runaway Slave Advertisements from Colonial and Revolutionary New York and New Jersey (1994)
_____, Slavery and Freedom in the Rural North: African Americans in Monmouth County, New Jersey (1996)
Marvin L. Michael Kay and Lorin Lee Cary, Slavery in North Carolina, 1748-1775 (1996)
Jack D. Forbes, Africans and Native Americans: The Language of Race and the Evolution of Red-Black Peoples (1993)
Sue Peabody, There Are No Slaves in France: The Political Culture of Race and Slavery in the Ancien Regime (1996)

Slavery and the American Revolution:

William Cooper Nell, The Colored Patriots of the American Revolution (1855, reprint, 1968)
Benjamin Quarles, The Negro in the American Revolution (1961)
Gary B. Nash, Race and Revolution (1990)
Edmund Morgan, American Slavery, American Freedom, (1975)
Donald Robinson, Slavery and the Structure of American Politics, (1979)
Sidney Kaplan and Emma N. Kaplan, The Black Presence in the Era of the American Revolution, (1990)
David Brion Davis, The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, (1975)
Duncan J. MacLeod, Slavery, Race and the American Revolution, 1975
Ira Berlin and Roland Hoffman, Slavery and Freedom in the Age of the American Revolution, (1983)
William C. Nell, The Colored Patriots of the American Revolution, (1855)
Staughton Lynd, Class Conflict, Slavery and the United States Constitution, (1967)
Phyllis Wheatley, [John C. Shields, ed.,] The Collected Works of Phyllis Wheatley (1988)
William H. Robinson, Phillis Wheatley in the Black American Beginnings (Detroit, 1975)
Julian D. Mason, Jr., The Poems of Phillis Wheatley (1991)
M. A. Richmond, Bid The Vassal Soar: Interpretive Essays on the Life and Poetry of Phillis Wheatley and George Moses Horton (Washington, D.C., 1974)
Sylvia Frey, Water from the Rock: Black Resistance in a Revolutionary Age (1992)
Paul Finkelman, Slavery and the Founders: Race and Liberty in the Age of Jefferson (1996)

Antebellum Slavery:

George H. Moore, Notes on the History of Slavery in Massachusetts (1866)
Ulrich B. Philips, American Negro Slavery: A Survey of the Supply, Employment and Control of Negro Labor as Determined by the Plantation Regime (1918)
Helen Tunnicliff Catterall, ed., Judicial Cases Concerning American Slavery and the Negro (1936)
Paul Finkelmann, ed., Slavery in the Courtroom: An Annotated Bibiliography of American Cases (1985)
_____, The Law of Freedom and Bondage: A Casebook (1986)
C.L.R. James, The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution, (1938)
Albert Rabateau, Slave Religion: The Invisible Institution in the AnteBellum South, (1978)

Melville Herskovits, The Myth of the Negro Past (1941)
Barnett Hollander, Slavery in America: Its Legal History (1962)
Margaret Washington Creel, "A Peculiar People": Slave Religion and Community Culture Among the Gullah (1988)
Lionel Kennedy and Thomas Parker, The Trial Record of Denmark Vesey (1970)
Wilma King, Stolen Children: Slave Youth in the 19th Century (1995)
Nathan Huggins, Black Odyssey: The Afro-American Ordeal in Slavery, (1977)
Charles Joyner, Down by the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community, (1984)
Willie Lee Rose, ed., A Documentary History of Slavery in North America (1976)
Robert W. Fogel, Without Consent or Contract: The Rise and Fall of American Slavery, (1989)
John Blassingame, The Slave Community, (1973)
_____, ed., Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews and Autobiographies (1977)
Eugene Genovese, Roll Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made,(1976)
Leslie Howard Owens, This Species of Property: Slave Life and Culture in the Old South (1977)
Deborah Grey White, Ar'nt I a Woman? Female Slaves in the Plantation South, (1985)
Peter Kolchin, American Slavery, 1619-1877 (1993)
Howard Jones, Mutiny on the *Amistad*: The Saga of a Slave Revolt and its Impact on American Abolition, Law, and Diplomacy (1987)
Thomas L. Webber, Deep Like the Rivers: Education in the Slave Quarter Community, 1831-1865, (1978)
Randall Miller, ed., Dear Master: Letters of a Slave Family, (1990)
Hilary M. Beckles, Natural Rebels: A Social History of Enslaved Women in Barbados, (1989)
George P. Rawick, The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography, 19 volumes, (1971)
Randolph B. Campbell, An Empire for Slavery: The Peculiar Institution in Texas, 1821-1865, (1990)
Hilary M. Beckles, White Servitude and Black Slavery in Barbados, 1627-1715, (1989)
William L. Van Deburg, The Slave Drivers: Black Agricultural Labor Supervisors in the Ante-Bellum South, (1979)
Joseph C. Halasz, Rattling Chains: Slave Unrest and Revolt in the Antebellum South, (1966)
Richard C. Wade, Slavery in the Cities: The South, 1820-1860 (1967)
Claudia D. Goldin, Urban Slavery in the American South, 1820-1860: A Quantitative History (1976)
Melton McLaurin, Celia, A Slave (1991)
Ronnie W. Clayton, ed., Mother Wit: The Ex-Slave Narratives of the Louisiana Writers' Project (1991)
Mary A. Twining and Keith E. Baird, Sea Island Roots: African Presence in the Carolinas and Georgia (1991)
Gary Okihito, ed., In Resistance: Studies in African, Afro-Caribbean and Afro-American History (1986)
Albert E. Stone, The Return of Nat Turner: History, Literature, and Cultural Politics in Sixties America (1992)
Janet Duitsman Cornelius, When I Can Read My Title Clear: Literacy, Slavery and Religion in the Antebellum South (1992)
Walter F. Pitts, Old Ship of Zion: The Afro-Baptist Ritual in the African Diaspora (1992)
Jon Michael Spencer, Black Hymnody: A Hymnological History of the African American Church (1992)
Stephen B. Oats, The Fires of Jubilee: Nat Turner's Fierce Rebellion (1990)

Douglas R. Egerton, Gabriel's Rebellion: The Virginia Slave Conspiracies of 1800 and 1802 (1990)

Peter Parish, Slavery History and Historians (1989)

Todd L. Savitt, Medicine and Slavery: The Diseases and health Care of Blacks in Antebellum Virginia (1978)

Freddie L. Parker, Stealing a Little Freedom: Advertisements for Slave Runaways in North Carolina, 1791-1840 (1994)

Larry E. Hudson, Jr., ed., Working Toward Freedom: Slave Society and Domestic Economy in the American South (1994)

John Michael Vlach, Back of the Big House: The Architecture of Plantation Slavery (1990)

Ann Patton Malone, Sweet Chariot: Slave Family and Household Structure in Nineteenth-Century Louisiana (1994)

Thomas D. Morris, Southern Slavery and the Law, 1619-1860 (1990)

Sterling Stuckey, Going Through the Storm: The Influence of African American Art in History (1994)

Samuel A. Floyd, Jr., The Power of Black Music: Interpreting its History from Africa to the United States (1995)

David Barry Gaspar and Darlene Clark Hine, eds., More Than Chattel: Black WOmen and Slavery in the Americas (1996)

Mary Turner, ed., From Chattel Slaves to Wage Slaves: The Dynamics of Labour Bargaining in the Americas (1996)

Howard McGary and Bill E. Lawson, Between Slavery and Freedom: Philosophy and American Slavery (1993)

Joseph E. Holloway, ed., Africanisms in American Culture (1990)

William D. Piersen, Black Legacy: America's Hidden Heritage *[on Africanisms]* (1993)

Jennifer Fleischner, Mastering Slavery: Memory, Family and Identity in Women's Slave Narratives (1996)

Betty Wood, Women's Work, Men's Work: The Informal Slave Economies of Lowcountry Georgia (1995)

John R. McKivigan, and Mitchel Snay, eds., Religion and the Antebellum Debate over Slavery (1998)

The Anti-Slavery Campaign:

Issac Neale, ed., Cases Adjudged in the Supreme Court of New Jersey; Relative to the Manumission of Negroes and Others Holden in Bondage (1794)

Charles Emory Stevens, Anthony Burns: A History (1856)

James Redpath, The Roving Editor, or, Talks With Slaves in the Southern States (1859)

William Still, The Underground Railroad, (1872)

Frederick Douglass, The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass, (1881)

Carter G. Woodson, ed., The Mind of the Negro As Reflected in Letters Written During the Crisis, 1800-1860 (1925)

Arthur Zilversmit, The First Emancipation: The Abolition of Slavery in the North (1967)

Thomas D. Morris, Free Men All: The Personal Liberty Laws of the North, 1780-1861 (1974)

Shirley J. Yee, Black Women Abolitionists: A Study in Activism, 1828-1860, (1992)

Jean Fagan Yellin and John C. Van Horne, eds., The Abolitionist Sisterhood: Women's Political Culture in Antebellum America (1994)

Arthur Huff Fauset, Sojourner Truth: God's Faithful Pilgrim (1938)

Erlene Stetson and Linda David, Glorifying in Tribulation: The Lifework of Sojourner Truth (1994)
Carleton Mabee, Sojourner Truth: Slave, Prophet, Legend (1995)
William S. McFeely, Frederick Douglass (1991)
Howard H. Bell, A Survey of the Negro Convention Movement, 1831-1861 (1969)
Benjamin Quarles, Black Abolitionists, (1969)
Aileen Kraditor, Means and Ends in American Abolitionism: Garrison and His Critics on Strategy and Tactics, 1834-1850, (1969)
John Bracey and others, ed., Blacks in the Abolitionist Movement, (1971)
C. Peter Ripley, ed., The Black Abolitionist Papers (5 vols.) (1985-1992)
Marilyn Richardson, Maria W. Stewart: America's First Black Woman Political Writer, (1987)
R.J.M. Blackett, Building an Anti-Slavery Wall: Black Americans and the Atlantic Abolitionist Movement, (1983)
William E. Farrison, William Wells Brown: Author and Reformer, (1969)
Stanley W. Campbell, The Slave Catchers: Enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Law, 1850-1860, (1970)
Lathan A. Windley, ed., Runaway Slave Advertisements: A Documentary History from the 1730s to 1790 (1983)
Charlotte L. Forten, [Brenda Stevenson, ed.,] The Journals of Charlotte Forten Grimke (1988)
Don E. Fehrenbacher, Slavery, Law, and Politics: The Dred Scott Case in Historical Perspective (1981)
James Brewer Stewart, William Lloyd Garrison and the Challenge of Emancipation (1992)
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CHAPTER ONE:

The African Background

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During the four centuries of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade people from hundreds of different ethnic groups with vastly diverse languages and cultures were brought to the New World from regions of Africa stretching four thousand miles along the continent's Atlantic Coast. Despite their differences, these Africans, partly by design, and partly by circumstance forged an African American culture. In order to fully understand that culture we must first however, examine the history and cultures of the various regions which were the ancestral homes of African Americans. Chapter One examines that heritage. The vignettes included here describe African societies at the time of the slave trade, providing a context for understanding the evolution of African American culture during the first two centuries of the black presence in British North America.

The first vignette, ***The Origin of Race****, contrasts the anthropological definition of the term with the political context in which it has been used in American society. The vignettes,* ***The "Golden Age" of African History****,* ***Urban Civilization in West Africa****,* ***The Writers of Timbuktu****, and* ***Timbuktu: The Urban Center of West Africa****, describe in detail the civilizations which flourished in ancient Ghana, Mali and Songhai. The removal of Africans to the New World is outlined in the chart,* ***The Slave Trade Over Four Centuries****, which plots the varying origins, destinations, and slaving nations involved in the transfer of millions of Africans to the New World.* ***Sugar and Slavery*** *explores the relationship between the world's first major cash crop and human bondage. The extent of European involvement is detailed in* ***The Slave Trade In Perspective****.* ***Slavery in Global Perspective*** *relates the African servile institution to those on other continents while* ***The Transformation of Slavery*** *and* ***Sugar and Slavery*** *describe why the servile institution was increasingly identified with African people.* ***The Slave Trade and African Society****,* ***Africans and Europeans on the Gold Coast****, and* ***The Signares of Senegal*** *suggests the varied impact of the trade on the regions which were sources of slaves. United States involvement in the trade is profiled briefly in* ***American Ships and the Illegal Slave Trade****. Finally,* ***Africans in Bolivia, 1992*** *shows its widespread consequences in the New World.*

Two contrasting views of the trade from the vantage point of the trader and his victim are outlined in the next three vignettes. ***The Slave Trade: A Participant's Account*** *provides a description of the human commerce by a European captain while the next two vignettes,* ***The Slave Trade: Olaudah Equiano Remembers****,* ***Olaudah Equiano Describes the Middle Passage****, and* ***Omar Ibn Seid: From Senegal to North Carolina****, provide the perspective of unfortunate persons who fell victim to the trade and who left poignant accounts of their early captivity. The vignette,* ***A Defense of the African Slave Trade*** *proffers a justification of the barter in slaves and presages the 19th Century argument of pro-slavery proponents who termed the institution "a positive good."*

Terms For Week One:

"modern racism"

ethnocentrism

nation-state

Henry Tucker

Black (or) African Diaspora

stateless society

Mansa Musa

Timbuktu

Sankore University

Mali Empire

Songhai Empire

luxury slave trade

Trans-Sahara Slave Trade

Afro-Europeans

Antom Goncalvez

Mahmud Kati

Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade

Mediterranean plantation system

Sao Tome

Royal African Company

Elmina

Olaudah Equiano

Omar Ibn Seid

THE ORIGIN OF RACE

In the following passage historian William McNeill describes the evolution of race as a political as well as anthropological term.

Modern races presumably descend from various mixtures of ancestral types. Some of the most obvious differences, such as skin color, which divide us today, are a result of adaptation to different climates. For example, Mongolian features and skin color are well adapted for survival in cold climates; African and Indian populations have dark skins that protect them from tropical ultraviolet rays; and the pale skins of Europeans are adapted to the scarcity of sunlight in a cloudy climate.

Race has become an issue in politics and social life, not only in the United States but in many other parts of the world. Skin color is obvious; hence our sensitivity to the shade of a person's complexion. But classification by skin color distorts and confuses the genetic facts of human variation, which are much more complicated than any difference indicated by skin color alone. Human beings cannot be divided into clearly separate races, for they show many kinds of intermediate types, involving every sort of variable characteristic.

When two or more different races live side by side for a few generations, biological boundaries blur. As time passes, more and more people of mixed blood combine features from the different races. This is as true in the United States, where whites and blacks have lived together for about 300 years, as it is in India, where light-skinned and darker-skinned populations have lived side by side for about 4500 years.

Wherever people mingle and move about, as has been happening more and more frequently in recent centuries, all sorts of intermediate mixed racial types come into existence. Until a few hundred years ago, most human beings were grouped in small village or tribal communities whose relations with the outside world were quite limited. As a result, ten or fifteen generations back our ancestors seldom saw anyone who did not fall within a well-defined local range of physical variation. This ceased to be true as ships and trains and airplanes made it easier to move about, so that all the different types of human beings began to mix more rapidly than before.

Racial purity among large and flourishing human communities never existed. Variations in physical appearance of course occur, and people react to such variations, thinking some persons beautiful or desirable and others ugly. But these opinions vary from time to time and from place to place.

The breakdown of age-old isolation is what created the conditions for modern race feeling. In more and more parts of the world, people of different appearance find themselves living side by side. However unreasonable, it is sometimes hard not to fear and distrust people who seem strange, or whose forebears have run afoul of yours--even (or especially) when they live next door or just a few blocks away. But the fact that differing human types are now living side by side more often than ever before means that the age-old process of biological and social mixture is going ahead more rapidly than in times past. If new barriers to movement do not arise, the physical differences among people will eventually become less than they are today, just as the differences today are less than they were when widely different prehuman types walked the earth.

Source: William H. McNeill, A History of the Human Community, Englewood, Cliffs, N.J., 1990, pp. 4, 6.

THE "GOLDEN AGE" OF AFRICAN HISTORY

In the passage below Basil Davidson assesses the period between 1000 and 1500 A.D. which African historians term the "Golden Age" of the continent and briefly describes the gold and salt trade which provided the economic foundation for the wealth of West African empires.

Three major factors dominate the movement of society in the centuries between AD 1OOO and 1500. They are the spread of metal-working, especially in iron weapons and tools; secondly, the steady growth of trade and of production for trade in certain staple items, both inside West Africa and between West and North Africa across the Sahara; thirdly, the parallel foundation of large market-centres and trading cities in the plains of the Western Sudan, along the banks of West Africa's principal rivers, and in the forests and coastland of Guinea. Such developments were linked together. Iron tools and weapons helped to expand production, whether of crops or minerals or other goods, and to provide new sources of military power. These in turn promoted the growth of trade. And the growth of trade went hand-in-hand with the rise of markets, towns and cities. Many West African communities were profoundly influenced by this network of social and economic pressures. They worked out new ways of organizing their community lives, and of enforcing law and order. Some of them went ahead without chiefs and kings and central governments, while others founded large states and empires. Cities grew in number, size, and wealth, and became the home of new kinds of craftsmen and traders, politicians, priests, soldiers, writers, and men of learning. With their export of ivory and gold, these trading cities and the states which often grew around them became an indispensable part of the whole wide organisation of international trade that was composed of western and northern Africa, southern Europe, and western Asia.

This long and fruitful period has been called a golden age of West African development. The term is fanciful. There were plenty of rough and bitter years, sudden incursions of cruelty and chaos, times of arbitrary rule and persecution of the weak; the story of man is no gentler here than anywhere else. Some people prospered if they did, it was often at the expense of their hapless neighbors. Others suffered; if not only from the empire-builders but also from unlucky circumstances in their habitat or failure of internal organization. Those who lived on the trade routes were drawn irresistibly into the mainstream of change, either as rulers or as ruled. Those were far away in the forests and hills had little part in all that, but at least the had the advantage of living largely undisturbed.

Yet the term "golden age," is not entirely romantic. It is true that these countries witnessed the transformation of West African life into a richly varied social and political fabric. It is true that this civilization was the parent of modern West Africa.... Traveling through the fourteenth-century empire of Mali the Moroccan Ibn Battuta found "complete and general safety in the land." "The traveler has no more reason than the man who stays at home," he wrote from personal experience, "to fear brigands, thieves or violent gangs." Such far-ranging security revealed a major achievement in community organization, and it was by on means the only one of its kind....

Old West Africa possessed two kinds of wealth that were greatly desired by the peoples of the far north and east, whether in Africa or Europe or Asia. These were gold and ivory.... But Ancient Ghana, like other states of West Africa, also had one great need which the peoples of the Sahara, or the peoples beyond it, could help to supply--salt. It is probably true that salt was no

less valued by the peoples south of the desert, because of their hot climate and relative lack of local supplies, than was gold by the peoples who lived north of the desert. So the basis of trade between the Western Sudan and the Berbers of the Sahara lay in the exchange of salt for gold. But this was only the basis of trade. The total system was much wider. For the Saharan Berbers sold the goods they bought from the Western Sudan to the traders of North Africa, and the traders of North Africa sold them again to Europeans and Asians. European and Asian goods came down into West Africa by the same methods. Needless to say, there were other items of trade besides gold and salt. West Africa, for example, also needed copper, silks, and more metalware (such as pots and pans and swords) than West Africans could make themselves. West Africa also supplied ivory and kola nuts. Both sides sold and bought slaves although West Africans, having a less stratified economy than their North African neighbors and a smaller need of wageless labour, sold more slaves than they bought.

All this trade led to the founding of cities. Most of these cities were especially concerned with the trade across the Sahara. They began as small trading settlements, but grew bigger as more traders came and went, and became centres for craftsmen who worked in leather, wood, ivory, and metals. City governments became necessary, as well as men trained to be put in charge of keeping accounts, of maintaining law and order, of ensuring the safety of citizens. Then the rulers of these cities began to extend their power to ever wider regions of neighboring countryside. Gradually the cities grew into states, and the states into empires.

This long historical process--from trading settlements to trading empires--also occurred to the north and east of the Sahara. Trading settlements and cities duly appeared in the stony lands of the Sahara itself. These were Berber cities. Some of them are alive to this day: Agades, Ghat, and Murzuk, for example. Others, like Walata and Tichitt, still exist but have lost their wealth and importance. Others again, such as Audaghost and Sijilmasa, have entirely disappeared....

The same process of city-founding and empire-building went on to the south of the Sahara. Here, too, some of the great cities of the Western Sudan, such as Kumbi and Tekrur, have disappeared; while others, such as Timbuktu, Gao, and Jenne, have survived. And the main business of these old cities....was fed by the wealth of West Africa.

Source: Basil Davidson, A History of West Africa To the Nineteenth Century, (New York, 1966), pp. 27-28, 33-35.

URBAN CIVILIZATION IN WEST AFRICA

The following passage describes the West African trading cities that were the centers of the urban civilizations of the empires of Ghana, Mali and Songhay from the 12th to 17th Centuries.

In the big West African cities--Benin City, for instance, or Kano--the market was likely to be near the physical center of town, even as it was a focal point for much of the economic and social life of the metropolis. Several highways converged on the city, continuing through the gates to intersect typically in a large square in the middle of town. Along these avenues were residences, frequently open-faced in the forest community but in the savanna cities turning their blank facades of sun-dried clay toward the daily traffic, with only an occasional door or window to betray the life of the compound within. At the square might be found the mosque and probably as well the palace of local ruler or highly placed deputy for a distant emperor. Here too was the market, standing perhaps opposite the mosque, running along one complete side of the square near the royal residence and, during its busy hours, spilling out to take over virtually the whole of the available open area.

The large urban market operated daily and, though physically ephemeral, was as established an institution as anything in town, its stability marked not only through official benediction but also by the changeless pattern of its wares and the predictable location of its stalls. Near the palace entrance might be found the cloth merchants with their blue batik-style Yoruba cottons, Hausa blankets made of narrow woven strips stitched together in parallel, fine *kente* cloth from Ashanti, and many other regional fabrics. Nearby the leatherworkers set up shop and next to them the makers of straw mats, while across the square the horse traders were established along with the saddle makers and dealers in other forms of livestock. The butchers had a large display at a distance to the right of the mosque, and there could be heard the characteristic rhythm of their drummer announcing that meat had been freshly slaughtered that day. There were many others--barbers and potters, ironworkers, tailors, scribes, women selling hot food and others selling uncooked yams, millet, rice, or greens, some hawking animal skins or kola nuts, others offering the makings of magical charms with their monkey skulls, vulture heads, certain kinds of bones, bits of leopard pelt, dried herbs, or special pieces of iron.

All stalls and displays were highly portable for they would be packed up and taken away at day's end; spread out, the establishments were tightly crowded along narrow paths through which prospective buyers were forced slowly to pick their way. These were not the only pedestrians, for along the thoroughfares moved small bands of musicians, their drums and gongs delighting bystanders and stimulating an occasional impromptu dance step, itinerant peddlers balancing their wares expertly on wide calabash trays carried upon their heads, groups of young men preoccupied with flirtations, furious rushes of children at play, and a motley assortment of dogs darting about underfoot in search of scraps of garbage.

Source: Robert W. July, Precolonial Africa: An Economic and Social History, (New York, 1975), pp. 186-187.

TIMBUKTU: THE URBAN CENTER OF WEST AFRICA

In describing the city of Timbuktu, Robert W. July provides a captivating glimpse into life in urban Africa during the "Golden Age" of African history.

Discussing Timbuktu, the seventeenth-century Sudanese historian es-Sadi spoke with a glowing lyricism. "That exquisite city," he exclaimed, "delightful, illustrious, and pure, a blessed city, lush and lively--this is my home and my dearest possession." Allowing for hyperbole, the enthusiasm of as-Sadi nonetheless reflected the prestige, the affluence, and the cultivation of a great metropolis, possibly in its heyday the most sophisticated center representing the mercantile civilization of the Sudan. Timbuktu was not the first of its kind; that distinction probably belonged to Kumbi Saleh, government seat for the kingdom of Ghana, and to Awdaghost, its western neighbor along the desert edge. First or last, however, the savanna cities displayed many qualities in common, their way of life a mingling of two diverse cultures, brought together and fused in the heat of their mutual commercial interest.

This fact was at once demonstrated by their size. In a region of small farming villages, Kumbi at its twelfth-century peak probably contained fifteen to twenty thousand people; three hundred years later Timbuktu numbered twenty-five thousand or more, while Kano and Gao both reached the impressive total of seventy-five thousand during the sixteenth century. Of greater significance, however, was the physical plan of the towns which normally presented two separate quarters, one occupied by immigrant merchants from the north and the other by West African tradesmen surrounded by the dwellings of local craftsmen and laborers. This self-imposed segregation by neighborhood was accentuated by differences in architectural design, these in turn reflecting cultural and economic disparities between the two communities.

The merchant houses were two-storied stone structures, crowded together in their quarter, varying somewhat in design and size but resembling the buildings of the Saharan oases to the north, their ground floors given over to storage and merchandising, their upper stories to family living. The walls were very thick, making possible numerous rectangular and triangular niches used for storage. The interior surfaces were covered with a yellow plaster on which were traced geometric patterns and Quranic inscriptions in red and white. Furnishings were sparse and beds often cut into the heavy walls, but some homes possessed detached beds of matting on pottery legs. Earthenware dishes and ornaments were common as were finely worked red leather saddlebags and, presumably, rugs of wool, cotton, and camel hair. Many of these homes contained fine libraries--all in all, despite the mercantile preoccupations of their occupants, they conveyed a cultivated atmosphere, formal but intellectually stimulating, where leisurely meals combined with the ceremonial drinking of sweet green tea and good conversation went in easy companionship with prayer and contemplation. This foreign quarter usually contained the city market as well as a main thoroughfare given over to additional commercial transactions, while the predominantly Muslim character of its inhabitants assured the presence of one or more mosques. Across town in the West African districts, a different ambience prevailed. Here, very likely, was the royal palace, and here the houses consisted both os single-storied, slab-sided mud structures topped by flat beam and reed roofs (except for the vaulted buildings in Hausaland) and the plain, round mud and thatched-roof dwellings of the simple countrymen. This was pagan territory to counterbalance the self-conscious piety of the commercial districts; here, both in the streets and at court, a more relaxed atmosphere signaled greater exuberance in expressing the joy of living.

Dancing and music making were a common pastime, particularly at late hours, when processions typically gathered to serenade the town. Public nudity was conventional among women, with royal princess no less than with slave girl, but such informality reflected freedom more than license. Women were highly respected socially and in numerous areas held important government positions. In Walata, where Ibn Battuta remarked their beauty, they were at liberty to have lovers without fear of censure; possibly their exalted status was linked to the frequent custom of uterine descent which shocked the Muslim northerners but which offered the clear advantage of linking family and inheritance to blood, thereby ensuring the purity and survival of the clan line.

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Source: Robert W. July, Precolonial Africa: An Economic and Social History, (New York, 1975), pp. 197-198.

THE WRITERS OF TIMBUKTU

In the account below Basil Davidson explores the urbane, intellectual culture that emerged in Timbuktu, Jenne and other West Africa cities.

Timbuktu and Jenne had well-known scholars of their own. The most renowned of the sixteenth century was probably Ahmad Baba. Born in Timbuktu in 1556, Ahmad Baba composed many works on Islamic law as well as a biographical dictionary of Muslim scholars. At least thirteen of his works are still in use by the *ulama* [religious scholars] of West Africa. His library was so good that it was held in high esteem for many years after his death. His bravery and independence of mind were also much respected, and it is not difficult to see why. When the Moroccan invaders seized Timbuktu, Ahmad Baba refused to serve them. Fearing his influence and accusing him of fomenting a rebellion, the Moroccans took him in chains across the Sahara to Marrakesh. There they detained him for many years before allowing him to return home. There is thus a sense in which it may be said that Ahmad Baba, who never ceased to protest against the invasion of his native land, was not only an outstanding scholar but was also among the forerunners of West African nationalism.

Two important histories of the Western Sudan were written by scholars of Timbuktu. They are the *Tarikh al Fartash*, the Chronicle of the Seeker after Knowledge, and the *Tarikh al-Sudan*, the Chronicle of the [Western] Sudan. Both were composed in Arabic, for this was the literary language of these learned men, just as Latin was the literary language of their contemporaries in Europe. Both were the work of West Africans born in Timbuktu. The first of these was Mahmud Kati, who was born in about 1468 and is said to have lived to the age of 125; and the second was Abd al-Rahman as-Sadi, who was born in 1569 and lived until about 1655.

Both had fine careers. Kati was only twenty-five when the famous Songhai ruler, Askia Muhammad the Great, usurped the throne from Sunni Baru; Kati became a member of the askia's personal staff. He went to Mecca with the emperor and was thereby well placed to observe and understand the events of his time. He began his great book in about 1519, but his sons and grandsons, who were also scholars, continued to work on it and brought the story of Songhai and Timbuktu down to about 1665.

Abd al-Rahman as-Sadi was born only a few years before the Moroccan invasion, which he suffered as a child. He tells us in the *Tarikh al-Sudan* that it was because of all the sad events he had witnessed in his youth that he decided to write his book. In a moving preface he recalls how he saw "the ruin of learning and its utter collapse" under the hammer-blows of Moroccan onslaught. "And because learning is rich in beauty," he explains, "and fertile in its teaching, since it instructs men about their fatherland, their ancestors, their history, the names of their heroes and what lives they lived, I asked God's help and decided to set down all that I myself could learn on the subject of the Songhay princes of the Sudan, their adventures, their story, their achievements, and their wars. Then I added the history of Timbuktu from the time of its foundation, of the princes who ruled there and the scholars and saints who lived there, and of other things as well."

Source: Basil Davidson, A History of West Africa To the Nineteenth Century, (New York, 1966), pp. 167-169.

SLAVERY IN GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

In the discussion below Harvard sociologist Orlando Patterson compares the variety of servile institutions which have existed throughout much of human history in virtually every region of the world.

There is nothing notably peculiar about the institution of slavery. It has existed from before the dawn of human history right down to the twentieth century, in the most primitive of human societies and in the most civilized. There is no region on earth that has not at some time harbored the institution. Probably there is no group of people whose ancestors were not at one time slaves or slaveholders.

Why then the commonplace that slavery is "the peculiar institution"? It is hard to say, but perhaps the reason lies in the tendency to eschew what seems too paradoxical. Slavery was not only ubiquitous but turns out to have thrived most in precisely those areas and periods of the world where our conventional wisdom would lead us to expect it least. It was firmly established in all the great early centers of human civilization and, far from declining, actually increased in significance with the growth of all the epochs and cultures that modern Western peoples consider watersheds in their historical development. Ancient Greece and Rome were not simply slaveholding societies; they were "genuine" slave societies, in that slavery was very solidly the base of their socioeconomic structures. Many European societies too were genuine slave societies during their critical periods. In Visigothic Spain, late Old English society, Merovingian France, and Viking Europe, slavery--if not always dominant--was never less than critical. The institution rose again to major significance in late medieval Spain, and in Russia from the sixteenth century to the end of the eighteenth. Slaves constituted such a large proportion of the Florentine population during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries that they significantly transformed the appearance of the indigenous Tuscan population. Late medieval and early Renaissance Venice and Genoa were extremely dependent on slave labor, and the Italian colonies of the Mediterranean during the late Middle Ages not only were large-scale plantation slave systems but were the models upon which the advanced plantation systems of the Iberian Atlantic colonies were based. These, in turn. were the testing grounds for the capitalistic slave systems of the modern Americas.

The late Eric Williams may have gone too far in his celebrated argument that the rise of capitalism itself could be largely accounted for by the enormous profits generated by the slave systems of the Americas. But no one now doubts that New World slavery was a key factor in the rise of the West European economies.

Europe, however, was hardly unique in this association of civilization and slavery. The rise of Islam was made possible by slavery, for without it the early Arab elites simply would not have been able to exploit the skilled and unskilled manpower that was essential for their survival and expansion. Even more than the Western states, the Islamic world depended on slaves for the performance of critical administrative, military, and cultural roles.

The same holds true for Africa and certain areas of the Orient. In both the pagan and Islamic regions of precolonial Africa advanced political and cultural developments were usually, though not always, associated with high levels of dependence on slavery. Medieval Ghana, Songhay, and Mali all relied heavily on slave labor. So did the city-states of the Hausas, Yorubas, and Ibibios, the kingdoms of Dahomey and Ashanti at their peak, the caliphate of Sokoto, and the sultanate of Zanzibar.

Oriental societies are unusual in world historical terms for the relatively low level of association between periods of high civilization and the growth of slavery. Even so, it is easy to underestimate the role of slavery in this part of the world. The institution existed in all oriental systems, and slaves played significant roles in the palatine service and administration. In fact, it is in Korea that we find one of the most extraordinary cases of economic dependence on slaves among all peoples and all periods. Large-scale slavery flourished there for over a thousand years up to the nineteenth century. For several centuries the servile population was proportionately higher than the one in the U.S. South at its peak of dependence on slavery in the nineteenth century.

In the Western world the paradox is compounded by another historical enigma. Slavery is associated not only with the development of advanced economies, but also with the emergence of several of the most profoundly cherished ideals and beliefs in the Western tradition. The idea of freedom and the concept of property were both intimately bound up with the rise of slavery, their very antithesis. The great innovators not only took slavery for granted, they insisted on its necessity to their way of life. In doing so, they were guilty not of some unfathomable lapse of logic, but rather of admirable candor. For Plato and Aristotle and the great Roman jurists were not wrong in recognizing the necessary correlation between their love of their own freedom and its denial to others. The joint rise of slavery and cultivation of freedom was no accident. It was, as we shall see, a sociohistorical necessity.

Modern Western thinkers, especially since the Enlightenment, have found such views wrong, disturbing, and deeply embarrassing. The embarrassment was not confined to those who puzzled over the ancient world: it was to reach its zenith in the most democratic political constitution and social system ever achieved by a Western people--the experiment called the United States. Americans have never been able to explain how it came to pass that the most articulate defender of their freedoms, Thomas Jefferson and the greatest hero of their revolution and history, George Washington, both were large-scale, largely unrepentant slaveholders. Slavery, for all who look to Enlightenment Europe and revolutionary America as the source of their most cherished political values, is not the peculiar institution but the embarrassing institution.

Source: Orlando Patterson, Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study, (Cambridge, 1982), pp. vii-ix.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF SLAVERY

The following account by David Brion Davis traces the evolution of plantation slavery from its Mediterranean origins in the 12th Century--when the vast majority of the slaves were European--to the emergence of New World slavery in the 16th Century which was almost entirely based on African subjugation.

If one takes the New World as a whole, one finds the importation of African slaves far surpassed the flow of European immigrants during the first three and one-third centuries of settlement. From Brazil and the Caribbean to Chesapeake Bay, the richest and most coveted colonies--in terms of large scale capital investment, output, and value of exports and imports--ultimately became dependent on black slave labor. Yet the enslavement of whites persisted and at times even flourished on both Christian and Muslim shores of the Mediterranean and the Black seas, in eastern Europe and Russia, and even in western Europe, where lifelong sentences to the galleys became an acceptable and utilitarian substitute for capital punishment. The use of bound white laborers preceded the use of black slaves in every British American colony, and it was only after an initial reliance on indentured servants for the bulk of their labor needs that the planters of the West Indies and the southern mainland colonies turned to slaves. The Africanization of large parts of the New World was the result not of concerted planning, racial destiny, or immanent historical design but of innumerable local and pragmatic choices made in four continents. The following discussion can do no more than trace some important continuities between such choices and point to the often bitterly ironic connections between the extension of black slavery and white concepts of progress.

The story begins with the revival of the ancient Mediterranean slave trade that accompanied the early expansion of western Europe....Internal changes within the feudal hinterland, including innovations in agriculture and technology, enables western Europe to take advantage of the commercial leadership of the Italian city-republics. Specifically, when the Pisans, Venetians, and Genoese gained control of much of the eastern trade that had earlier been monopolized by Greeks, Arabs, Syrians, and Jews, they could count on funds for investment as well as extensive internal markets for spices, silk, indigo, sugar, and slaves.

The trade in foreign slaves was simply one manifestation of Italian cosmopolitanism and business enterprise....Genoese merchants bought and transported anything for which they could find new markets--grain, cheese, salt, fish, wine, sugar; Senegalese gold; fine cloth and linen from northern Europe; silk, spices, and other luxury goods from the Orient; Moorish slaves from Spain and pagan or Christian slaves from the Balkans, Greece, and the Black Sea. Papal edicts were powerless in curbing an entrepreneurial spirit that led Genoese financiers to lend millions of ducats to the Spanish crown, and Genoese traders to sell thousands of Christian slaves to the Muslims of Syria and Egypt. What needs to be stressed is that such unscrupulous slave trading was part of a general defiance of traditional restraints and limits that made Genoa a crucible of economic and maritime innovation.

The Venetians had long marketed slaves acquired along the Dalmatian coast, and led the way in building colonial trading posts along the shores of the Black Sea. Tana, their main slave-buying entrepot, stood at the mouth of the Don, on the Sea of Azov, a gateway to Central Asia. By promoting trade with the Tartars, who were eager to sell slaves and other commodities, Venetians established direct links with the Far East, thereby overleaping the barrier of Muslim middlemen....

To understand the significance of changing sources of labor, we must return briefly to the expansion of slavery in the Mediterranean. Beginning in 1347 the Black Death and subsequent famines and epidemics devastated Europe. In parts of northern Europe, where the plague suddenly reduced the population by a least one-third, the labor shortage hastened the erosion of various forms of servile dependency and encouraged attempts to regulate wages and compel the unemployed to work. But in Italy, where seaborne trade had long brought an influx of mostly female slaves from the Dalmatian coast and reconquered Spain, the population decline created a new and continuing demand for foreign slaves. The shortage of household servants and agricultural workers induced even northern Italians to tolerate the risks of buying Circassians, Georgians, Armenians, Turks, Bulgarians, Tatars, and a few Africans. In 1364 the priors of Florence permitted the unlimited importation of slaves as long as they were not Roman Catholics (they could thus be Eastern Orthodox Christians). Between 1414 and 1423 no fewer than ten thousand bondsmen (mostly bondswomen) were sold in Venice alone. This continuing demand for servile labor coincided with a mounting supply of captives offered to various buyers from the Ottoman conquests in central Anatolia, Thrace, and the Balkans and from the celebrated transcontinental invasions of Timur (Tamerlane).

Slavery had always been pervasive and deeply entrenched in southern Italy, Sicily, Crete, Cyprus, Majorca, and Mediterranean Spain. These regions had all been subject to Muslim conquest and Christian reconquest; they remained frontier outposts, vulnerable to raids but also the closest beneficiaries of centuries of Christian-Muslim terrorism and trade....Under the Norman kings of the twelfth century, Sicily may well have been the most prosperous and most efficiently governed realm in Europe; the thirteenth-century slaveholding and sugar-producing regime of Frederick II is renowned for its encouragement of science and learning, its struggles against special privilege, and its constructive constitutionalism based on Roman and Arabic precedents. In the Thirteenth century, one must add, Sicilian proprietors could benefit from a relatively dense supply of nominally free labor; the slave population was largely Muslim and female--though recent comparative studies show that female slaves have seldom been exempt from the most grueling field labor...

But in the fourteenth century, as the number of Moorish captives declined as a result of successful Christian reconquests and agreements between Muslim and Christian princes to reduce piracy and encourage mutually beneficial commerce, the Black Sea trade profoundly transformed the ethnic composition of slave populations from Cyprus to Catalonia. It is astonishing to discover that in the early fourteenth century most of the slaves in Crete,...were Greek. The native Greek of Crete, Cyprus, Chios, and other islands (to say nothing of Italian proprietors) seem to have had no scruples about buying Christian brethren of the Orthodox faith. By the 1380s, however, Greek slaves were greatly outnumbered by Tartars, Bulgarians, Russians, Circassians, and Alans. Slaves of Black Sea and Balkan origin also took the place of Moorish captives in Sicily, Majorca, and Catalonia-Aragon....

The turning point came with the Ottoman capture of Constantinople in 1453. While the Venetians struggled for some decades to preserve their commercial access to the Black Sea, the Turks soon diverted the flow of Black Sea and Balkan captives to Islamic markets. Mediterranean Europe was thus cut off from its major source of slaves, and for most potential buyers the price of slaves became prohibitive. The only alternative to the Crimea and the steppes of western Asia was sub-Saharan Africa....The constriction of the Black Sea trade gave temporary stimulus to the Arab caravan trade, which had already begun transporting sub-Saharan blacks to the shores of Libya....Notarial deeds in the second half of the fifteenth century indicate that blacks accounted for 83% of the servile labor force in Naples. As in Naples, slavery in Sicily at the end of the Fifteenth century was preeminently black slavery. The size of Sicilian

slaveholdings was relatively small--the baron de Cadera, for example, owned only twenty bondsmen, eighteen of whom were black. The significant points pertain to sex ratio and employment. The new population of black slaves was predominately male. Unlike the black household servants and page boys in the courts and cities of Europe, the blacks in Sicily, Majorca, and other plantation areas worked mainly in the fields and vineyards and on sugar plantations. The Mediterranean had developed an "American" form of slavery several decades before America was discovered.

The critical factor appears to have been the supply of labor available from regions that were ravaged by warfare or that lacked the political power and stability to protect their subjects. The plantation-oriented economics of the Mediterranean eagerly absorbed Moorish, Greek, and Caucasian slaves as long as they could be obtained at a tolerable price, though the price multiplied many times as a result of the demographic crisis and escalating labor costs of the Fourteenth century. When Ottoman conquests later closed off the traditional sources of foreign labor, the Christian slaveholding regions turned to blacks from sub-Saharan Africa until that flow of labor was increasingly diverted to more profitable markets to the west.

Source: David Brion Davis, Slavery and Human Progress (New York, 1984) pp. 51-57.

SUGAR AND SLAVERY

In the following account historian David Brion Davis describes the symbiotic relationship between sugar cultivation and the most frequently applied form of coerced labor, slavery.

In this first stage of European imperialism, the history of slavery became inextricably tied to the history of sugar. Sugar cane had spread in ancient times from Southeast Asia to India, where its cultivation was commonplace by the Fourth century B.C., at the time of Alexander's invasion. From India, however, the *Puri* or Creole cane moved very slowly to the west until the Arabs seized control of Iran. The Arabs developed sugar industries in Egypt and Syria, and extended cane cultivation to Cyprus, Crete, Malta, Sicily, the Barbary Coast, and southern Spain.

Little is known, unfortunately, about the type of labor employed on the early Arab estates. The primitive technology available for milling and boiling imposed severe limits on productivity. Yet the cutting and processing of cane must be done without delay and thus requires a fairly concentrated labor force. Muslim as well as later Christian proprietors often relied on free or corvee labor. But..."the intimate connection between sugar and slavery must be looked on as having its roots in the wave of Arab expansion which spread over North Africa from the Seventh century onwards, and which also extended into Southern Europe.

It would have been better for the Christians' morals if they had remained content with honey, which was the only sweetener they had known.... But when the crusaders founded their feudal kingdom in Palestine, they discovered the joy of sugar and other unknown condiments. One chronicler described Arab sugar as "this unsuspected and inestimable present from Heaven." The cultivation of sugar by the chivalric Hospitalers and Knights of the Teutonic Order symbolizes a paradoxical alliance that would long characterize European expansion and "progress"--the merger of feudal forms and ideals with business enterprise. Italian bankers and merchants provided long-term credit, shipping, and profitable markets for the sugar grown on crusader-owned estates near Tyre, Acre, Sidon, and Tiberias.

Even when the Mongol conquests of the Thirteenth century shut off the westward flow of sugar from Iran and....when the Franks finally withdrew from Palestine in 1291, Europeans could cultivate their own sugar in Cyprus, Crete, and Sicily. In Cyprus, the Venetian entrepreneurs managed their sugar plantations by "capitalist" methods, importing expensive copper boilers from Italy, using hydraulic mills to press the cane, and employing a mixed labor force of local serfs and Muslim slaves. It must be emphasized that the use of sugar was still often medicinal; that until the nineteenth century the condiment remained an expensive luxury, at least on the Continent; and that large scale demand depended on the appearance of many relatively affluent consumers eager to sweeten their drinks.... In Sicily and southern Italy landed proprietors turned increasingly to sugar and sweet wines as substitutes for low-priced grains. Cane sugar, either pure or as an ingredient of *siropate*, paste, and other sweetened foods, gradually acquired a new importance in the international network of trade and finance. Genoese merchants, for example, began transporting bulk shipments of sugar to markets as distant as England....

The demand for sugar continued to rise with the monetary expansion and population recovery of the second half of the Fifteenth century. There was thus sufficient incentive for Italians to introduce an improved Sicilian sugar press to Spain, to promote sugar cultivation in southern Portugal, and to provide the capital, cane, and technology for plantations in Madeira and the Canary Islands. It was clearly sugar and the small Atlantic islands that gave a distinctive shape to New World slavery. Today it is difficult to appreciate the importance of the rugged,

volcanic Atlantic islands as crucibles for New World institutions. The pattern of trade winds and ocean currents made all the islands crossroads of navigation, landmarks and stopovers for the ships of every maritime nation engaged legally or illegally in trade with West Africa, Asia, the West Indies, and Brazil. The Portuguese government understood the strategic value of permanent settlements along the vital sea lanes from the Azores to Sao Tome, in the Gulf of Guinea close to the equator. The Cape Verdes and Sao Tome were also ideal bases for trading ventures along the disease-ridden African coast. But in Fifteen-century Portugal, in contrast to England of the late Sixteenth and early Seventeenth centuries, there was no "excess" population of unemployed and dangerous laborers.... The colonists relied on captives from the Canary Islands to construct a system of irrigation canals from treacherous mountain ravines to the fertile but arid lands below. By the 1440s black slaves had begun to supplement or replace the Guanches. By the mid-Fifteenth century there was sufficient sugar production to warrant the use of a hydraulic mill, or *engenho*, in place of hand presses.... By the 1490s Madeira had become a wealthy sugar colony wholly dependent on the labor of African slaves. As the first true colony committed to sugar monoculture and black slave labor, it was the transitional prototype for later mercantilist ideals of empire. Madeiran sugar, outstripping the production of the entire Mediterranean, was being shipped or reexported by the late 1490s to England, France, Italy, and even the eastern Mediterranean. Columbus, who lived for over a decade in Madeira, had the foresight to take sugar plants from the Canary Islands on his voyages to the "Indies."

Sao Tome occupied an equally strategic site, roughly one hundred miles west of Cape Gabon at the junction of wind systems that powered both northbound and southbound Atlantic traffic.... As early as 1495 Antwerp had begun receiving sugar from Sao Tome, which during the first half of the Sixteenth century imported more African slaves than Europe, the Americas, or the other Atlantic islands. The spectacular success of Sao Tome and neighboring Principe made it clear that sugar and slaves could become the keys to imperial wealth and power....

In the meantime, however, sugar had become for Portugal an even more valuable import than spices. The sale of African slave labor to Spanish America had also become a means of earning the silver needed to pay for Asian luxuries, since the value of Western commodities sent to the East never approximated the value of Eastern imports.... While the Dutch later gave priority to the East Indies, they also seized the rich sugar-producing regions in northeastern Brazil, most of the Portuguese forts and slave-trading settlements in Africa, and Caribbean bases from Surinam to Aruba.... Black slavery took root in the Americas in a slow, spasmodic, and seemingly haphazard way, but even the last three-quarters of the Sixteenth century gave ample and cumulative evidence that the fortunes of the New World depended on Africa.

Source: David Brion Davis, Slavery and Human Progress (New York, 1984) pp. 58-64.

THE SLAVE TRADE AND AFRICAN SOCIETIES

Historian Walter Rodney describes the transformation of African societies as a consequence of the four centuries of trans-Atlantic slave trading.

The consequences of the slave trade for African intertribal and interstate relations have often been discussed in terms of whether wars in the normal course of African affairs readily provided the Europeans with slaves, or whether those wars were not themselves set in motion by the Atlantic slave trade. The fact is that both these interpretations have some truth in them. There were instances when European ships obtained slaves as an incidental by-product of wars fought by the Africans, particularly during the early years of the slave trade. There were occasions when the outbreak of hostilities could be attributed to nothing but the presence of slavebuying Europeans and the lure of European manufactures. In general, however, it seems clear that the prospects of profit from the slave trade became so attractive that old rivalries were either revived or smoothed over, according to which was the most profitable.

By the height of the Atlantic slave trade in the eighteenth century the procurement of captives for sale had become the principal motivation for an endless succession of intergroup conflicts on the West African coast. Occasionally the pattern of political power in an area was decisively affected by the influence of the slave trade. The kingdom of Kongo-Angola is the classic example of a West African state whose structure and coherence were destroyed by the intensity of the slave trade as pursued by the Portuguese and their local mulatto mercenaries. The Yoruba political federation also disintegrated in the face of slave raiding by its African neighbors. On the other hand, states like Dahomey, Asante and the Futa Djalon increased their power while acting as agents of the Atlantic slave trade. In this way, then, the slave trade influenced different areas in different ways.

It is equally important to assess the manner in which slave raiding affected people at different social levels within the hierarchical society of West Africa. For the vast majority it brought insecurity and fear, whether or not they were lucky enough to escape sale into slavery, because the slave trade meant violence in the form of skirmishes, ambushes and kidnapping--often carried out by professional man-hunters, under the supervision of the ruling elites. This atmosphere of fear caused people to flee from their villages into the bush or remove their homes to places which were difficult to get to and agriculturally inhospitable....

But there was one section of the African community which was, to a large extent, immune from the perils of the slave trade. This was the ruling class. For many members of the ruling class were engaged in a partnership of exploitation with the Europeans and, by a variety of devices, they protected themselves from being captured, sold to the slavers and exported. Furthermore the ruling class took advantage of their legal authority to classify people as 'criminals' and have them sold. For instance it was easy enough to bring trumped-up charges of adultery against perfectly innocent people. Not only had the ruling classes ceased to administer the customary law in a spirit of justice, but the law itself became thoroughly debased. Reports on West African penal codes in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries show that there was a system of mild penalties, usually involving the payment of damages to the aggrieved party. And yet in the period of the Atlantic slave trade a punishment as drastic as sale into slavery was introduced for a larger and larger number of offenses, descending right down to the most trivial....

However, the African allies of the Europeans in any given society were not necessarily the same throughout the period of the Atlantic slave trade. This was because the traditional ruling

classes did not always escape the upheavals which they themselves had set in motion. Possibly because they were not sufficiently ruthless, and certainly because they were not commercially equipped to meet the requirements of the slave ships, many of the old ruling groups found themselves replaced. And they were replaced by a new class of men who owed their strength to the skill and devotion with which they served the capitalist system...

Source: Roland Oliver, ed., The Middle Age of African History, (New York, 1967), pp. 36-38.

AFRICANS AND EUROPEANS ON THE GOLD COAST

The rise of mulatto slave trading communities along the Gold Coast is described below by Christopher Fyfe.

Portuguese seeking a sea-route to the gold mines reached the coast in the 1480s. The rulers of the coastal Fanti (one of the Akan peoples) let them build a trading post which became known as Elmina. Other Europeans followed to buy gold--also slaves for the transatlantic market. They fortified their trading posts with thick walls in the style of the castles of medieval Europe. But these forts were not colonies..... The European occupiers had to pay rent to African owners who retained sovereignty. At regular intervals the African landlord presented a "note" to the white tenant who paid him the rent due. During the course of wars or power struggles between African rulers the notes might pass from one landlord to another--but whoever held the note was entitled to receive the rent.

The Europeans fought their little wars and captured the forts from one another. By the late eighteenth century only three groups were left--British, Danish, and Dutch. As the forts were not colonies they did not need to be clustered together in coherent areas. Each was sited where trade was best, jostling the neighboring forts if need be. At Accra, for instance, British, Danish, and Dutch forts adjoined one another.

Though the Fanti and Ga usually sited their political capitals inland, away from direct European influence, trade towns grew up round the forts, where African traders congregated to do business with the Europeans. Each depended on the other for their trading commodities--the Africans receiving imported manufactures, the Europeans receiving slaves and gold. As a literate Fanti who visited England in the early eighteenth century put it, "the English live by us, and we by them." It was therefore in the interests of both to be closely associated, not only by friendship but by kinship. Many Europeans married African wives. Even if they had white wives at home, these marriages were valid by the laws of the polygamous country they lived in. In this way they established close trading ties with their wives' families.

As the Europeans became partly Africanized, the Africans became partly Europeanized. Some Africans even became highly Europeanized, like William Amo who was taken to Germany as a boy, studied European philosophy, and eventually taught it at several German universities. At Cape Coast Castle, the main British fort, the Reverend Philip Quaque, a Fanti educated in England, officiated as chaplain from 1776 to 1816 and kept a school for Eurafrican and African children. There were similar schools in the Danish and Dutch forts. Those who had received a European-style education and were equipped with the advantages of literacy, could find employment as clerks or business agents. They formed a small elite, proud of their skills, and conscious of what they considered their social as well as educational prestige. Sometimes their pretensions brought them into conflict with the Fanti or Ga governments. Nevertheless, they remained part of Fanti or Ga society. Even the children of Europeans, in these matrilineal societies, usually identified with the families of their African mothers.

Source: Christopher Fyfe, Africanus Horton: 1835-1883. West African Scientist and Patriot (New York, 1972), 14-15.

THE *SIGNARES* OF SENEGAL

One consequence of the four centuries of slave trading along the West African coast was the emergence of a mulatto trading elite. These Euro-Africans emerged from their middleman position in the slave trade to dominate legitimate commerce until well into the 20th Century. In the account below historian George Brooks describes their impact on Saint Louis and Goree, the leading commercial cities of Senegal.

On the eve of the French Revolution the population of Saint Louis was estimated to be more than 6,000 including 2,400 mulattos and *Negres libres*, about the same number of *captifs de case* (domestic slaves), approximately 600 French soldiers, government and company officials [Compagnie nouvelle du Senegal, the monopoly trading company chartered by the French Crown], and perhaps 60 permanent white residents. In addition, there were, on average, a thousand slaves in transit held in the fort and the cellars of houses on the island. Altogether it was no inconsiderable population for an island a mile-and-a-half long and an eight-of-a-mile wide. The *captifs de case* were employed as house servants and as various skilled and unskilled workers, such as longshoremen, sailors, carpenters, blacksmiths, and boat builders. As a rule they were well-treated members of large households, and custom exacted that they might not be sold into overseas slavery except as punishment for crime or grave misbehavior. The large mulatto population derived from Portuguese, French, and English antecedents; much of the Senegal River trade was in their hands, and they resented the company's exclusive monopoly of direct trade with France.

The social importance of the mulatto and free African element in Senegal is attested to by the fact that from 1778 onwards the governor of the colony named a salaried mayor from among their number. The mulatto women, or *signares*, were an element to be reckoned with in their own right. As the mistresses, occasionally the wives, of the resident French traders, military officers, and company employees, they missed few opportunities to further their own interests and those of their families and exercised no small influence in the Saint Louis and Goree communities. Many of them owned large numbers of *captifs de case* and engaged in the slave trade--even though it was specially forbidden them by company regulations--as well as other commerce. Their most obvious attribute was their commanding beauty, enhanced by expensive jewelry, rich attire, and all the feminine artifices known to both civilizations. The striking turbans which distinguished signares were constructed of as many as nine silk handkerchiefs, and their graceful bearing was admired (though their "insolence" was not) even by European women who visited West Africa. *Signares* were irresistible to European men, and the ungovernable passions they aroused is reputed to have ruined many careers. On viewing surviving portraits of these women, one historian judiciously concluded that such a fate was perhaps worth the price.

Source: George E. Brooks, Yankee Traders, Old Coasters and African Middlemen: A History of American Legitimate Trade with West Africa in the 19th Century, (Boston, 1970), pp. 33-34.

THE SLAVE TRADE OVER FOUR CENTURIES

Century	*Major Slaving Country*	*Major Sources*	*Major Destinations*
16th Century:	Portugal	Upper Guinea Coast	Hispaniola
		Benin	Cuba
		Angola	The Spanish Main
			Portuguese Brazil
			Peru
17th Century:	Portugal	Gold Coast	Brazil
	Holland	Kongo	The Spanish Main
	Great Britain	Angola	Jamaica
	France	Upper Guinea Coast	Haiti
			Mexico
			Virginia
			/The Carolinas
			Peru
			Cuba
18th Century:	Great Britain	Gold Coast	Jamaica
	Portugal	The Slave Coast	Virginia
			/The Carolinas
	France	Dahomey	Maryland/Georgia
	Holland	The Niger Delta	Brazil
			Angola
			Haiti
19th Century:	Portugal	Niger Delta	Brazil
	Brazil	Angola	Brazil
	United States	Mozambique	United States
	(Illegal trade)		/Cuba

Estimated Number of Slaves Arriving in the New World

16th Century	275,000
17th Century	1,382,000
18th Century	6,250,000
19th Century	1,898,000

Destination of Slaves, 1526-1810:

Brazil	3,647,000
British Caribbean	1,665,000
French Caribbean	1,600,000
Spanish America	1,552,000
Dutch America	500,000
British North America	399,000
Europe	175,000

Danish West Indies	28,000

Sources: Robert Fogel and Stanley Engerman, Time on the Cross, (Boston, 1974), pp. 15-17; Stephen Thernstrom, A History of the American People, vol. I (New York, 1989) p. 73.

THE SLAVE TRADE IN PERSPECTIVE

In the account below Gary Nash provides a brief global perspective of the dimensions of the slave trade.

For the Europeans the slave trade itself became an immensely profitable enterprise. In the several centuries of intensive slave trading that followed the establishment of New World sugar plantations, European nations warred constantly for trading advantages on the West African coast. The coastal forts, the focal points of the trade, became key strategic targets in the successive wars of empire. The great Portuguese slaving fort at Elmina on the Gold Coast, begun in 1481, was captured more than a century and a half later by the Dutch. The primary fort on the Guinea Coast, started by the Swedes, passed through the hands of the Danes, the English, and the Dutch between 1652 and 1664. Obtaining rights to the slave trade on the African coast and obtaining monopolies for supplying European plantations in the New World with their annual quotas of slaves became a major issue of European diplomacy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It was the Dutch who were the primary victors in the seventeenth century battle for the West AFrican slave coast: for most of the century the majority of slaves who were being fed into the expanding New World markets found themselves crossing the Atlantic in Dutch ships.

Not until the last third of the seventeenth century were the English of any importance in the slave trade or in the demand for slaves in their North American colonies. English attempts to break into the profitable trade began in a serious way only in 1603, when Charles II, recently restored to the English throne, granted a charter to the Royal Adventurers to Africa, a joint-stock company headed by the king's brother, the Duke of York. Superseded by the Royal African Company in 1672, these companies enjoyed the exclusive right to carry slaves to England's overseas plantations. For thirty-four years after 1663 each of the slaves they brought across the Atlantic bore the brand "DY" for the Duke of York, who himself became king in 1685. In 1698 the Royal African Company had been exporting about five to six thousand slaves annually. In the first decade of free trade the annual average rose above twenty thousand. For the remainder of the eighteenth century English involvement in the trade increased until by the 1790s England had become the foremost slave trading nation in Europe.

Gary B. Nash, Red, White and Black: The Peoples of Early America (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1974), pp. 161-162.

THE SLAVE TRADE: A PARTICIPANT'S ACCOUNT

An Eighteenth Century English Captain provides a detailed description of the work of "slaving" along the West African Coast and in the process reveals much of the thinking of the slavers.

We mark'd the slaves we had bought in the breast, or shoulder, with a hot iron, having the letter of the ship's name on it, the place being before anointed with a little palm oil, which caus'd but little pain, the mark being usually well in four or five days, appearing very plain and white after.

When we had purchas'd to the number of 50 or 60 we would send them aboard, there being a cappasheir, intitled the captain of the slaves, whose care it was to secure them to the water-side, and see them all off; and if in carrying to the marine any were lost, he was bound to make them good, to us, the captain of the trunk being oblig'd to do the like, if any ran away while under his care, for after we buy them we give him charge of them till the captain of the slaves comes to carry them away....

The negroes are so wilful and loth to leave their own country, that they have often leap'd out of the canoes, boat and ship, into the sea, and kept under water till they were drowned, to avoid being taken up and saved by our boats, which pursued them; they having a more dreadful apprehension of Barbados then we can have of hell, tho' in reality they live much better there than in their own country; but home is home, etc: we have likewise seen divers of them eaten by the sharks, of which a prodigious number kept about the ships in this place, and I have been told will follow her hence to Barbados, for the dead negroes that are thrown over-board in the passage. I am certain in our voyage there we did not want the sight of some every day, but that they were the same I can't affirm.

We had about 12 negroes did wilfully drown themselves, and others starv'd themselves to death; for 'tis their belief that when they die they return home to their own country and friends again.

I have been inform'd that some commanders have cut off the legs and arms of the most wilful, to terrify the rest, for they believe if they lose a member, they cannot return home again: I was advis'd by some of my officers to do the same, but I could not be persuaded to entertain the least thought of it, much less put in practice such barbarity and cruelty to poor creatures, who, excepting their want of christianity and true religion (their misfortune more than fault) are as much the works of God's hands, and no doubt as dear to him as ourselves; nor can I imagine why they should be despis'd for their color, being what they cannot help, and the effect of the climate it has pleas'd God to appoint them. I can't think there is any intrinsick value in one color more than another, nor that white is better than black, only we think so because we are so, and are prone to judge favorably in our own case, as well as the blacks, who in odium of the color, say, the devil is white, and so paint him....

The present king often, when ships are in a great strait for slaves, and cannot be supply'd otherwise, will sell 3 or 400 of his wives to compleat their number, but we always pay dearer for his slaves than those bought of the cappasheirs....

Source: Thomas A. Bailey and David M. Kennedy, The American Spirit, Vol. I, (Lexington: Mass., 1984), pp. 60-61.

THE SLAVE TRADE: OLAUDAH EQUIANO REMEMBERS

Olaudah Equiano, a slave captured in the 18th Century from the Kingdom of Benin in what is now Nigeria provides one of the few eyewitness accounts of the experiences of captive people brought from Africa to North America. The passage below details his capture and journey to the coast of Africa.

One day, when all our people were gone out to their works....and only I and my dear sister were left to mind the house, two men and a woman got over our walls, and in a moment seized us both; and without giving us time to cry out, or to make our resistance, they stopped our mouths, and ran off with us into the nearest wood. Here they tied our hands and continued to carry us as far as they could, till night came on, when we reached a small house, were the robbers halted for refreshment, and spent the night.... The next day proved of greater sorrow....for my sister and I were separated. At length, after many days traveling, during which I had often changed masters, I got into the hands of a chieftain, in a very pleasant country. This man had two wives and some children, and they all used me extremely well. [Once] I ran into a thicket and hid myself in the bushes.... The neighbors continued the whole day looking for me, and several times many of them came within a few yards of the place where I lay hid.... Night began to approach, and aggravated all my fears... I heard frequent rustlings among the leaves; and being pretty sure they were snakes, I expected every instant to be stung by them. This increased my anguish..... I quitted the thicket, very faint and hungry...and crept to my master's kitchen.

I was again sold, and carried through a number of places till I came to a town called Timnah, in the most beautiful country I had yet seen in Africa.... Here I first saw and tasted coconuts. Here I also saw and tasted for the first time sugarcane....

All the nations and people I had hitherto passed through resembled our own in their manners, customs, and language; but I came at length to a country, the inhabitants of which differed from us in all those particulars.... They cooked in iron pots, and had European cutlasses and cross bows, which were unknown to us, and fought with their fists among themselves. Their women were not so modest as ours, for they eat, and drank, and slept with their men.... At last I came to the banks of a large river, which was covered with canoes, in which the people appeared to live with their household utensils and provisions of all kinds. I had never see any water larger than a pond or a rivulet; and my surprise was mingled with no small fear, when I was put into one of these canoes, and we began to paddle and move along the river. We continued going on this till night; and, when we came to land, and made fires on the banks, each family by themselves....made tents, some in the shape of little houses; In these we slept and after the morning meal, we embarked again, and proceeded as before. I was....astonished to see some of the women, as well as the men, jump into the water, dive to the bottom, come up again, and swim about. Thus I continued to travel, sometimes by land, sometimes by water, through different countries, till, at the end of six or seven months after I had been kidnapped I arrived at the seacoast.

Source: The Interesting Narrative of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vasa, the African, (2 vols., London, 1789) reprinted in Philip Curtain, ed., Africa Remembered, (Madison, 1967), pp. 70-84.

OLAUDAH EQUIANO DESCRIBES THE MIDDLE PASSAGE

In the account below Olaudah Equiano gives us a vivid description of his voyage across the Atlantic in a 18th Century slave ship.

The first object which saluted my eyes when I arrived on the coast was the sea, and a slave ship which was then riding at anchor and waiting for its cargo. These filled me with astonishment, which was soon converted into terror when I was carried on board. I was immediately handled and tossed up to see if I were sound by some of the crew, and I was now persuaded that I had gotten into a world of bad spirits and that they were going to kill me. Their complexions differing so much from ours, their long hair and the language they spoke (which was very different from any I had ever heard) united to confirm me in this belief. Indeed such were the horrors of my views and fears at the moment that, if ten thousand worlds had been my own, I would have freely parted with them all to have exchanged my condition with that of the meanest slave in my own country.

When I looked round the ship and saw a large furnace or copper boiling and a multitude of black people of every description chained together, every one of their countenances expressing dejection and sorrow, I no longer doubted my fate; and quite overpowered with horror and anguish, I fell motionless on the deck and fainted.... I was soon put down under the decks, and there I received such a salutation in my nostrils....with the loathsomeness of the stench, I became so sick that I was not able to eat. I now wished for ....death to relieve me. Two white men offered me eatables and, on my refusing to eat, one of them held me by the hand and tied my feet while the other flogged me severely.... I found some of my own nation [and] inquired of them what was to be done with us? We were to be carried to these white people's country to work for them.

Every circumstance served only to heighten my....opinion of the cruelty of the whites. One day they had taken fishes; and when they had satisfied themselves with an many as they thought fit...rather than give any of them to us to eat...they tossed the remaining fish into the sea again. [Once] when we had a smooth sea and moderate wind, two of my wearied countrymen who were chained together, preferring death to a life of misery somehow made through the [deck] netting and jumped into the sea; immediately another fellow followed their example; and I believe many more would very soon have done the same, if they had not been prevented by the ship's crew. Two of the wretches were drowned, but they got the other and afterwards flogged him unmercifully for attempting to prefer death to slavery.

At last, we came in sight of the island of Barbados, at which the whites on board gave a great shout.... As the vessel drew nearer, we plainly saw the harbour, and other ships of different kinds and sizes. Many merchants and planters now came on board, though it was in the evening. They put us in separate parcels and examined us attentively. We were not many days in the merchant's custody before we were sold in the usual manner; the buyers rush at once into the yard where the slaves are confined, and make choice of that parcel they like best.

Source: The Interesting Narrative of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vasa, the African, (2 vols., London, 1789) reprinted in Philip Curtain, ed., Africa Remembered, (Madison, 1967), pp. 85-98.

AMERICAN SHIPS AND THE ILLEGAL SLAVE TRADE

After 1833 the announced intention of Great Britain to stop and board any slave ship on the high seas and liberate its cargo, and slave importation ban of the Constitution of the United States, which took effect in 1807, had combined to make American participation in the slave trade both illegal and exceedingly dangerous. Nevertheless some American ship captains resorted to various subterfuges to continue to support the trade. Their actions are depicted below by George Brooks.

Slavers derived enormous benefits from the protection afforded their vessels by the use of the Stars and Stripes, almost with impunity. American colors served as their chief disguise and shield from the 1830s onward, inasmuch as Britain had by then secured reciprocal search treaties from every other maritime power conducting commerce in West Africa (including France for the years 1833-1841). Slave traders were doubly served; for the United States' intransigence in denying British warships the privilege to stop vessels flying the Stars and Stripes was coupled with its unwillingness to keep a naval force in West Africa sufficient to prevent the American flag from serving as the refuge of slavers and brigands.

An American naval officer commented: "Everything was reduced to a regular mercantile system in carrying on the slave trade. We have the schooner *Hugh Boyle*, from New York, with a crew of nine American citizens, coming to the coast, and having as passengers a crew of ten 'citizens of the world,' or from somewhere else. She is American, with an American crew and papers, until she gets her slaves on board, then her American citizens become passengers, and the 'citizens of the world' take their place as the crew, till she gets her slaves into Cuba." Permutations of these subterfuges were devised to suit varied circumstances.

Confronted by an ever-worsening situation, the British Navy retaliated by seeking to extend existing jurisdictions and practices. Officers boarded suspicious vessels flying the American flag to examine their papers so as to determine their true identity and business on the coast. British spokesmen attempted to downplay the new procedures as merely "visits," not a practice of the right of search long denied by the United States. However, interested parties in the United States aroused American public opinion to protest strenuously against British pretensions. The jingoistic howls of the popular press exacerbated already-strained relations between the two countries. There were mob scenes in Boston in 1840 when a British prize crew returned the Salem brig *Tigris* to the United States for trial as a suspected slaver. The court ruled that there was insufficient evidence for condemnation. The owners, Robert Brookhouse, Jr. and William Hunt, instituted a lawsuit to collect damages from the losses entailed in having their vessel detained in an unlawful manner. The issue of the right of search was one of the principal issues in dispute in the famous Webster-Ashburton negotiations. The treaty resulting in 1842 resolved on a compromise formula. The United States maintained its opposition to the right of search, but it agreed to send a squadron of eighty guns to the coast to undertake joint-cruising with the British Navy, so that suspected vessels flying the Stars and Stripes could be boarded and investigated by American naval officers. Implementation of the agreement was another matter.

The American contribution to suppressing the slave trade was a bitter disappointment to the hopes of the antislavery forces. The Secretary of the Navy in 1843, Abel B. Upshur, a Southerner.... proclaimed the African Squadron's paramount goal to be the protection of American commerce and abjured Commodore Matthew Perry, the squadron's commander, not to inflict upon American citizens "injurious and vexatious interruptions" in the prosecution of

lawful pursuits. The same order of priorities was maintained by his successors. Perry's command lasted two years; during that period the squadron captured only one suspected slaver, which was afterwards freed by the New Orleans court to which it was returned for adjudication. The squadron never had more than five vessels assigned to it until 1859 and.... few of the vessels had first-class sailors, or were suited to the task assigned.

Source: George E. Brooks, Yankee Traders, Old Coasters and African Middlemen: A History of American Legitimate Trade with West Africa in the 19th Century, (Boston, 1970), pp. 116-118.

OMAR IBN SEID: FROM SENEGAL TO NORTH CAROLINA

The autobiography of Omar ibn Seid, a North Carolina slave in 1831, undermines the slaveholders often repeated argument that African slaves had no knowledge of civilization before being brought to the New World. Seid, a member of the Fula nation in what is now Senegal was born in 1770 and raised as a Muslim. After being educated in Arabic and mathematics by his uncle, he became a merchant dealing primarily in cotton cloth. Captured and sold into slavery in South Carolina, he escaped and was later arrested in Fayetteville, North Carolina in 1831. While in jail he began writing on the walls of his cell in Arabic which brought him to the attention of General James Owen who purchased him. Unlike Equiano, ibn Seid never gained his freedom, and eventually converted to Christianity. But before his conversion he wrote his autobiography in Arabic. Part of it is reprinted below.

In the name of God, the merciful, the gracious. --God grant his blessing upon our Prophet Mohammed. Blessed be He in whose hands is the kingdom and who is Almighty; who created death and life that he might test you; for he is exalted; he is the forgiver (of sins), who created seven heavens one above the other.... You asked me to write my life. I am not able to do this because I have much forgotten my own, as well as the Arabic language. Neither can I write very grammatically or according to the true idiom. And so, my brother, I beg you, in God's name, not to blame me, for I am a man of weak eyes, and of a weak body.

My name is Omar ibn Seid. My birthplace was Fut Tur, between the two rivers. I sought knowledge under the instruction of a Sheikh called Mohammed Seid, my own brother, and Sheikh Soleiman Kembeh, and Sheikh Gabriel Abdal. I continued my studies twenty-five years, and then returned to my home where I remained six years. Then there came to our place a large army, who killed many men, and took me, and brought me to the great sea, and sold me into the hands of the Christians, who bound me and sent me on board a great ship and we sailed upon the great sea a month and a half, where we came to a place called Charleston in the Christian language. There they sold me to a small, weak, and wicked man, called Johnson, a complete infidel, who had not fear of God at all. Now I am a small man, and unable to do hard work so I fled from the hand of Johnson and after a month came to a place called Fayd-il [Fayetteville] There I saw some great houses (churches). On the new moon I went into a church to pray. A lad saw me and rode off to the place of his father and informed him that he had seen a black man in the church. A man named Handah (Hunter?) and another man with him on horseback, came attended by a troop of dogs. They took me and made me go with them twelve miles to a place called Fayd-il, where they put me into a great house from which I could not go out. I continued in the great house (which in the Christian language, they called *jail*) sixteen days and nights. One Friday the jailor came and opened the door of the house and I saw a great many men, all Christians, some of whom called out to me, "What is your name? Is it Omar or Seid?" I did not understand their Christian language. A man called Bob Mumford took me and led me out of the jail, and I was very well pleased to go with them to their place. I stayed at Mumford's four days and nights, and then a man named Jim Owen, son-in-law of Mumford....asked me if I was willing to got to a place called Bladen. I said, Yes, I was willing. We went with them and have remained in the place of Jim Owen until now...

Before I came to the Christian country, my religion was the religion of "Mohammed, the Apostle of God--may God have mercy upon him and give him peace." I walked to the mosque before day-break, washed my face and head and hands and feet. I prayed at noon, prayed in the

afternoon, prayed at sunset, prayed in the evening. I gave alms every year, gold, silver, seeds, cattle, sheep, goats, rice, wheat, and barley. I gave tithes of all the above-named things. I went every year to the holy war against the infidels. I went on pilgrimage to Mecca, as all did who were able. My father had six sons and five daughters, and my mother had three sons and one daughter. When I left my country I was thirty-seven years old; I have been in the country of the Christians twenty-four years.

Source: "Autobiography of Omar ibn Seid, Slave in North Carolina, 1831," American Historical Review, 30(July 1925):791-95.

A DEFENSE OF THE AFRICAN SLAVE TRADE

Today few individuals attempt a justification of the African slave trade but during the height of the trade in the 17th and 18th Centuries many Europeans claimed it was a positive force which introduced Africans to Christianity and civilization. In July 1740 Mercator Honestus (a pseudonym) made such an argument in London Magazine and publication for English Merchants and Traders.

....The Inhabitants of Guinea are indeed in a most deplorable State of Slavery, under the arbitrary Powers of their Princes both as to Life and Property. In the several Subordinations to them, every great Man is absolute lord of his immediate Dependents. And lower still; every Master of a Family is Proprietor of his Wives, Children, and Servants; and may at his Pleasure consign them to Death, or a better Market. No doubt such a State is contrary to Nature and Reason, since every human Creature hath an absolute Right to Liberty. But are not all arbitrary Governments, as well in Europe, as Africa, equally repugnant to that great Law of Nature? And yet it is not in our power to cure the universal Evil, and set all the Kingdoms of the Earth free from the Domination of Tyrants, whose long Possession, supported by standing Armies, and flagitious Ministers, renders the Thraldom without Remedy, while the People under it are by Custom satisfied with, or at least quiet under Bondage.

All that can be done in such a Case is, to communicate as much Liberty, and Happiness, as such circumstances will admit, and the People will consent to: And this is certainly by the Guinea Trade. For, by purchasing, or rather ransoming the Negroes from their National Tyrants, and transplanting them under the benign Influences of the Law, and Gospel, they are advanced to much greater Degrees of Felicity, tho' not to absolute Liberty.

Source: Mercator Honestus, "A Defense of the African Slave Trade, 1740," London Magazine, 9 (1740) in Elizabeth Donnan, Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America, (Washington, D.C.: 1930).

AFRICANS IN BOLIVIA, 1992

The African diaspora, the unintended consequence of four hundred years of the trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, is often imperfectly understood. Most Americans know that the 30 million African Americans in the United States today are a product of the forced removal of millions of Africans to North America. We often forget or do not know that far more Africans were transported throughout Latin America. The following brief article which describes the efforts of Afro-Bolivians to organize themselves, serves as a reminder of the extent of the diaspora and is a contemporary manifestation of the consequence of the slave trade.

Fifty representatives of 21 black communities in Bolivia have met in the town of Chulumani, in southern Yungas province, to discuss the importance of upholding black customs and culture. Yungas province, which is about 130 kilometers north-east of La Paz, has the principal black settlements in the country. This is the first conference of black people's representatives in Bolivia since their ancestors were brought to the country as slaves by the Spaniards 400 years ago. The slaves had come from Senegal, in West Africa, and the purpose of the forced migration was to help cultivate the coca plantations. But before arriving in Yungas Province they had passed from Potosi, in the southern part of Bolivia, where they were put to work in the mines and were later involved in the minting of coins. But the Senegalese blacks though accustomed to high temperatures, were unable to withstand the rigors of the 4,000-meter altitude where the Potosi mines were located. So they were transferred to the subtropical plantations of Yungas.

In 1952 when the Bolivian agrarian reform programme went into effect, the blacks became the owners of the lands on which they lived and had worked for generations. They are now concentrated in a series of communities of Yungas Province--about 5,000 people all told, close to areas colonized by the Aymara and Quechua Indians.

Prudencio Garcia, leader of the Yungas Province blacks, said that one of the cultural expressions associated with the Bolivian negroes was the rhythm of the "saya" music, form which such other popular rhythms as the "caporales," "morenada" and the latest "lambada" were born. But special music is not the only cultural expression flowing from Bolivia's black communities.

In April of this year Bolivia's black people celebrated the coronation of a black royal family that had been transported here from Senegal together with thousands of other negroes. Julio Pinedo Bonifacio is the latest king of the Bolivian blacks. Though he has no political powers over his brothers of the same race, his mere presence here converts him into a cultural point of reference from the land from which his ancestors came.

Bolivia's black communities do not feel they are adequately represented in the country's administration. For this reason, the Chicaloma black community decided to boycott the candidates presented in the last elections.

The present conference of Bolivian black communities was organized by negro leaders Prudencio Garcia and Lido Clavijo. The conference is supported by local church groups.

Source: "Bolivia: Black Communities Begin to Organize," Subtext: The International News Monthly 3:19 (November 1992):2.

CHAPTER TWO:

The Evolution of Black Society

CHAPTER TWO: The Evolution of Black Society

Almost from their very arrival in the New World Africans were confronted with the reality of a different culture, one which they were completely unfamiliar, and more significantly, one they could not possibly control. They were also face with the daunting task of forging common cultural bonds from their myriad backgrounds of origin. These two challenges, accepting relevant and crucial segments of the "dominant" culture and integrating their own cultural traditions, became the basis for the fashioning of African American society.

Color Consciousness in 16th Century England *describes the origins of European origins of thinking on racial difference. The vignettes,* ***Estevan and the Discovery of the U.S. Southwest****,* ***Isabel De Olvera Arrives in New Mexico****,* ***Marriage in Colonial New Mexico: The Rodriguez Saga****, and* ***The Founding of Los Angeles****, remind us of the presence of Spanish Speaking blacks in the U.S. nearly a century before the first Africans reach Virginia. In* ***Blacks in British North America: The First Arrivals, 1619****, we see the cautious attempt to carve a place for the first African arrivals who were not slaves but who did not have the status of white indentured servants. The vignette,* ***Africans Become African Americans*** *describes the blending of various African cultures into an African American culture. The vignette,* ***African vs. Indian Slavery*** *provides an explanation of the varied "advantages" of enslavement of black rather than red people, but the subsequent passage,* ***Indians and Blacks in the Colonial Southeast*** *describes the support both Indians and blacks provided each other against a background of slavery and war.* ***Of Captains and Kings: Slavery in Colonial New York****, describes the growth of the institution in a Northern colony. The pattern of race-inspired legislation in the 18th Century clearly reflects the declining status of all blacks slave and free, and of Indian people. That pattern is seen in the vignettes,* ***Black Slaves and White Servants in Virginia (1705)*** *and* ***Eighteenth Century Black Slave Codes*** *which describe the growing social separation between white and black indentured servants and the evolving pattern of discrimination against all non-whites. In contrast the Quakers become the earliest group to challenge the evolving labor system as seen in* ***A Quaker Resolution Against Slavery, 1652****.*

The vignette, ***Jefferson's Notes on Indians and Blacks*** *is not about slavery but instead explains the rapid spread of the idea of black racial inferiority which served to justify the enslavement of Africans. The transformation of Africans into African-Americans is described in three vignettes,* ***Black Families in Colonial America****,* ***The Family of Ann Joice****, and* ***The Silver Bluff Baptist Church, 1773****.* ***Silver Bluff Baptist Church in the 1990s*** *shows the ongoing legacy of the first black church in North America. Finally,* ***African Slaves and the Development of Rice Cultivation*** *shows the Old-World skills Africans put to use in the interest of evolving New World economies while* ***The Debate Over the Black Mind*** *shows the growing conflict between anti-slavery advocates and slavery's proponents.* ***Bones of the Dead*** *describes the archaeological activities in New York City designed to recover the past of African Americans.*

Terms For Week Two:

Estevan

Isabel de Olvera

urban creoles

Anthony Johnson

indentured servants

"descent into slavery"

Bacon's Rebellion

low country

Negro Election Day

Phyllis/Fillis

"fictive kin"

James Derham

Thomas Fuller

Ann Joice

Silver Bluff Baptist Church

COLOR CONSCIOUSNESS IN 16TH CENTURY ENGLAND

In the account below historian Winthrop Jordan describes the impact 16th Century English ideas about race and color and suggests these views became the source of the racism of 17th Century English settlers toward Africans whom they eventually enslaved.

The most arresting characteristic of the newly discovered African was his color. Travelers rarely failed to comment upon it indeed when describing Negroes they frequently began with complexion and then moved on to dress (or rather lack of it) and manners... Englishmen actually described Negroes as black-an exaggerated term which in itself suggests that the Negro's complexion had powerful impact upon their perceptions. Even the peoples of northern Africa seemed so dark that Englishmen tended to call them "black" and let further refinements go by the board.... During the seventeenth century the distinction became more firmly established and writers came to stress the difference in color, partly because they delighted in correcting their predecessors and partly because Negroes were being taken up as slaves and Moors, increasingly, were not. In the more detailed and accurate reports about West Africa of the seventeenth century, moreover, Negroes in different regions were described as varying considerably in complexion. In England, however, the initial impression of Negroes was not appreciably modified: the firmest fact about the Negro, was that he was "black."

In England perhaps more than in southern Europe, the concept of blackness was loaded with intense meaning.... No other color except white conveyed so much emotional impact. As described by the Oxford English Dictionary, the meaning of black before the sixteenth century included, "Deeply stained with dirt; soiled, dirty, foul...Having dark or deadly purposes, malignant; pertaining to or involving death, deadly, baneful, disastrous, sinister....Foul, iniquitous, atrocious, horrible, wicked...Indicating disgrace, censure, liability to punishment, etc." Black was an emotionally partisan color, the handmaid and symbol of baseness and evil, a sign of danger and repulsion.

Embedded in the concept of blackness was its direct opposite--whiteness. White and black connoted purity and filthiness, virginity and sin, virtue and baseness, beauty and ugliness, beneficence and evil, God and the devil. Whiteness, moreover, carried a special significance for Elizabethan Englishmen: it was....the color of perfect human beauty, especially female beauty. This ideal was already centuries old in Elizabeth's time, and their fair Queen was its very embodiment: her cheeks were "roses in a bed of lilies." By contrast, the Negro was ugly, by reason of his color and also his "horrid Curles" and "disfigured" lips and nose. As Shakespeare wrote apologetically of his black mistress.

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;
Coral is far more red than her lips' red:
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;
If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.
I have seen roses damask'd, red and white,
But no such roses see I in her cheeks.

Source: Winthrop Jordan, White Over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550-1815 (Chapel Hill, 1968), pp. 3-9, 24-28.

ESTEVAN AND THE "DISCOVERY" OF THE U.S. SOUTHWEST

The following vignette is a brief synopsis of the travels of Estevan, the African-born slave whose exploits helped establish the Spanish claim to what is now the southwestern section of the United States. Estevan is recognized by historians as the first person of African ancestry to reach what is now the United States.

The history of African Americans in the West began with Nature's violence followed by a remarkable saga of courage, perseverance, survival, and adaptation. In November 1528, a storm in the Gulf of Mexico washed ashore on the Texas coast two small boats that were the only remnants of the ill-fated expedition of Spanish Conquistador Painfilo de Narvaez from Havana, Cuba, to the North American Mainland. Among the survivors was Estevan, a black slave of another survivor, Captain Andres Dorantes de Carranza. Estevan was the first African to land in what would become Texas and the western United States.

The fateful voyage which placed Estevan in the course of African American and western history began in Cuba in April, 1528. The Narvaez Expedition of five ships and four hundred adventurers set out from Havana to explore the North American mainland. On May 1 Narvaez arrived at Tampa Bay, abandoned his ships, and with two hundred and sixty men, set out into the interior. For fifteen days native peoples warily watched this strange procession of breastplated soldiers, black-robed priests, and one servant, Estevan, march north under brightly colored plumes and banners. Then in mid-May the Timuquan Indians attacked the party at the Withlacoochee River. Although the attackers were driven off, the expedition captured several Indians who described to Narvaez a province called Apalachen which contained a city of gold. Envisioning riches and fame comparable to Cortes following his conquest of the Valley of Mexico a decade earlier, the adventurers pressed on until they reached Apalachen (near what is now Tallahassee), which proved not to be a village of forty thatched huts rather than a city of gold. The Apalachees attacked the invaders and drove them south toward the Gulf of Mexico until the party's survivors reached St. Marks Bay. Fearing being stranded, the wounded Narvaez ordered the construction of five crude barges. Then, mistakenly believing they were closer to Mexico than to Cuba, they headed west rather than south. By early November three of the five boats, including Narvaez's. were lost in storms off the Texas coast. One storm deposited the survivors on a sandbar near what is now Galveston, which they named the *Island of Ill Fate.*

Sixteen members of the party survived the winter, and in April 1529, moved onto the mainland where they were captured and enslaved for the next five years by the Capoques Indians. In September 1534, the remaining four, Estevan, Dorantes, Alonzo Castillo Maldonado, and Alvar Nunez Cabeza de Vaca, escaped from the coastal Indians and fled into the interior where friendlier Native Americans accepted them as medicine men. Because of his ability to "talk fluently with his hands in the language of the signs," Estevan became the group interpreter, acting as an emissary and diplomat with the native people. Accompanied by a party of Texas Indians, the disoriented survivors traveled southwest believing they could reach Spanish settlements in Mexico. They crossed the Rio Grande and then, with the guidance of Shuman Apaches, straggled across Chihuahua and Sonora until they finally encountered Culican, the northernmost Spanish settlement on Mexico's Pacific slope, in March 1536, ending their eight year, fifteen thousand mile ordeal....

The four survivors were brought to Mexico City where they had audiences with the Viceroy of New Spain, Don Antonio de Mendoza, and Fernando [Hernan] Cortes, now the Marquis de Valle de Oaxaca. After several unsuccessful attempts to persuade Dorantes, Castillo, and Cabeza de Vaca to return to the Northern frontier to search for the widely rumored Seven (Golden) Cities of Cibola, Mendoza organized an expedition led by Franciscan friar, Marcos de Niza but which employed Estevan as its guide and interpreter.

In 1539 the expedition set out from Culican and traveled inland across the Sonora desert. Estevan, moving well ahead, gathered around him an Indian retinue of three hundred women and men while regularly sending back news of his discoveries. Upon reaching the Zuni Indian town of Hawikuh (just east of the present Arizona-New Mexico border), which he mistakenly believed to be the first of the seven cities, Estevan sent an Indian messenger ahead with a brightly decorated gourd to announce his arrival. Hawikuh's leaders, however, interpreted the gourd as a sign of danger and warned Estevan and his followers to stay out of the city. Estavan refused the order and further enraged the Zuni leaders by demanding tribute and informing the town leaders that he was the advance representative of a large armed party. When Estevan chose to ignore the threat and enter the city, he was murdered by the Zuni, "so that he would not reveal our location to his brothers." Fray Marcos upon learning of his guide's death hastily returned to Mexico City where he proclaimed Hawikuh one of the seven golden cities. His report immediately prompted other forays to the North including the 1,100 person expedition of Francisco Vazquez de Coronado, which retraced Estevan's route to Hawikuh and then proceeded across what is now New Mexico, Northwestern Texas, Oklahoma and central Kansas before returning to Mexico City.

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Source: Quintard Taylor, In Search of the Racial Frontier: A History of African Americans in the American West (forthcoming, 1996)

ISABEL De OLVERA ARRIVES IN NEW MEXICO

The 16th and 17th Century historical records of the U.S. Southwest are replete with examples of persons of African ancestry who accompanied Spanish explorers and colonizers. The Juan de Onate party that established a colony along the upper Rio Grande near Santa Fe, in 1598, included at least five blacks and mulattoes, two of whom were soldiers. Most of those explorers and settlers were men. However in 1600 one black woman, Isabel De Olvera of Queretaro, the daughter of a black father and Indian mother, accompanied the Juan Guerra de Resa relief expedition to Santa Fe to strengthen the Spanish claim on the region. Her arrival predates by 19 years the first known landing at Jamestown, Virginia, of twenty persons of African ancestry in British North America. De Olvera, who was a servant for one of the Spanish women, was apparently concerned about her safety and status in the frontier region and gave the following deposition to the alcalde mayor of Queretaro. To buttress her claim, Olvera presented three witnesses, Mateo Laines, a free black man living in Queretaro, Anna Verdugo, a mestiza who lived near the city, and Santa Maria, a black slave of the alcalde mayor.

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In the town of Queretaro in New Spain, January 8, 1600, there appeared before Don Pedro Lorenzo de Castilla, his majesty's alcalde mayor in this town, a mulatto woman named Isabel, who presented herself before his grace in the appropriate legal manner and declared:

> As I am going on the expedition to New Mexico and have reason to fear that I may be annoyed by some individual since I am a mulatto, and as it is proper to protect my rights in such an eventuality by an affidavit showing that I am a free women, unmarried, and the legitimate daughter of Hernando, a negro and an Indian named Magdalena, I therefore request your grace to accept this affidavit, which show that I am free and not bound by marriage or slavery. I request that a properly certified and signed copy be given to me in order to protect my rights, and that it carry full legal authority. I demand justice.

The alcalde mayor instructed her to present the affidavits which she thought could be used and ordered that they be examined in accordance with this petition and that she be given the original. He so ordered and signed. DON PEDRO LORENZO DE CASTILLA. Before me, BALTASAR MARTINEZ, royal notary.

Source: George P. Hammond, and Agapito Rey, eds., Don Juan de Onate: Colonizer of New Mexico, 1595-1628 (Albuquerque, 1953), pp. 560-562.

MARRIAGE IN COLONIAL NEW MEXICO: THE RODRIGUEZ SAGA

In the following account historian Dedra McDonald introduces both Sebastian Rodriguez Brito and provides a glimpse into the fluid social relations of multiethnic and multiracial Colonial New Mexico.

In 1689, Sebastian Rodriguez Brito, an African from Luanda in the nation of Angola and Antonia Naranjo, daughter of a New Mexico mulatto family, initiated marital proceedings in the jurisdiction of El Paso del Norte. Their plans to wed, however, soon faltered. Rodriguez's former employer, Governor Pedro Reneros de Posada, claimed that Rodriguez had already married a woman in Veracruz. In response, Rodriguez insisted, "I am free and single," and that Reneros' allegations were false. Rodriguez brought forward three witnesses to attest to his bachelorhood.

Those witnesses, Juan Luis, Francisco Romero de Pedraza, Esteban de Berdiguil, and Antonio Montoya, all living at El Paso del Norte, did not help matters much. They could only repeat what they had heard from Governor Reneros while working from him. Juan Luis reported that Sebastian Rodriguez informed Reneros of his plans to mary Antonia Naranjo and that Reneros expressed pleasure at this news, "preferring this step to [Rodriguez's] whoring around." A few days later, Luis explained, Reneros told Rodriguez that he could not get married because he must continue to work as Reneros' servant when he returned from El Paso del Norte to New Spain. Francisco Romero de Pedraza's testimony also provided little support for Sebastian's claims. Romero had overheard Governor Reneros say that Sebastian was married and that he should return to Mexico City... Romero added that Reneros had summoned Antonia Naranjo's mother, Maria Romero, to inform her of Sebastian's status as a married man. The third witness, Esteban de Berdiguil, declared that two Mexico CIty merchants claimed that Rodriguez had already married and requested that he "be put in manacles and returned to his wife." Finally, Antonio Montoya corroborated the previous testimonies. The marriage did not take place.

Three years later, in May 1692, Sebastian Rodriguez proved his status as a single man when a Franciscan testified regarding a handwritten letter dated April 14, 1692, in which Governor Reneros de Posada admitted that Rodriguez had not previously married. Rodriguez, age 40 in 1692, had planned another marriage, this time to widow Isabel Olguin, an *espanola* and 44 years of age. With the matter of his marital status clear, Rodriguez could and did marry Olguin. Their wedding took place June 4, 1692.

Isabel Olguin died within four years of the marriage, which brought Sebastian to initiate yet another marriage, this time with Maria de la Cruz, *mestiza* and servant of Lieutenant General Luis Granillo. This marriage may not actually have taken place, for less than one year later, on May 2, 1697, Sebastian initiated a fourth marriage, with Juana de la Cruz, *coyota* (the offspring of parents of mixed heritages including mulatto, *mestizo*, Indian, and Spanish) of Las Salinas. Their Marriage took place May 12, 1697...

Sebastian Rodriguez's fascinating life story provides more than entertainment. Rodriguez, a free black African from Angola whose parents were *bozales*, or African-born slaves, lived and worked on the far northern frontier of New Spain in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. He intermarried, or at least attempted to marry, women representing the spectrum of racial categories that existed in colonial New Mexico. Moreover, he exhibited economic mobility as he moved from a position as a servant to drummer and soldier, as well as landholder. In all of these aspects, Sebastian Rodriguez's experience suggest that the history of colonial New Mexico must include the stories of black and mulattoes, free and enslaves, and that

the region's geographical isolation allowed them unprecedented economic and social opportunities.

Source: Dedra S. McDonald, "Black Drummers and Mulatto Slaves: African Descendants in Colonial New Mexico," Unpublished paper presented at the Rocky Mountain Council on Latin American Studies Conference, 1995, pp. 1-4.

THE FOUNDING OF LOS ANGELES

In the account below historian Lonnie Bunch, III, describes the establishment of Los Angeles and the role persons of African ancestry played in its settlement.

Of the forty-four *pobladores* or settlers of the pueblo of "Nuestra Senora la Reina de Los Angeles de Porciuncula," twenty-six were either black or of mixed racial ancestry. The site that would become Los Angeles was known to the Spanish governors of Mexico as early as 1769. However, plans to settle the area remained unclear until Felipe de Neve, the governor of Alta California (literally the current state of California), decided a civilian community was needed in the region between the mission in San Gabriel and the Presidio of Santa Barbara...

Captain Fernando X. Rivera was charged with obtaining twenty-four families of farmers, artisans and cattlemen. Rivera was ordered to offer these families cash, supplies, tools, animals, clothing, a limited period of no taxation, and access to land. Despite these inducements, only twelve families agreed to undertake the venture. Those individuals who did agree were recruited from Sinaloa, Mexico, a less than prosperous area of the country where one third of the residents were of African ancestry. Many of the *pobladores* hailed from the city of Rosario, a village where two-thirds of the residents were listed as mulattoes in the census, many having resided as free men and women for a long period of time.

This band of settlers...left Alamos, Sonora, with their military escorts in February 1781. After months of travel, eleven of the twelve families that left Sinaloa arrived at the mission in San Gabriel that August. After a month's quarantine to ensure that the settlers did not carry the smallpox virus, the band of Indians, mulattoes, and Spaniards arrived in the area of the planned settlement on 4 September... The Afro-Mexican families that contributed to the establishment of Los Angeles were a diverse group ranging from 1 to 67 years of age. They included: Luis Quintero, a 55-year-old black tailor accompanied by his mulatto wife Maria Petra Rubio, 40 and their five children. Quintero was born in Guadalajara, Jalisco in 1725. Jose Moreno, 22, and Maria Guadalupe Gertrudis, 19, a recently wed mulatto couple, born in Rosario, Mexico. Manuel Camero, 30, and Maria Tomasa, 24, two mulattoes also from Rosario. Antonio Mesa, 38, a Negro born in Alamos, Sonora, his mulatto wife, Ana Gertrudis Lopez, 27, and their two children. Maria Manuela Calixtra, 43, the mulatto mother of six and her Indian husband, Basilia Rosas, 67. Maria Rufina Dorotea, 45, also a mulatto, brought her three children and her mestizo husband, 42-year-old Jose Antonia Navarro.

These settlers...worked hard to maintain the colony. Los Angeles was laid out in the typical pattern for Spanish colonial towns: Each family was allocated a lot surrounding the rectangular public plaza, with meadows, common grazing and farm lands on the outskirts of the pueblo. Immediately after establishing the town lots, the community built the *zanja madre*, a series of channels created to bring water into the area. Within a short time, the colony no longer relied upon supplies from Mexico and its population grew to 141 residents, according to the *Estado* taken on 17 August 1790...

[Los Angeles] prospered enough to become the largest Spanish settlement in Alta California by 1800... As Los Angeles matured, many of its citizens received large grants of land to encourage the development of rancheros--large ranches that prospered due to the cattle and tallow trades. Several Afro-Mexicans received these grants from the Spanish colonial administration, demonstrating the significant roles they were expected to play in the affairs of the colony... The Pico brothers, Pio and Andes, obtained land near Simi, while Francisco Reyes

controlled large areas of the San Fernando Valley and Lompoc. Other landowners of Africa descent were Bartolo Tapia, whose holdings were centered near the Topanga Canyon, and Manuel Nieto in the eastern San Gabriel Valley... By 1820 Maria Rita Valdez, and descendant of Luis Quintero...was granted Rancho Rodeo de Las Aquas--now a quaint little village called Beverly Hills...

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Source: Lonnie Bunch, III, Black Angelenos: The African American in Los Angeles, 1850-1950 (Los Angeles, 1989), pp. 10-12.

BLACKS IN BRITISH NORTH AMERICA: THE FIRST ARRIVALS

The first blacks to arrive in British North America were indentured servants rather than slaves. One of them, Antonio, landed at Jamestown, Virginia, in 1621, and anglicized his name to Anthony Johnson. Johnson was granted his freedom and eventually became a prosperous landowner. The passage below describes his experience and reflects the declining status of blacks.

Anthony Johnson, an African, arrived in Virginia in 1621 with only the name "Antonio." Caught as a young man in the Portuguese slavetrading net, he had passed from one trader to another in the New World until he reached Virginia. There he was purchased by Richard Bennett and sent to work at *Warrasquoke,* Bennett's plantation.

Antonio, anglicized to Anthony, labored on the Bennett plantation for 20 years, slave in fact if not in law, for legally defined bondage was still in the formative stage. During this time he married Mary, another African and fathered four children. In the 1640s, Anthony and Mary Johnson gained their freedom after half a lifetime of servitude. They chose the surname Johnson to signify their new status.

Already past middle age by Seventeenth Century standards, the Johnson began carving out a niche for themselves on Virginia's eastern shore. By 1650, they owned 250 acres, a small heard of cattle, and two black servants. In a world in which racial boundaries were not yet firmly marked, the Johnsons had entered the scramble of small planters for economic security. By schooling themselves in the workings of the English legal process, by carefully cultivating white patronage, and by working industriously on the land, the Johnsons warded off contentious neighbors, and hammered out a decent existence.

But by the late 1650s, the customs of the country began closing in on Virginia's free blacks. In 1664, convinced that ill winds were blowing away the chances for their children and grandchildren on Virginia's eastern shore, the Johnsons began selling their land to white neighbors. Most the clan moved northward to Maryland, where they rented land and again took up farming and cattle raising. Five years later, Anthony Johnson died, leaving four children and his wife, who lived another ten years. The growing racial prejudice of Virginia followed Johnson beyond his grave. A jury of white men in Virginia declared that because Johnson "was a Negroe and by consequence an alien," the 50 acres he had deeded to his son Richard before moving to Maryland should be taken from his family and awarded to a local white planter.

Johnson's children and grandchildren, born in America, could not duplicate the modest success of the African-born patriarch. Anthony's sons never rose higher than tenant farmer or small freeholder. John Johnson moved farther north into Delaware in the 1680s. Members of his family married local Indians and became part of a triracial community that has survived to the present day. Richard Johnson stayed behind in Virginia. When he died in 1689, he had little to leave his four sons. They became tenant farmers and hired servants laboring on plantations owned by whites. To be black had at first been a handicap. Now it became a fatal disability, a practically inescapable mark of degradation and bondage.

Source: Gary Nash, The American People, (New York: Harper and Row, 1986), p. 63.

AFRICANS BECOME AFRICAN AMERICANS

In the following account historian Allan Kulikoff describes the transformation of African culture into African American culture in the 18th Century Chesapeake colonies and suggests examples of the various African, and in rare instances, European cultural traits that would eventually comprise the new "creole" culture once native-born slaves outnumbered African arrivals.

Newly enslaved Africans possessed a few building blocks for a new social order under slavery. Many did share a similar ethnic identity. About half the African arrivals at Port York during two periods of heavy immigration were Ibos, Ibibios, Efkins, and Mokos from Nigeria, and another fifth came from various tribes in Angola. From 1718 to 1726, 60 percent came from the Bight of Biafra (the Ibo area); between 1728 and 1739, 85 percent were imported from Biafra or Angola. Most new slaves spoke similar languages, lived under the same climate, cultivated similar crops, and shared comparable kinship systems. When they arrived in the Chesapeake, they may have combined common threads in their cultures into new Afro-American structures.

Once they entered the plantation world, African immigrants had to begin to cope with their status.... When they reached their new homes, Africans were immediately put to work making tobacco. Most were broken in on the most routine tasks of production. Nearly two-thirds of them arrived between June and August, when the tobacco plants had already been moved from seedbeds and were growing rapidly. The new slaves' first task was weeding between the rows of plants with hands, axes, or hoes. These jobs were similar to those that Ibos and other Africans had used in growing other crops in their native lands. After a month or two of such labor, slaves could be instructed in the more difficult task of harvesting....

Not only were Africans forced to work for harsh masters in a strange land but masters usually stripped them of their names, their last personal possession. Africans imbued names with great meaning, and naming often followed a ceremony at birth or coming of age.... Masters in the Chesapeake, without ceremony, forced Africans to adopt English names and required that they be used in daily exchanges between whites and blacks. At least four-fifths of African youths age ten to fifteen, whose ages and names were recorded in York and Lancaster counties at the peak of the slave trade, received English names. Only 3 percent of these 465 slaves kept African names. Six maintained day names, used in many African communities to indicate the day of birth: four were Cuffy (male name for "Friday"), one was Jacko, (Quacko, male name for "Wednesday"), and one Juba (female name for "Monday"). Eighty slaves, however, might have persuaded their masters to allow them to retain Anglicized versions of African names. Three names were especially common. Twenty-four boys were named Jack, an English version of Quacko, and twelve were named Jemmy, probably an Anglicized version of Quame (male name for "Saturday"). The most common name among African girls in this group was Phyllis (often spelled Fillis), a name rarely employed by whites. The name is phonetically close to Fili, an African word meaning "losing one's way" in Mandingo and "to abandon" or "to deceive" in Bambora. Perhaps these girls had not been named Fili before their capture, but adopted the name to describe their current low condition....

Afro-American slaves developed their own social institutions and indigenous culture during the second half of the eighteenth century. A period of great disruptions among blacks early in the century was followed by a time of settled communities. Newly enslaved Africans came to the Chesapeake colonies in large enough numbers to cause conflicts between native slaves and new Negroes, but the migration was too small to allow Africans to develop syncretic

communities and cultures. It was only when native adults began to predominate that earlier conflicts among blacks were contained and families and quarter communities began to emerge. The culture these creole slaves forged put African forms of behavior into Euro-American familial and religious structures.

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Source: Allan Kulikoff, Tobacco and Slaves: The Development of Southern Cultures in the Chesapeake, 1680-1800, (Chapel Hill, 1986), pp. 321-326, 350-351.

BLACK SLAVES AND WHITE SERVANTS IN VIRGINIA, (1705)

The following Virginia colonial laws regarding white servants and black slaves reveal the growing disparity in the social positions of the two groups which during the first forty years of the colony were indistinguishable.

White Servants: All masters and owners of servants, shall find and provide for their servants, wholesome and competent diet, clothing, and lodging, by the discretion of the county court; and shall not, at any time, give immoderate correction; neither shall, at any time, whip a christian white servant naked, without an order from a justice of the peace: And if any, notwithstanding this act shall presume to whip a christian white servant naked, without such order, the person so offending, shall forfeit and pay for the same, forty shillings sterling, to the party injured: To be recovered, with costs, upon petition, without the formal process of an action...

Blacks and Indians: And if any slave resist his master, or owner, or other person, by his or her order, correcting such slave, and shall happen to be killed in such correction, it shall not be accounted felony; but the master, owner, and every such other person so giving correction, shall be free and acquit of all punishment and accusation for the same, as if such accident had never happened; And also, if any negro, mulatto, or Indian, bond or free, shall at any time, life his or her hand, in opposition against any christian, not being negro, mulatto, or Indian, he or she so offending, shall, for every such offence, proved by the oath of the party, receive on his or her bare back, thirty lashes, well laid on, cognizable by a justice of the peace for that country wherein such offence shall be committed.

Source: Stephen Thernstrom, A History of the American People, vol. I (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1989) p. 77.

AFRICAN VS. INDIAN SLAVERY

In the account below Winthrop Jordan advances reasons Africans were favored over Indians as candidates for New World slavery.

Indians seemed radically different from Englishmen, far more so than any Europeans. They were enslaved, like Negroes, and so fell on the losing side of a crucial dividing line. It is easy to see why: whether considered in terms of complexion, religion, nationality, savagery, bestiality, or geographical location, Indians were more like Negroes than like Englishmen. Given this resemblance the essential problem becomes why Indian slavery never became an important institution in the colonies.....

Certain obvious factors made for important differentiations in the minds of the English colonists, As was the case with the first confrontations in America and Africa, the different contexts of confrontation made Englishmen more interested in converting and civilizing Indians than Negroes. That this campaign in America too frequently degenerated into military campaigns of extermination did nothing to eradicate the initial distinction. Entirely apart from English intentions, the culture of the American Indians probably meant that they were less readily enslavable than Africans. By comparison, they were less used to settled agriculture, and their own variety of slavery was probably even less similar to the chattel slavery with Englishmen practiced in America than was the domestic and political slavery of West African cultures.

But it was the transformation of English intentions in the wilderness which counted most heavily in the long run. The Bible and the treaty gave way to the clash of flintlock and tomahawk. The colonists' perceptions of the Indians came to be organized not only in pulpits and printshops but at the bloody cutting edge of the English thrust into the Indian's lands. Thus the most pressing and mundane circumstances worked to make Indians seem very different from Negroes. In the early years especially, Indians were in a position to mount murderous reprisals upon the English settlers, while the few scattered Negroes were not. When English-Indian relations did not turn upon sheer power they rested on diplomacy. In many instances the colonists took assiduous precautions to prevent abuse of Indians belonging to friendly tribes..... It became a common practice to ship Indian slaves to the West Indies where they could be exchanged for slaves who had no compatriots lurking on the outskirts of English settlements. In contrast, Negroes presented much less of a threat--at first.

Equally important, Negroes had to be dealt with as individuals....rather than as nations. Englishmen had to live with their Negroes side by side. Accordingly their impressions of Negroes were forged in the heat of continual, inescapable personal contacts. There were few pressures surging Englishmen to treat Indians as integral constituents in their society, which Negroes were whether Englishmen liked it or not. At a distance the Indian could be viewed with greater detachment and his characteristics acknowledges and approached more coolly and more rationally. Indians [too] could retain the quality of nationality, a quality which Englishmen admired in themselves and expected in other people. Under contrasting circumstances in America, the Negro nations tended to become Negro people.

Source: Winthrop D. Jordan, White Over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550-1812, (Baltimore, 1969), pp. 89-90.

INDIANS AND BLACKS IN THE COLONIAL SOUTHEAST

In the following account Gary Nash describes the bonds that developed between Indians and black slaves despite the fervent efforts of colonial officials to prevent peaceful contact between the two groups.

In spite of strenuous efforts at promoting hatred between Indians and Africans, a surprising number of slaves were harbored within the Indian communities throughout the colonial period. It is impossible to measure this phenomenon with statistical precision but the persistent inclusion in Indian treaties of a clause providing for the return of escaped slaves demonstrates that the bounties offered Indians for slave catching often evoked little response. The Tuscarora tribe, for example, gave refuge to a large number of slaves in the period before the outbreak of war in 1711. When war came, these Africans fought with the Tuscaroras and one of them named Harry, was said to have designed the Tuscarora fortress on the Neuse River. Four years later, during the Yamasee uprising, fugitive slaves were also active in the raids on while on white settlements. Even after the Yamasee had given up their struggle, they refused to return their black allies which, according to one Carolina official, "has encouraged a great many more [slaves] lately to run away to that Place."

Because the Yamasees were located along the coast between the English settlements and the Spanish outposts in Florida, slaves had additional reason to flee in this direction. As early as 1699 the Spanish issued a royal decree promising protection to all fugitive English slaves and this offer was repeated periodically during the first half of the eighteenth century. Carolina slaves to join them but engaged in slave-stealing raids on outlying plantations. In 1738, twenty-three slaves escaped from Port Royal and made their way to St. Augustine. They soon joined an enclave of free Negroes where thirty-escaped slave men, many with families, were already settled. In a sense this was simply the advance guard of the fifty to a hundred slaves who rose at Stono in 1739 in a mass attempt to kill whites and flee to Spanish Florida. When Governor Oglethorpe of Georgia launched his attack on St. Augustine in 1740 as a part of the resistance of Spanish Indians, and ex-Carolina slaves, who had no difficulty repulsing the expedition in which the Carolinas invested more than L7,000. Two years later the Spaniards retaliated with an attack on Georgia; among the invasionary forces was a regiment whose Negro commanders "were clothed in lace, bore the same rank as the white officers, and with equal freedom and familiarity walked and conversed with their comrades and chief." An eighteenth-century historian of South Carolina revealed how precarious the hold of white slave masters was on their slaves when he conjectured that if the Spanish exploitation had attacked South Carolina rather than Georgia the English would have been lost, for in South Carolina there were "such numbers of negroes, they would soon have acquired such a force, as must have rendered all opposition fruitless and ineffectual."

Slaves in the South fled not only to Spanish Florida and the Yamasee. As early as 1725 a prominent South Carolina slave holder reported with concern that the slaves had become well acquainted with the hill country of the Cherokees and were becoming fluent not only in English but in the Cherokee language. The Creeks also harbored runaway slaves in their towns. In the same year that concern for slave proficiency in the Cherokee language was expressed a Spanish delegation arrived at Coweta, the principal town of the Lower Creeks, with an ex-Carolina slave who served as interpreter between the Creeks and Spanish. Still another ex-slave was active as an interpreter between the French and the Creeks during this period, testifying to the linguistic ability of some of the escaped slaves and their ability to assimilate into the frontier cultures of

the other European nations as well as into Creek, Cherokee, or Yamasee societies. Runaway slaves, concludes one student of red-black contacts in the Southeast, "operated to an unknown extent, but evidently with considerable effectiveness, as French and Spanish agents among Indian tribes bordering on the English settlements." As late as the 1760s the Carolinians were pressing the Creeks hard for the return of runaway slaves, and although blacks were occasionally handed over, hundreds remained in the Indian territory, blending their cultural attributes with those of the Creeks, Cherokees, and others.

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Gary B. Nash, Red, White and Black: The Peoples of Early America, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1974), pp. 294-295.

OF CAPTAINS AND KINGS: SLAVERY IN COLONIAL NEW YORK

Although slavery in the Southern and Mid-Atlantic colonies was far more crucial to local economies, New Amsterdam (later New York) developed an extensive slave-holding system as described below.

When the Dutch West India Company established New Netherland as a trading post in 1626, it was not particularly anxious to encourage the importation of slave, but it soon turned to slavery as a means of solving a labor problem common to all land-rich colonies. The first crisis was the shortage of farm laborers to work the fertile lands of the Hudson River Valley. Most of the immigrants....to the colony were more interested in becoming prosperous merchants than agricultural laborers. To deal with the labor shortage....[it] began the importation of African slaves into New Netherland. The first "parcels" of company imported slaves arrived in 1626....to work as agricultural laborers on company farms, and on the construction of public buildings and military [fortifications]. The Company intended to monopolize the slave trade in New Netherland, and throughout the Dutch period it did remain both the largest importer and the largest owner of slaves in the colony. But pressure from individual settlers and the.... [growing] number of slaves admitted illegally forced the company to open the trade to all in 1648....

Despite shortages of slaves....and the consequent rise in prices, slavery remained the most economical source of labor in New York. During this period it was possible to buy a seasoned slave from the West Indies for approximately the same amount it would cost to employ a free wage workers for one year.... While there are no exact statistics, there are indications that by the close of the Dutch period (1664), slaves constituted a surprisingly large proportion of the colony's population, perhaps as high as 10%.... The *Gideon*, for example, a Dutch West India Company ship which arrived in 1664, landed a cargo of 300 slaves [which] alone represented about 3% of the infant colony's population.... The best informed guesses place the number at 700 Negroes in a total population of seven thousand in 1664.

The number of slaves in the colony increased dramatically following the English conquest of New Netherland in large part because of the personal influence of the Duke of York, the new proprietor of the colony. Charles, II, restored to the thorne of England only 4 years earlier, gave the province to his brother, James, Duke of York (who became King of England in 1685) as his personal property. As proprietor, the Duke of York gained more than the privilege of renaming the colony in his own honor; he also acquired the power to direct its economic development in a manner profitable to himself (and several of his best friends in England). The Duke of York was one of the leading officials of the English Royal African Company which dealt exclusively in the African slave trade. Increasing use of slaves in New York would mean greater profit for him and his friends.... Thus one byproduct of the English conquest of New York was a substantial increase in the number of Negroes imported into the colony as slaves....

During most of the first half of the 18th Century there was a 100% markup on retailed slaves; convenient weekly auctions were established in which both black slaves and white indentured servants were auctioned off. Unlike the antebellum South, no social stigma was attached to being a slave trader in colonial New York; it was considered another business venture open to men with capital to invest, perhaps more likely to produce quick profits.

* * *

During the century in which the slave traders remained active and the port of New York was one of the principal depots for black slaves, the colony took in (and kept) Negroes at such a rate that by the middle of the 18th Century there were more slaves in New York--both in absolute numbers and as a percentage of the total population--than in any colony north of Maryland.... Throughout the colonial period slaves greatly outnumbered white servants in the colony.

At the beginning of the 18th Century, more than 11% of the colony's population was Negro. By 1723 the figure had risen to almost 15%, and it stayed at 14% until at least 1756.... The decline in the percentage of Negroes in the New York population in the years immediately before the American Revolution does not indicate a decrease in the actual number of blacks in the province. Rather, it reflects the phenomenal growth of the white population.

Until nearly the close of the colonial period, Negroes were concentrated mostly in New York City, and the surrounding counties of Kings, Queens, and Richmond. In 1703, over 70% of all blacks in the province lived in those downstate counties; in the 1750s the figure remained above 60%. Most of the white inhabitants who were economically able to support slaves and who could employ them profitably were found in these ares... In addition, since New York City served as the center for the slave trade, it was easier for downstate whites to obtain Africans....

In the New York province, slaves were used as agricultural laborers on farms, as servants in houses, in manufacturing, in commerce, and in a variety of skilled and semiskilled occupations. A majority of the unskilled and menial laborers in the colony were probably Negroes. But in New York city in particular, owners often employed slaves in various urban occupations and trades which required a considerable degree of skill (and consequently, permitted considerable independence). Slaves in the city were goldsmiths, carpenters, blacksmiths, weavers, shoemakers and butchers. To some degree slave labor in New York was in competition with free labor; but because of the absence of a large white labor force, there was little opposition.

During the colonial period, New York's slave population was more widely diffused among the white population than in any other English colony. Although some masters owned over 30 slaves, in the closing years of the colonial era few individuals owned more than 10 slaves, and the average master had between one and three slaves in his household.... In New York--unlike the tobacco and rice plantations of the Chesapeake and Carolina societies--the Negroes did not work in large gangs at simple, repetitive tasks under they eyes of hired overseers. On the contrary, either in the city or on the farm, the New York Negro was likely to live in his master's household and to work alongside him in the fields or at his place of business. He was sill a slave, of course, but such proximity permitted, even encouraged, a personal relationship between black slave and white master which was not likely on the large plantation.

Source: David Kobrin, The Black Minority in Early New York, (Albany, 1975), pp. 3-10.

A QUAKER RESOLUTION AGAINST SLAVERY, 1652

The Quakers were one of the first religious groups to challenge slavery. In an 1652 petition before a Pennsylvania court they requested a limit be placed on the bondage of local black slaves. The petition is reprinted below.

At a General Court held in Warwick the 18th of May, 1652

Whereas their is a common course practiced among Englishmen, to buy negroes to that end that they may have for service or as slaves forever; for the preventing of such practices among us, let it be ordered, that no black mankind or white being shall be forced, by covenant, bond, or other wise, to serve any man or his assignees longer than ten years, or until they come to be twenty four years of age, if they be taken in under fourteen, from the time of their coming within the liberties of this Colony at the end or term of ten years, to set them free as the manner is with the English servants.

And that man that will not let them go free, or shall sell them away elsewhere, to that end they may be enslaved to others for a longer time, he or they shall forfeit to the colony forty pounds.

Source: Joanne Grant, Black Protest: History, Documents, and Analyses, 1619 to the Present, (New York: Fawcett Premier Book, 1969), p. 26.

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY BLACK SLAVE CODES

In 1712 South Carolina passed a series of laws governing slaves and blacks. These laws became the model for slave codes enacted throughout the South in the 18th and 19th Centuries.

WHEREAS, the plantations and estates of this Province cannot be well and sufficiently managed and brought into use, without the labor and service of negroes and other slaves; and forasmuch as the said negroes and other slaves brought unto the people of this Province for that purpose, are of barbarous, wild, savage natures....it is absolutely necessary, that constitutions, laws and orders, should in this Province be made and enacted, for the good regulating and ordering of them....

I. Be it therefore enacted, by his Excellency, William, Lord Craven, Palatine.... and the rest of the members of the General Assembly, now met at Charlestown, for the South-west part of this Province, and by the authority of the same, That all negroes, mulatoes, mestizoes or Indians, which at any time heretofore have been sold, or now are held or taken to be, or hereafter shall be bought and sold for slaves, are hereby declared slaves; and they, and their children, are hereby made and declared slaves....

II. ....Be it enacted by the authority aforesaid, That no master, mistress, overseer, or other person whatsoever, that hath the care and charge of any negro or slave, shall give their negroes and other slaves leave, on Sundays, holidays, or any other time, to go out of their plantations.... Every slave hereafter out of his master's plantation, without a ticket, or leave in writing, from his master or mistress, or .... some white person in the company of such slave, to give an account of his business, shall be whipped.... and every person who shall not (when in his power,) apprehend every negro or other slave which he shall see out of his master's plantation, without leave .... shall forfeit twenty shillings....

III. And be it further enacted .... That every master, mistress or overseer of a family in this Province, shall cause all his negro houses to be searched diligently and effectually, once every fourteen days, for fugitive and runaway slaves, guns, swords, clubs, and any other mischievous weapons....

V. And be it further enacted.... That no negro or slave shall carry out of the limits of his master's plantation any sort of gun or fire arms, without his master, or some other white person by his order....

VI. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That every master or head of any family, shall keep all his guns and other arms, when out of use, in the most private and least frequented room in the house, upon the penalty of being convicted of neglect therein, to forfeit three pounds.

Source: Thomas Cooper and David J. McCord, ed., Statutes at Large of South Carolina, (10 Vols., Columbia, 1836-1841) VII, pp. 352-356.

THE FAMILY OF ANN JOICE

Although most slave families had two parents, family dissolution through slave sales posed an everpresent threat. Even the death of an owner and the subsequent division of an estate could separate families. In the following vignette Allan Kulikoff describes the process of family formation and dissolution as it applied to the descendants of Ann Joice, a black woman who became a Maryland slave in the 1670s.

The process of household and family formation and dissolution was begun each immigrant black woman who lived long enough to have children. The story of Ann Joice, a black woman who was born in Barbados, taken to England as a servant, and then falsely sold into slavery in Maryland in the 1670s, may have been similar to that of African women once they became slaves. The Darnall family of Prince George's owned Ann Joice. She had seven children with several white men in the 1670s and 1680s; all remained slaves the rest of their life. Three of her children stayed on the Darnall home plantation until their death. One was sold as a child to a planter who lived a few miles away; another was eventually sold to William Digges, who lived about five miles from the Darnall plantation. Both the spatial spread and the local concentration of kinfolk continued in the next generation. Peter Harbard, born between 1715 and 1720, was the son of Francis Harbard, who was Ann Joice's child. Peter grew up on the Darnall farm, but in 1737 he was sold to George Gordon, who lived across the road from Darnall. As a child, Peter lived with or very near his grandmother Ann Joice, his father, and several paternal uncles and aunts. He probably knew his seven cousins (father's sister's children), children of his aunt Susan Harbard, who lived on the William Digges plantation. Other kinfolk lived in Annapolis but were too far away to visit easily.

Three demographic processes combined to create and destroy complex households and families. Husbands and wives, and parents and children were frequently separated by the master's transfers of family members. A young man tended to receive slaves from his parents or purchase them on the open market, thereby separating family members. If economic disaster did not intervene, his slaveholdings grew through natural increase, slave families were reestablished, and extended family networks developed. When the master died, the family's slaves were divided among heirs, and the process began again. Only during the second stage were slave families even relatively secure. At the same time, as generation followed generation, households, or adjacent huts, became increasingly complex and sometimes included grand-parents, uncles, aunts, or cousins as well as the immediate family. Since other kin lived on nearby plantations, geographically dispersed kinship networks that connected numbers of quarters emerged during the pre- Revolutionary era. This second process of building kinship networks had to be started all over again when slaves were forced to migrate to frontier regions.

Source: Allan Kulikoff, Tobacco and Slaves: The Development of Southern Cultures in the Chesapeake, 1680-1800, (Chapel Hill, 1986), pp. 360-364.

THE SILVER BLUFF BAPTIST CHURCH, 1773

Historian Albert Raboteau describes below the first black church organized in the United States, the Silver Bluff Baptist Church in South Carolina.

The distinction of being the first separate black church in the South (and the North)....belonged to the Baptist church founded between 1773 and 1775 in Silver Bluff, South Carolina, across the Savannah River from Georgia. The importance of the Silver Bluff Church lies not only in its chronological priority but in its role as mother church of several far-flung Baptist missions. This church owed its beginning to the preaching of a white Baptist minister named Palmer who preached to the slaves of one George Galphin at Silver Bluff. David George, George's wife, Jesse Galphin (or Jesse Peter), and five other slaves were converted and baptized by Palmer at Galphin's mill. These eight formed the nucleus of the Silver Bluff Church. David George had a talent for exhorting and was appointed to the office of elder on the recommendation of Palmer. When the American Revolution began, white ministers were no longer allowed to attend the slaves "lest they should furnish...too much knowledge"--about Governor Dunmore's proclamation freeing all slaves who would support the British. Due to the lack of a regular minister, David George assumed the responsibility and "continued preaching...till the church...encreased to thirty or more, and till the British came to the city Savannah and took it."

The British occupation of the city in 1778 disrupted the Silver Bluff Church. Galphin, a patriot, decided to flee, and his slaves took refuge in Savannah behind British lines. When American forces reclaimed the area, David George elected to gain his freedom by emigrating to Nova Scotia in 1782. There he preached to other black emigrés and founded a Baptist church at Shelburne. In 1792 George migrated again, this time with a colony of blacks to Sierra Leone, where he planted yet another Baptist church.

Source: Albert J. Raboteau, Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South, (New York, 1978), pp. 139-140.

SILVER BLUFF BAPTIST CHURCH IN THE 1990s

The following description of Silver Bluff Baptist Church appeared in a January 1991, issue of the Atlanta Constitution.

Worship at Silver Bluff Baptist Church opens with a procession of two dozen choir members singing a rousing, clapping, foot-stomping chorus to an electric organ that would make a rock band proud. Shortly into the service, the organ falls silent and the tempo changes. Deacon Sam Cook steps up and calls out the first words to his favorite hymn as Silver Bluff deacons have done for more than 200 years.... This custom, called lining hymns, dates form the days of the Puritans, when illiteracy was widespread and hymnbooks were rare. It has continued at Silver Bluff simply because it's always been done.

As the nation's oldest black church....generations of families have followed one another into the sanctuary as surely as one hymn verse follows another. Many people in these pews descended from slaves who gathered at the church's earliest meetings. There have been only 12 pastors in 240 years. But some things at Silver Bluff have changed. Young people have grown up and moved away from this tiny town, where there isn't much to do except ride past singer James Brown's house or go to work at the big toilet paper plant.... Many heads in the pews have grown grey. Most of the people are women. Some members of the usher board--the white-gloved female leaders of the church who assist in the service--hobble as they step up to offer worshipers bulletins adorned with Easter lilies on a midwinter Sunday. Members speak of "a great falling off" in the congregation... In fact in pre-Revolutionary War times evangelist George Liele wrote of speaking in the church to 60 people, more than often attend today.

From the swaying of the choir to the singsong tone of the preacher much of the worship service is classic black church. After about an hour of preliminaries,--two hymns, three choir anthems, numerous prayers and two offerings--the preaching starts about noon.... The Rev. J.D. Show, his white suit coat bulging slightly at his plump midriff.... stands before his flock. His sermon starts out focusing on the Persian Gulf war and goes to Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the fiery furnace, all the while gaining momentum for the altar call.... Rev. Shaw, 50....has been pastor since 1980 and plans to end his career here. "Its a traditional thing at Silver Bluff," he says. "A minister serves until he's deceased." Shaw is the latest in a line of pastors beginning with black evangelist George Liele.

Although Silver Bluff counts 300 members, most never come to worship. Silver Bluff's members, unlike the illiterate servants of years ago, are doctors, lawyers, teachers, accountants and educated blue-collar workers. You would think they would bring new ideas and enthusiasm to the church, says Elbert Newman Jr., 27, who returned to Silver Bluff after eight years in the Army. But he says few are will to give the time and energy.

[Nevertheless] the very history of Silver Bluff will keep it alive, says Marvel Leverett, 26. She is secretary of another historic church--Ebenezer Baptist in Atlanta, where Martin Luther King Sir. was the longtime pastor and his son was the associate. "I enjoy Atlanta," Mrs. Leverett says. "there's a lot to offer there. But I can't help but think when my husband and I are old and retired, we'll move back."

Source: Atlanta Constitution, February 10, 1991, pp. M1, M4.

AFRICAN SLAVES AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF RICE CULTIVATION

Although most African slaves brought to the New World were forced to learn cultivation techniques and work habits vastly different from those of West Africa, a small minority of slaves were desired precisely because their prior skills in Africa paralleled those economic activities evolving in North and South America. Some West African slaves who had extensive experience in cattle raising were specifically brought to the Texas frontier. Other slaves familiar with West African cotton cultivation were highly prized by planters spreading the "Cotton Kingdom." However the South Carolina rice planters made the most extensive use of recently arrived Africans familiar with rice cultivation. The account below is a description of their critical role in developing South Carolina's rice-based agricultural economy.

In contrast to Europeans, Negroes from the West Coast of Africa were widely familiar with rice planting. An indigenous variety (*Oryza glaberrima*) was a staple in the western rain-forest regions long before Portuguese and French navigators introduced Asian and American varieties of *O. sativa* in the 1500s. By the seventeenth an eighteenth centuries, West Africans were selling rice to slave traders to provision their ships.

The most significant rice region was the "Windward Coast," the area upwind or westward from the major Gold Coast trading station of Elmina in present-day Ghana. Through most of the slaving era a central part of this broad stretch was designated as the Grain Coast, and a portion of this in turn was sometimes labeled more explicitly as the Rice Coast. An Englishman who spent time on the Windward Coast (Sierra Leone) at the end of the eighteenth century claimed that rice "forms the chief part of the African's sustenance," "The rice-fields or *Luqars*" he observed, "are prepared during the dry season, and the seed sown in the tornado season, requiring about four or five months growth to bring it to perfection." Throughout the era of slave importation into South Carolina references can be found concerning African familiarity with rice. Ads in the local papers occasionally made note of slaves from rice-growing areas, and a notice from the *Evening Gazette*, July 11, 1785, announced the arrival aboard a Danish ship of "a choice cargo of windward and gold coast negroes, who have been accustomed to the planting of rice."

Not every slave entering South Carolina had been drown from an African rice field, and many, perhaps even a great majority, had never seen a rice plant. But hundreds of black immigrants were more familiar with the planting, hoeing, processing, and cooking of rice than were the European settlers who purchased them. Those slaves who were accustomed to growing rice on one side of the Atlantic, and who eventually found themselves raising the same crop on the other side, did not markedly alter their annual routine. When New World slaves planted rice in the spring by pressing a hole with the heel and covering the seeds with the foot, the motion used was demonstrably similar to that employed in West Africa. In summer, when Carolina blacks moved through the rice fields in a row, hoeing in unison to work songs, the pattern of cultivation was not one imposed by European owners but rather one retained from West African forebears. And in October when the threshed grain was "fanned" in the wind, the wide, flat winnowing baskets were made by black hands after an African design.

Source: Peter H. Wood, Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina, (New York, 1974), pp. 59-62.

JEFFERSON'S "NOTES" ON INDIANS AND BLACKS

In his famous essay, Notes on the State of Virginia Thomas Jefferson advances his comparative impressions on Native Americans and Africans in North America. His essays, which for the period represented the most enlightened thought, nevertheless also revealed deeply rooted prejudice based primarily on the inaccurate and imprecise scientific evidence of the time as well as Jefferson's own faulty suppositions. His essay also reveals how deeply rooted 16th Century ideas of race had become by the late 18th Century.

INDIANS: The Indian of North America being more within our reach, I can speak of him somewhat from my own knowledge, but more from the information of others better acquainted with him, and on whose truth and judgment I can rely. From these sources I am able to say that he is brave, when an enterprise depends on bravery; education with him making the point of honor consist in the destruction of an enemy by stratagem, and in the preservation of his own person free from injury; or, perhaps, this is nature, while it is education which teaches us to honor force more than finesse; that he will defend himself against a host of enemies, always choosing to be killed, rather than to surrender, though it be to the whites, who he knows will treat him well; that in other situations, also, he meets death with more deliberation, and endures tortures with a firmness unknown almost to religious enthusiasm with us; that he is affectionate to his children, careful of them, and indulgent in the extreme; that his affections comprehend his other connections, weakening, as with us, from circle to circle, as they recede from the center; that his friendships are strong and faithful to the uttermost extremity; that his sensibility is keen, even the warriors weeping most bitterly on the loss of their children, though in general, they endeavor to appear superior to human events; that his vivacity and activity of mind is games of chance. The women are submitted to unjust drudgery. This I believe is the case with every barbarous people. With such, force is law. The stronger sex imposes on the weaker. It is civilization alone which replaces women in the enjoyment of their natural equality. That first teaches us to subdue the selfish passions, and to respect those rights in others which we value in ourselves. Were we in equal barbarism, our females would be equal drudges. The man with them is less strong than with us, but their women stronger than ours; and both or the same obvious reason; because our man and their woman is habituated to labor, and formed by it. With both races the sex which is indulged with ease is the least athletic. an Indian man is small in the hand and wrist, for the same reason for which a sailor is large and strong in the arms and shoulders, and a porter in the legs and thighs. They raise fewer children than we do. The causes of this are to be found, not in a difference of nature, but of circumstance. The women were frequently attending the men in their parties of war and hunting, child-bearing becomes extremely inconvenient to them. It is said, therefore, that they have learned the practice of procuring abortion by the use of some vegetable; and that it even extends to prevent conception for a considerable time after.

It is true, that when at home, they do not employ themselves in labor or the culture of the soil; but this again is the effect of customs and manners, which habe assigned that to the province of the women. But it is said, they are averse to society and a social life. Can anything be more inapplicable than this to a people who always live in towns or clans? Or can they be said to have no "republic," who conduct all their affairs in national councils, who pride themselves in their national character, who consider an insult or injury done to an individual by a stranger as done to

the whole, and resent it accordingly? In short. this picture is not applicable to any nation of Indians I have ever known or heard of in North America...

NEGROES: ...It will probably be asked, Why not retain and incorporate the blacks into the State, and thus save the expense of supplying by importation of white settlers, the vacancies they will leave? Deep-rooted prejudices entertained by the whites; ten thousand recollections, by the blacks, of the injuries they have sustained; new provocations; the real distinctions which nature has made; and many other circumstances, will divide us into parties, and produce convulsions, which will probably never end but in the extermination of the one or the other race. To these objections, which are political, may be added others, which are physical and moral. The firs difference which strikes us that of color. Whether the black of the negro resides in the reticular membrane between the skin and scarf-skin, or in the scarf-skin itself; whether it proceeds from the color of the blood, the color of the bile, ar from that of some other secretions, the difference is fixed in nature, and is as real as if its seat and cause were better known to us....

They seem to require less sleep. A black after hard labor through the day, will be induced by the slightest amusement to sit up till midnight, or later, though knowing he must be out with the first dawn of the morning. They are at least as brave, and more adventuresome. but this may perhaps proceed from a want of forethought, which prevents their seeing a danger till it be present. When present, they do not go through it with more coolness or steadiness than the whites. They are more ardent after their female; but love seems with them to be more an eager desire, than a tender delicate mixture of sentiment and sensation.

Comparing them by their faculties of memory, reason, and imagination, it appears to me that in memory they are equal to the whites; in reason much inferior, as I think one could scarcely be found capable of tracing and comprehending the investigations of Euclid; and that in imagination they are dull, tasteless, and anomalous. It would be unfair to follow them to Africa for this investigation, we will consider them here, on the same stage with the whites, and where the facts are not apocryphal on which a judgment is to be formed....

This unfortunate difference of color, and perhaps of faculty, is a powerful obstacle to the emancipation of these people. Many of their advocates, while they wish to vindicate the liberty of human nature, are anxious also to preserve its dignity and beauty. some of these, embarrassed by the question "What further is to be done with them?" join themselves in opposition with those who are actuated by sordid avarice only. Among the Romans emancipation required but one effort. The slave, when made free, might mix with, without staining the blood of his master. But with us a second is necessary, unknown to history. When freed, he is to be removed beyond the reach of mixture....

Source: Thomas Jefferson, Notes on the State of Virginia in The Writings of Thomas Jefferson, (New York, 1854), pp. 304-307, 431-434, 380-387.

THE DEBATE OVER THE BLACK MIND

The debate over black intellect was part of the larger discourse on the morality of slavery. Pro-slavery advocates argued that black mental inferiority was so palpably apparent that slavery was their natural condition. Abolitionists countered that the self-evident black mental inferiority was a consequence of slavery, not its cause. To buttress their argument they put before the public examples of African American intellect, James Derham and Thomas Fuller.

Two extraordinary men of the period, James Derham and Thomas Fuller, provided publicists with opportunities to show that innate ability in blacks could survive the psychic destruction that slavery often wrought and hence to prove Stanhope Smith's argument that environment alone caused variation among humans. Benjamin Rush happily publicized the talents of the black physician James Derham, who had been born in Philadelphia in 1762 and sold to a Quaker doctor, who taught him the rudiments of medicine. After passing through the hands of at least four other masters, including a British officer during the Revolution, Derham had been freed in New Orleans, where he was practicing successfully in the late 1780s. On a visit to Philadelphia in 1788 he was baptized in Christ Church and talked knowledgeably about medicine with Rush, who saw to it that his accomplishments received public notice.

Even more newsworthy was Fuller, the "African Calculator." African-born, the illiterate Fuller, a slave in Virginia, could perform spectacular arithmetic calculations. When tested by doubting whites with the problem of figuring the number of seconds a man has lived after 70 years, 17 days, and 12 hours, he reflected briefly and answered 2,210,500,800 seconds. When his white interrogators charged him with a small error, he stunned them by pointing out that they had forgotten to account for leap years. Fuller topped off the performance by tackling in his head the problem of how many sows a farmer would have if he started with six and each sow had six female pigs in the first year "and they all increased in the same proportion to the end of eight years." After a few minutes' reflection, he produced the correct answer of 34,588,806. Fuller's feats were publicized in Philadelphia's magazines, and when he died at eighty in 1790, the *General Advertiser* proclaimed that if average opportunities had come his way, "neither the Royal Society of London, the Academy of Sciences at Paris, nor even a Newton himself, need have been ashamed to acknowledge him as a brother in science." His case, it was pointed out, demonstrated "the genius, capacity and talents of our ill fated black brethren" and gave reason to deplore prejudiced white conduct based on "a supposed inferiority of their intellectual faculties; sentiments as ill founded in fact, as they are inhuman in their tendency."

Source: Gary Nash, Forging Freedom: The Formation of Philadelphia's Black Community, 1720-1840, (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 106-107.

BONES OF THE DEAD

In 1991 the construction site for a new federal office building in New York City yielded an unexpected find, a 18th Century cemetery for black slaves. The find itself affords a brief but significantly revealing glimpse into the life of the slaves who left no written record of their activities.

In life, they could be horsewhipped 40 times by civil authorities if three or more of them were seen talking on a public street. In death, they were buried in stacks as much as five deep in soil too poor to serve any other purpose. Now, after two centuries of oblivion, New York's slaves have reappeared in the city that long ago forgot them. An archaeological excavation at a construction site in the heart of downtown Manhattan has rediscovered the cemetery where the 19th century seaport disposed of its human chattel. Scientists have excavated graves of more than 60 people, most of them believed to have been slaves, and expect to find more than 100 by the time the project is finished.

"These people, about whom nothing was recorded in their lives, have become tremendously valuable resources," archaeologist Michael Parrington said. [Parrington's specialty is excavation of black urban burial grounds.] "No one thought they were important when they lived. No one though to write down anything about them. Now the remains of these people are telling their story." Between the razing of old buildings and the rising of a 34-story federal office building, progress has paused a moment to listen for the faint voices of the dead. About 50 yards east of Broadway, scholars pinpointed the Revolutionary War-era cemetery. It is perhaps a 15-minute, brisk stroll from the scene of the old slave market at the end of Wall Street, and scarcely a stone's throw from the City Hall offices of David Dinkins, New York's first black mayor.

When the federal government cleared the property to build its office tower, historical preservation laws required an archaeological survey. Using maps, deeds, and building plans, archaeologists concluded that, while previous construction ruined most of the graves, a few should have been preserved under an intersection of 19th Century alleys. "Once we began digging we found even more than we expected," Parrington said. It is painstaking work, conducted with dentist's tools and fine haired brushes. Excavating and removing a single skeleton can take more than a week. "Delays for the archaeology could cost up to $1 million per day," said William Diamond, regional administrator for the General Services Administration. "But we've uncovered 18th Century New York here."

Around the site, scientists have found signs of old tanneries and pottery works; the slaves were buried amid the foul, heavy industry of the day. But the ground where the graves were dug was not even fit for mining clay and, in its day, was the least desirable land in Manhattan. "It is an irony," Parrington said, "that this real estate, once so poor its only value was to bury poor black people, is now so expensive."

Source: The Seattle Times, December 1, 1991, p. A10.

CHAPTER THREE:

Revolution, 1776, and

American Slavery

CHAPTER THREE: Revolution, 1776, and American Slavery

Black slavery represented the most profound contradiction in the avowed struggle against British political slavery. Despite sincere efforts by some Americans to eliminate slavery from the American social and economic landscape in the years of and immediately following the American Revolution, the institution soon became entrenched in the fabric of antebellum society. The vignettes in this chapter reflect curious course of the struggle for liberty.

Crispus Attucks and the Boston Massacre *describes the action of one of the first colonists to fall at the hands of British soldiers. Conversely,* ***Lord Dunmore's Proclamation*** *announces freedom to black slaves who support the Crown while* ***British Troops and Black Freedom*** *describes the impact of the British military occupation of Philadelphia on the cause of black liberty. The vignette,* ***James Otis and Thomas Jefferson on Slavery*** *illustrate the varied differences in the intensity of opposition to human bondage by some revolutionary political leaders. Of course,* ***The World of Thomas Jefferson*** *suggests reasons for his ambivalence toward slavery; from birth Jefferson was surrounded by slaves and the numerous services they provided. Conversely,* ***African Americans and the American Revolution*** *and* ***A Petition for Freedom*** *show the various practical efforts of black Americans to use the Revolution to end their personal slavery. The vignettes* ***Black Soldiers in the Service of the Revolution***, ***South Carolina Contemplates Black Soldiers*** *and* ***The Rhode Island First Regiment*** *describe black military participation in the struggle for independence. Phillis Wheatley, one of the earliest black poets, provides her view of the revolution through her verse in the vignette,* ***The Poetry of Phillis Wheatley*** *while the vignette,* ***The End of Slavery in Massachusetts*** *reflects the apex of anti-slavery sentiment during the years immediately following the American Revolution.*

Terms For Week Four:

Crispus Attucks

Phyllis Wheatley

Lord Dunmore's Proclamation

Black Pioneers

Lord Dunmore' Ethiopian Regiment

Africanization

Notes on Virginia

Salem Poor

The Rhode Island First Regiment

Commonwealth v. Jennison

Boston King

Thomas Peters

Nova Scotia

Sierra Leone

CRISPUS ATTUCKS AND THE BOSTON MASSACRE

The Boston Massacre, the March 5, 1770 confrontation between Boston residents and British soldiers, which resulted in the death of five civilians, is considered the first incident in which American blood was shed in the cause of liberty. In the account below Benjamin Quarles provides a description of Crispus Attacks, the fugitive slave, who was the first to fall.

A small crowd had gathered around a soldier stationed at the Custom House on King Street, accusing him of using the butt of his musket on a boy who had made slurring remarks about a British officer. Pelted with a volley of snow balls and broken ice, the solitary sentinel loaded his gun, backed up the steps, and called for help. From the British twenty-ninth regiment a rescuing file of eight came, followed quickly by Captain Thomas Preston, the officer of the day. The crowd, now swollen to more than fifty men, grew rowdier; it flung another barrage at the British reinforcements and taunted the troops with shouted insults: "You lobster," "You bloody-back," "You coward." Then the town fire bell was sounded, and "numerous bodys immediately assembled in the streets." Some who poured into the square carried fire bags and buckets, not knowing they were answering a false alarm; others came "armed, some with musquets, but most with clubs, bludgeons and such like weapons."

The restraint of the soldiers finally gave way when one of them received a blow, which threw him off-balance and knocked his gun to the ground. In an act blended of panic, resentment, self-defense, and a belief that above the din they had heard the voice of Captain Preston ordering them to fire, the soldiers discharged their weapons. Eleven civilians were hit. Three lay motionless, killed immediately; eight were wounded, two of them mortally. The coming Revolutionary War had its martyrs. "If there had ever been any intention in the Colonies to rebel, what a fair opening had been made," wrote a resident of the city, "the military, without the least provocation, slaughtering the unarmed defenseless and innocent citizens."

John Adams later observed that the men who lost their lives that night were "the most obscure and inconsiderable that could have been found upon the continent." His remark had some justification. Crispus Attucks, "the first to defy, and the first to die," was a Negro of obscure origin, with some admixture of Indian blood. Presumably he had been a slave, for he hailed from Framingham, Massachusetts, where in 1750 William Brown of that city had advertised for his runaway man, "a mulatto fellow, about 27 years of age, named Crispus, 6 feet 2 inches high, short, curl'd hair, his knees nearer together than common." Attuck's obscurity prior to the Boston Massacre was in dramatic contrast to his role on that occasion. On that evening he had gone to a "victualling house" kept by Thomas Simmons. While at supper he heard the fire bell ring and quickly went out to join the gathering crowd. On the way to King Street, he stepped to the fore of a crowd of twenty or thirty men, many of whom brandished sticks or clubs gathered from butcher's stalls and wood piles. He carried "a large cord-wood stick." Becoming more noisy and numerous with each step, the crowd made its way to King Street and confronted Captain Preston and his hastily summoned rescue squad. Then it was that a British soldier, Hugh Montgomery, was struck.

Who dealt the blow and thereby touched off the firing? An eye-witness, Andrew, slave of Oliver Wendell, a Boston selectman, told a story, the one that has more generally been accepted:

> The People seemed to be leaving the soldiers, and to turn from them when there came down a number from Jackson's corner, huzzaing and crying, damn them,

they dare not fire, we are not afraid of them. One of these people, a stout man with a long cord wood stick, threw himself in, and made a blow at the officer; I saw the officer try to ward off the stroke; whether he struck him or not I do not know; the stout man then turned around, and struck the grenadier's gun at the captain's right hand, and immediately fell in with his club, and knocked his gun away, and struck him over the head; the blow came either on the soldier's cheek or hat. This stout man held the bayonet with his left hand, and twitched it and cried, kill the dogs, knock them over. This was the general cry; the people then crowded in.

When the court asked the identity of the "stout man," Andrew replied, "I thought, and still think, it was the mulatto who was shot."

Whatever Attucks actually did that night, his prominent role in the Boston Massacre owed much to John Adams, who as counsel defending the British soldiers, chose to make him the chief target. Adams informed the trail jury that it was Attucks who "appears to have undertaken to be the hero of the night; and to lead this army with banners, to form them in the first place in Dock square, and march them up to King Street with their clubs." It was Attucks "whose very looks was enough to terrify any person," who "had hardiness enough to fall in upon the, and with one hand took hold of a bayonet, and with the other knocked the man down." It was Attucks "to whose mad behavior, in all probability, the dreadful carnage of that night is chiefly to be ascribed."

Attucks's one impulsive act wrote his name in the annals of American history, for patriots did not allow the Boston Massacre to be forgotten. Its anniversary was duly observed each year in a public ceremony. Bells would toll during the day, and at night lighted transparencies depicted the soldiers and their victims, giving a substance of sorts to the "discontented ghosts, with hollow groans," summoned to solemnize the occasion. The highlight of the evening was a stirring address by a leading citizen which, as the contemporary historian David Ramsay observed, "administered fuel to the fire of liberty, and kept it burning with an incessant flame." The propaganda value of the Boston Massacre cannot be minimized, for despite the just acquittal of Captain Preston and his squad, the initial impression of foul play was never effaced. "No previous outrage had given a general alarm, as the commotion of the fifth of March, 1770," wrote Mercy Warren, sister of James Otis. It "created a resentment which emboldened the timid" and "determined the wavering."

The lives of the five men who died on the occasion were nothing compared with military losses in the Revolution. But as John Fiske remarked in 1889 while speaking at the dedication of the Crispus Attucks monument on the Boston Common, "it will not do to measure history with a foot-rule."

Source: Benjamin Quarles, The Negro in the American Revolution, (Chapel Hill, 1961), pp. 3-7.

LORD DUNMORE'S PROCLAMATION

In November, 1775, after it became apparent that a reconciliation between the British and the rebellious colonists was impossible, Lord Dunmore, the Royal Governor of Virginia, issued the following proclamation promising freedom to all slaves and servants who supported the Crown.

A PROCLAMATION

As I have ever entertained hopes that an accommodation might have taken place between *Great Britain* and this Colony, without being compelled by my duty to this most disagreeable, but now absolutely necessary step, rendered so by a body of armed men, unlawfully assembled, firing on His Majesty's Tenders; and the formation of an Army, and that Army now on the march to attack His Majesty's Troops, and destroy the well-disposed subjects of this Colony: To defeat such treasonable purposes, and that all such traitors and their abettors may be brought to justice, and that the peace and good order of this Colony may be again restored, which the ordinary course of the civil law is unable to effect, I have thought fit to issue this my Proclamation, hereby declaring, that until the aforesaid good purposes can be obtained, I do, in virtue of the power and authority to me given by His Majesty, determine to execute martial law, and clause the same to be executed throughout this Colony. And to the end that peace and good order may the sooner be restored, I do require every person capable of bearing arms to resort to His Majesty's standard, or be looked upon as traitors to His Majesty's crown and Government, and thereby become liable to the penalty the law inflicts upon such offenses--such as forfeiture of life, confiscation of lands, &c., &c; and I do hereby further declare all indented [sic] servants, Negroes, or others, (appertaining to Rebels,) free, that are able and willing to bear arms, they joining His Majesty's Troops, as son as may be, for the more speedily reducing this Colony to a proper sense of their duty to His Majesty's crown and dignity. I do further order and require all His Majesty's liege subjects to retain their quit-rents, or any other taxes due, or that may become due, in their own custody, will such time as peace may be again restored to this, at present, most unhappy Country, or demanded of them for their former salutary purposes, by officers properly authorized to receive the same.

Given under my hand, on board the Ship *William*, off *Norfolk*, the 7th day of *November*, in the sixteenth year of His Majesty's reign.

DUNMORE

GOD Save the King

Source: Peter Force, ed., American Archives, A Documentary History of the American Colonies, 94th ser., 6 vols.; Washington, 1837-1853), ser. 4, III, p. 1385.

BRITISH TROOPS AND BLACK FREEDOM

That the American Revolution was waged in the name of political liberty and yet its leaders tolerated personal slavery is well known to those familiar with the history of that era. Black slaves nevertheless used the social and political chaos generated by the war to strike out for freedom. The passage below describes how the occupation of Philadelphia by British troops in September, 1777 provided opportunities for black freedom.

Three thousand British and Hessian troops marched into the city.... For the next nine months Philadelphia remained an occupied city, with as many as 10,000 troops and 2,000 cavalry garrisoned there. In the manner of most occupying armies, they used the city harshly. But for the city's black inhabitants the British occupation offered unusual opportunities to break the bonds of slavery. A slave did not have to flee by night and negotiate many miles through patriot territory to reach the English army on the coast, as in Virginia, but merely had to leave the master's house and report to the occupying British army billeted on every block. Foreseeing such circumstances, many owners no doubt took their slaves with them when they left Philadelphia, or, if they remained in the city, sent their slaves into the countryside. They knew, as the Lutheran minister Henry Muhlenberg wrote, that the slaves "secretly wished that the British army might win, for then all Negro slaves will gain their freedom."

Many Philadelphia slaves, whether they were taken to the countryside or remained in the city, found ways to escape and join the British ranks and fight against the Americans. This was not only a way of escaping bondage but, equally important, provided a means of contributing to the British victory, which many slaves thought would bring about a general emancipation. The belief that the British would free all slaves after defeating the Americans, reported the judicious Reverend Muhlenberg in 1777, "is almost universal among the *Negroes* in America."

The desire to fight with the British must have been heightened by the presence among Cornwallis's occupying troops of the Black Guides and Pioneers, a company raised in Virginia that fought under white officers throughout the war. A muster list of the Guides and Pioneers, taken on September 5, 1777, as the British troops were marching north toward Philadelphia, showed 172 men, 2 women, and 2 children. Three months later, another muster taken in Philadelphia showed 200 men and 8 women, suggesting that the numbers had been swelled by escaping slaves in and around the city. These "irregular" troops epitomized for whites the alienation and danger of those denied their freedom, for, as Muhlenberg warned, they were "fitted for and inclined toward barbarities, are lacking in human feeling, and are familiar with every corner of the country."

Source: Gary Nash, Forging Freedom: The Formation of Philadelphia's Black Community, 1720-1840, (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 47-49.

JAMES OTIS AND THOMAS JEFFERSON ON SLAVERY

Colonial era Americans were much more troubled by slavery than would be most of their 19th Century descendants. James Otis, a Boston attorney and later patriot leader in 1761 wrote an anti-British pamphlet which condemned slavery and warned his fellow colonists against denying liberty to anyone. Fifteen years later Thomas Jefferson, himself a slaveowner torn over the issue of slavery in a political revolution dedicated to liberty, wrote a paragraph into one of the early drafts of the Declaration of Independence denouncing King George III for promoting slavery. The paragraph is reprinted below:

Otis: The Colonist are by the law of nature free born, as indeed all men are, white or black. No better reasons can be given, for enslaving those of any colour, than such as baron Montesquieu has humorously given, as the foundation of that cruel slavery exercised over the poor Ethiopians; which threatens one day to reduce both Europe and America to the ignorance and barbarity of the darkest ages.

Does it follow that it is right to enslave a man because he is black? Will short curled hair, like wool, instead of Christian hair, as it is called by those whose hearts are as hard as the millstone, help the argument? Can any logical inference in favor of slavery, be drawn from a flat nose, a long or short face? Nothing better can be said in favour of a trade, that is the most shocking violation of the law of nature, has a direct tendency to diminish the idea of the inestimable value of liberty, and makes every dealer in it a tyrant, from the director of an Africa company to the petty chapman in needles and pins on the unhappy coast. It is a clear truth, that those who every day barter away other mens liberty, will soon care little for their own.

Jefferson: He [King George] has waged cruel war against human nature itself, violating its most sacred rights of life and liberty in the persons of a distant people who never offended him, captivating and carrying them into slavery in another hemisphere, or to incur miserable death in their transport thither. This piratical warfare, the opprobrium of infidel powers, is the warfare of the Christian king of Great Britain. Determined to keep open a market were MEN should be bought and sold, he has prostituted his negative for suppressing every legislative attempt to prohibit or restrain this execrable commerce; and that this assemblage of horror might want no face of distinguished die, he is now exciting those very people to rise in arms among us, and to purchase that liberty of which HE deprived them, by murdering the people upon whom He also obtruded them; plus paying off former crimes committed against the liberty of one people, with crimes which he urges them to commit against the lives of another.

Sources: James Otis, The Rights of the British Colonies Asserted and Proved (London, 1776), pp. 43-44; Lerone Bennett, Ebony Pictorial History of Black America, Vol I, (Nashville, 1971), p. 71.

THE WORLD OF THOMAS JEFFERSON

In the following account Jefferson biographer John Chester Miller describes the paradox of the lifelong dependence of the nation's third president on the everpresent black servants who attended him even as he condemned the institution as inimical to rights of humanity Jefferson consistently defended.

Thomas Jefferson was intimately associated with slavery from the cradle to the grave. His first memory was of being carried on a pillow by a slave; and a slave carpenter made the coffin in which he was buried at Monticello. The labor of black slaves made possible Jefferson's cultivation of the arts; the building of Monticello and the Virginia State Capitol, his principal architectural monuments; the acquisition of the books which made his library one of the largest private libraries in the United States (and which eventually former the nucleus of the Library of Congress); the accumulation of choice wines and the fine food prepared by a French chef, both of which made dinner at the President's House a notable event in the lives of congressmen; and the leisure which he devoted to science, philosophy, and politics. Even Jefferson's salaries as Secretary of State, Vice-President and President were indirectly paid in large part by slaves: their labor provided the tobacco, cotton, and sugar, the export of which stimulated Northern shipping, manufacture, banking, and insurance and enabled the United States to make remittances for imported manufactured goods and to attract the foreign investment capital vital to the agricultural, industrial, and commercial development of the Republic. Next to land, slaves constituted the largest property interest in the country, far larger than manufacturing and shipping combined. Truly, one of the main pillars of the world of Thomas Jefferson was black slavery.

The pillar Jefferson was resolved to destroy. As he saw it, the eradication of slavery was to be the crowning achievement of the American Revolution; that revolution could not be considered complete, he insisted, until this ugly scar, a vestige of the colonial period, had been removed. Compared with many of his fellow patriots, Jefferson was a radical revolutionary: revolutions, he said, were not made with rose water, and the purpose of a revolution was not to dispense sweetness and light but to effect needed changes in the existing social, political, and economic structure. He never supposed that the American Revolution consisted merely of the severance of the political ties that united the colonies to Great Britain or that it was an effort to maintain liberties already enjoyed in full plenitude by Americans. Among other things, Jefferson propose to destroy in Virginia the last vestiges of "artificial aristocracy" based upon wealth and family connections and to bring to the fore the talents and virtues that lay submerged and fallow in the lower strata of society. Even though he was born into the aristocracy, Jefferson put his hope of a new order in "the plebeian interest." Without the abolition of slavery, Jefferson realized that the attainment of a society based upon freedom and equality of opportunity would forever elude the American people....

Slaves were ubiquitous in the society in which Jefferson was reared and in which he came to his majority. Especially in the privileged circles of society in which Jefferson moved, it was difficult to find anyone who did not own slaves. His father was a slaveowner from whom Thomas inherited both land and slaves; all the Randolphs, to whom he related through his mother, held slaves; and when he went to Williamsburg in 1760 to attend the College of William and Mary he took with him a personal slave, "Jupiter," whom he later made his coachman. Jefferson's wife's dowry consisted of 132 slaves and many thousands of acres of land. Like other

Virginia patricians, he reckoned his wealth principally in slaves and land. By the time he wrote the Declaration of Independence he had become, by inheritance, purchase, and marriage, one of the principal slaveowners and one of the wealthiest men in Virginia....

If Jefferson as a Virginia planter was caught inextricably in the toils of slavery, as a man of the Enlightenment he knew the institution to antithetical to the ideals by which he lived. The Enlightenment of the eighteenth century has been well characterized by Sir Isaiah Berlin, the English philosopher and historian of ideas, as the best and most hopeful episode in the history of mankind. To the men of the Enlightenment, their age was like the dawn of a new day of humanism, rationality, scientific methodology, and religious toleration after a long night of superstition, intolerance, and misery. During the preceding century, Europe had fallen prey to visionaries, rabid dogmatists, and religious "enthusiasts," with the result that it had been devastated by religious wars. From the havoc wrought by unbridled religious zeal, European thinkers turned their attention in the eighteenth century to the problems confronting man upon this earth rather than in the next world and to utilitarianism rather than metaphysical speculation. Man-his psychology his physical characteristics, his political and social institutions, and his place in the universe-became the principal theme of the age. The eighteenth century discovered a new world in which man figured as a free, independent individual and in which his worth and dignity, rather than his depravity and proneness to sin, were regarded as his dominant characteristics. From the idea of a rational benevolent Creator, the men of the eighteenth century Enlightenment proceeded to the idea of rational, benevolent man, the finest work of the author Nature and the center of all created things.

It was assumed by these eighteenth century minds-and they made some very bold assumptions based upon their faith in an orderly, rational, and comprehensible universe-that the creative intelligence of man, working in harmony with the designs of Nature, was capable of creating a social order in which oppression, want, and misery would be replaced by freedom, happiness, and contentment. If man's potential was assumed to be without limit, then all things were possible once the restraints he had himself imposed upon his nature-and, above all, upon his reasoning powers-had been removed. Then, for the first time since man left the state of Nature, he would be free to function according to his ability and thereby to attain the statue intended for him by a benevolent Creator. The quintessence of wisdom, as the men of the Enlightenment conceived it, was to bring the existing social, political, and economic order into conformity with the plans of a benign Creator who wished well to mankind.

Without exception, the men of the Enlightenment condemned slavery as a vestige of barbarism, an offense against the moral law, and a flagrant violation of the rights of man derived from the Creator. It was agreed that all men received from Nature, by virtue of their common humanity, an absolute right to the fruit of their labor and to the freedom of their persons of which they could not lawfully be deprived. Where human rights were concerned, the Enlightenment studiously ignored skin coloration.

John Chester Miller, The Wolf by the Ears: Thomas Jefferson and Slavery, (New York, 1977), pp. 1-2, 3-4.

AFRICAN AMERICANS AND THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

When the Revolution began in 1775 most African Americans were not allowed to serve in the Continental armies and militia. However the passages below illustrate both early exceptions to the policy and the changing attitude of white America toward black participation in the Revolutionary War.

The Subscribers begg leave to Report to your Hon'ble House (which we do in justice to the Character of so Brave a Man) that under Our Own observation, We declare that a Negro Man Called Salem Poor of Col. Frye's Regiment, Cap't Ames Company--in the late Battle of Charlestown, behaved like an Experienced officer, as well as an Excellent Soldier, to set forth Particulars of his Conduct would be Tedious, We would only begg leave to Say in the Person of this Negro Centers a Brave and gallant Soldier. The Reward due to so great and Distinguished a Character, We Submit to the Congress-- Cambridge, Dec. 5th 1775

Jon A. Brewer, Col.
[signed by 13 other officers]

To the Honorable General Court
of the Massachusetts Bay

State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
February 14, 1778

Whereas, for the preservation of the rights and liberties of the United States, it is necessary that the whole powers of government should be exerted in recruiting the Continental battalions....It is voted and resolved, that every able-bodied negro, mulatto, or Indian man slave, in this state, may enlist into either of the said two battalions, to serve during the continuance of the present war with Great Britain.

That every slave, so enlisting, shall be entitled to, and receive, all the bounties, wages, and encouragements, allowed by the Continental Congress, to any soldier enlisting into their service.

It is further voted and resolved, that every slave so enlisting, shall, upon his passing muster before Col. Christopher Greene, be immediately discharged from the service of his master or mistress, and be absolutely FREE, as though he had never been encumbered with any kind of servitude or slavery.

Source: Revolutionary Rolls, Collection, Massachusetts Archives (State House, Boston), CLXXX, P. 241; John Russell Bartlett, Records of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations in New England (10 vols., Providence), III, pp. 358-360.

A PETITION FOR FREEDOM, 1784

Most 18th Century free blacks gained their liberty by serving in the Continental Armies. In the petition below, Ned Griffin, a North Carolina slave describes his role in the Battle of Gilford, in his request for freedom before the North Carolina Assembly.

To The General Assembly of the State of North Carolina

The Petitioner of Ned Griffin a Man of mixed Blood Humbley Saieth that a Small space of Time before the Battle of Gilford a certain William Kitchen then in the Service of his Countrey as a Soldier Deserted from his line for which he was Turned in to the Continental Service to serve as the Law Directs--Your Petitioner was then a Servant to William Griffin and was purchased by the said Kitchen for the purpose of Serving in His place, with a Solom Assurance that if he your Petitioner would faithfully serve the Term of Time that the said Kitchen was Returned for he should be a free Man--Upon which Promise and Assurance your Petitioner Consented to enter in to the Continental Service in said Kitchens Behalf and was Received by Colonel James Armstrong at Martinborough as a free Man Your Petitioner furter saieth that at that Time no Person could have been hired to have served in said Kitchens behalf for so small a sum as what I was purchased for and that at the Time that I was Received into Service by said Colo: Armstrong said Kitchen Openly Declaired me to be free Man--The Faithfull performance of the above agreement will appear from my Discharge,--some Time after your Petitioners Return he was Seized upon by said Kitchen and Sold to a Certain Abner Roberson who now holds me as a Servant--Your Petitioner therefore thinks that by Contract and merit he is Intitled to his Freedom I therefore submit my case to your Honourable Body hoping that I shall have that Justice done me as in your Wisdom shall think I am Intitled to and Desarving of & Your Petitioner as in duty bound

Will Pray

N. Carolina

Edgecombe County — his

April 4th 1784 — Ned X Griffin

mark

Source: Archives, North Carolina Historical Commission, Raleigh, North Carolina.

BLACK SOLDIERS IN THE SERVICE OF THE REVOLUTION

In the account below historian Benjamin Quarles describes the black soldiers who fought with patriot forces during the American Revolution.

The typical Negro soldier was a private, consigned....to the rank and file. Even more than other privates, he tended to lack identity. Often he bore no specific name; he was carried on the rolls as a "A Negro Man," or "Negro Name unknown." Rarely did he serve in the small corps of American cavalry. Free Negro John Banks of Goochland County, Virginia, saw two years of service as a cavalryman in Theodorick Bland's regiment, but Banks' case was exceptional. The mounted service tended to be made up of men of property and reputation, and the Negro enlistee, as a rule, had neither.

A small number of Negroes saw service in the brigade of artillery regiments. One of these, Edward Hector, of the Third Pennsylvania Artillery, took part in the Battle of Brandywine in September 1777. When the American army was pulled back, Hector disobeyed the order to abandon wagons. Making use of arms left on the field by fleeing soldiers, he protected his horses and his ammunition wagon, bringing them safely in. Fifty years later the Pennsylvania legislature gave him a $40.00 donation....

If the Negro soldier felt himself an object of discrimination, it does not seem to have been reflected in his behavior. To be a soldier, with all its discomforts and dangers, was likely to be a step forward, as the Negro saw it.... A former slave or low-paid town laborer, he was likely to be inured to the multiple hardships and privations of army life. The Negro soldier was seldom beset by conflicts of interest. With fewer reasons for clinging to civilian life, he was less given to summoning up the excuses which a vexed chief of artillery heard so often: "my business will not permit me to go," "I shall lose a very good bargain...." One of the notorious features of the American military service was the high incidence of unofficial absence; one-third of the regular troops deserted at one time or another. Negroes were sometimes included among those who ran away. A return of deserters at Ticonderoga on June 9, 1777, listed a mulatto, Israel Newport.... But Negroes were less inclined than white soldiers to walk off without official leave. They were not likely to have a farm that needed protection nor the kind of home that inspired homesickness. They had less to desert to.

Service in the American army was for [the negro] a way of gaining freedom..... Summing up the case for giving a slave his freedom upon enlistment, a Boston editor observed: "Our non-emancipated soldiers are irresistibly tempted to defect to our foes."

The slave's motivation was unmistakable, but what brought free Negroes into the army? In some cases they were drafted.... The free Negro who enlisted of his own volition, however, was probably inspired by a desire for adventure, a conviction of the justice of America's cause, a belief in the high-sounding goals of the Revolution, but also the prospect of receiving a bounty. Money gifts were generously given (or promised) to those who joined the army. In the later years of the war, when most of the Negroes were recruited, the badly depreciated currency bonuses were superseded by land grants as soldier bait. A grant of 100 acre to a private....was a tempting offer in a region where land determined one's social status no less than his economic well-being.

Source: Benjamin Quarles, The Negro in the American Revolution (Chapel Hill, 1961), pp. 74-80.

THE RHODE ISLAND FIRST REGIMENT

In the following account historian Benjamin Quarles describes one of the most remarkable African American military units in the annals of United States history, the Rhode Island First Regiment in the Battle of Rhode Island, August, 1778.

Since Negro soldiers fought side by side with whites, rather than in separate organizations, there was no battle in which black Americans were conspicuous as a racial group. Perhaps the Battle of Rhode Island in August 1778--the only engagement in the state between the British and the Americans--comes nearest to being an engagement in which Negroes were distinctive as a group. But even in this instance Colonel [Christopher] Greene's First Regiment, composed of Negroes, was but a fraction of one of the six brigades which made up General John Sullivan's forces.

The battle was in essence a skillfully executed retreat from the northern end of the island of Rhode Island. The withdrawal was necessary because a terrific sea storm had battered a French squadron, under the Count d'Estaing, which had undertaken to cooperate with the Americans. When the commanding officer, John Sullivan, learned that no French aid was forthcoming and that the British forces on the island were about to be heavily reenforced, he ordered a retreat to the mainland. Thereupon the British launched a general attack aimed at preventing the withdrawal so that British warships, then en route, could cut the Americans off.

Colonel Greene's regiment with some 125 colored soldiers, of whom over 30 were free Negroes, held one of the positions assaulted by the British-Hessian forces. When the enemy made three spirited charges against the American right wing, the First Regiment, ably led by Major Samuel Ward, held the ground in its sector. Meeting "a more stubborn resistance than they expected," the Hessians suffered heavy casualties. Knowing that a large majority of the men of the First Regiment were little more than raw recruits, having been in the army only three months, the British command doubtless expected that this unit would show weakness and yield, thus exposing a soft spot in the American defense. If this was the plan, it was a costly miscalculation. In nearly four hours of hard fighting, the colored troops held as firmly as the other patriot troops.

The upshot was a retreat in which the whole army and its equipment was brought safely to the mainland. The American forces sustained only 211 casualties, scarcely more than a fifth of those incurred by the enemy. Of the American casualties Greene's regiment had a total of 22, of which 2, were killed, 9 wounded, and 11 missing...

Many flattering phrases were lavished on Sullivan for the masterly executed withdrawal. Congress gave him a vote of thanks, as did Rhode Island and his home state, New Hampshire. In turn, Sullivan said some generous things about his troops and their officers. In the general chorus of praise the predominately colored unit was not left out. The First Regiment, said Sullivan in orders issued on August 30, would be entitled to a proper share of the day's honors.

Source: Benjamin Quarles, The Negro in the American Revolution (Chapel Hill, 1961), pp. 80-82.

SOUTH CAROLINA CONTEMPLATES BLACK SOLDIERS

In 1779, South Carolina, desperate for troops to mount a defense against the British, called on the Continental Congress for assistance. The Congress created a committee which responded that there were no forces that could be spared. The committee's subsequent suggestion, however, created a maelstrom of protest in South Carolina. The suggestion and the response appear below.

The committee...proposed to meet the emergency by having South Carolina and Georgia immediately raise a force of three thousand black troops and organize them into separate battalions commanded by white officers and noncommissioned officers, appointed by the two states. For each slave who enlisted and passed muster, the committee recommended that the Congress pay his master up to $1,000. The black soldiers themselves would receive no bounty or pay but would be fed and clothed at the expense of the federal government. Those who survived and served "well and faithfully" to the end of the war, and then turned in their arms, would be freed with a fifty-dollar bonus. The committee assured the Congress that blacks would make good soldiers because they were east to discipline and, once trained, would reduce the danger of revolts and desertions by drawing off "the most vigorous and enterprising" of the slaves, at the same time pacifying the others by holding open the door of possible freedom. Finally, they urged that, since the proposal might "involve inconveniences" to South Carolina and Georgia, the Congress should meet the cost of the project.

On March 29, the Continental Congress unanimously endorsed the proposal but stipulated that it be put into effect only with the consent of the two states concerned. On the same day, John Laurens [of South Carolina] who had suggested the proposal to his father, a member of the committee, was commissioned by the Congress as a lieutenant colonel to head the black battalion. He was instructed to present the proposal to the state legislatures of South Carolina and Georgia. Henry Laurens doubted the likelihood of his son's success in trying "to persuade rich men to part with the very source of their wealth, and as they suppose, tranquillity."

Henry Laurens's doubts proved justified. Fear of black insurrection bordered on panic in the Lower South, and it was inevitable that the Congressional proposal should be viewed as a serious threat to the social and economic order. "Many in SOuth Carolina and Georgia," one historian notes, "regarded arming the slaves as an unpleasant way to commit suicide." "We are much disgusted here," wrote Christopher Gadsden, aristocrat and politician, from Charleston, "at the Congress recommending us to arm our slaves, it was received with great resentment, as a very dangerous and impolitic step." In spite of Laurens's pleas in its behalf, the measure was rejected overwhelmingly...by the South Carolina legislature. Indeed, the proposal impelled the privy council to recommend that South Carolina withdraw from the conflict, a proposal that failed [to win] acceptance.

Source: Jack D. Foner, Blacks and the Military in American History: A New Perspective (New York, 1974) pp. 12-13.

THE END OF SLAVERY IN MASSACHUSETTS, 1783

The decision of the Massachusetts Supreme Court in Commonwealth v. Jennison which outlawing slavery in 1783 is reprinted below. Massachusetts, after Vermont, was the second state to abolish slavery and many anti-slavery advocates hoped most of the other states, caught up in the revolutionary fervor of the time, would follow its lead. Most of them did not although gradual emancipation was adopted by New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania.

As to the doctrine of slavery and the right of Christians to hold Africans in perpetual servitude, and sell and treat them as we do our horses and cattle, that (it is true) has been heretofore countenanced by the Province Laws formerly, but nowhere is it expressly enacted or established. It had been a usage--a usage which took its origin from the practice of some of the European nations, and the regulation of British government respecting the then Colonies, for the benefit of trade and wealth. But whatever sentiments have formerly prevailed in this particular or slid in upon us by the example of others, a different idea has taken place with the people of American, more favorable to the natural rights of mankind, and to that natural, innate desire of Liberty, which with Heaven (without regard to color, complexion, or shape of noses) has inspired all the human race.

And upon this ground our Constitution of Government, by which the people of this Commonwealth have solemnly bound themselves, sets out with declaring that all men are born free and equal--and that every subject is entitled to liberty, and to have it guarded by the laws, as well as life and property--and in short is totally repugnant to the idea of being born slaves.

This being the case, I think the idea of slavery is inconsistent with our own conduct and Constitution; and there can be no such thing as perpetual servitude of a rational creature, unless his liberty is forfeited by some criminal conduct or given up by personal consent or contract.

Source: Richard Current, American History: A Survey, (New York, 1961), p. 96

THE POETRY OF PHILLIS WHEATLEY

Born in Africa, Phillis Wheatley was reared a slave in Boston where, after easily learning to read and write, she began writing poetry. The two poems reprinted below, appeared in a volume of poetry published in 1773. Wheatley, although a slave for the remainder of her life, also holds the distinction of having been the second American woman to be published.

ON BEING BROUGHT FROM AFRICA TO AMERICA

Twas mercy brought me from my Pagan Land,
Taught my benighted soul to understand
That there's a God, and there's a Saviour too:
Once I redemption neither sought nor knew.
Some view our sable race with scornful eye,
"Their colour is a diabolic die."
Remember, Christians, Negroes, black as Cain,
May be refin'd, and join th' angelic train

TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE WILLIAM, EARL OF DARTMOUTH, HIS MAJESTY'S SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTH AMERICA, ETC.

Should you, my lord, while you peruse my song,
Wonder from whence my love of Freedom sprung,
Whence flow these wishes for the common good,
By feeling hearts alone best understood,
I, young in life, by seeming cruel fate
Was snatch'd from Afric's fancy'd happy seat:
What pangs excruciating must molest,
What sorrows labour in my parent's breast?
Steel'd was the soul and by no misery mov'd
That from, a father seiz'd his babe belov'd:
Such, such my case. And can I then but pray
Others may never feel tyrannic sway?

Source: Leslie H. Fishel and Benjamin Quarles, The Negro American: A Documentary History, (Glenview, Ill, 1967) p. 37.

CHAPTER FOUR:

American Slavery

CHAPTER FOUR: American Slavery

Propelled by Eli Whitney's invention of the cotton gin in 1793, the cotton plantation system rapidly spread across the South in the early 19th Century. With cotton cultivation came slavery so that by the 1830s maps identifying heavy cotton cultivation and slave concentrations were almost identical. Cotton and black slavery now became fixed on the Southern economic, political and cultural landscape and in fact were central to the region's way of life. That centrality would be bloodily put to the test in 1861 when Southerners, faced with the possibility of the curtailing of the westward expansion of the "Cotton Kingdom" and the undermining of slavery, opted to leave the Union.

The vignettes in this chapter reflect the emergence of this slave system and the reaction of the slaves to their servitude. In ***The Plantation Complex*** *we see the European roots, and the worldwide proliferation of the plantation system we usually associated with the antebellum South. The vignettes,* ***Haiti and the Fears of Slaveholders*** *and* ***Haiti: The Aftermath in the Southern States****, describe the role of that nation's revolution in shaping U.S. slavery.* ***American Ships and the Illegal Slave Trade*** *describes the continuing role of U.S. slave traders in the international commerce after the slave importation ban went into effect in 1807. The vignette,* ***A Northerner's Description of Slavery****, provides a glimpse into the society from the perspective of a New England college professor in 1817. The slave system is defended and attacked in the vignette,* ***Two Views of Slavery****, while* ***Slavery and Social Control*** *and* ***An Act Prohibiting the Teaching of Slaves to Read****, document the extent to which slavery was viewed as a means of regulating the black population.* ***The Saga of Louisa Picquet*** *and* ***Slavery and Sexual Abuse*** *detail the powerlessness of black female slaves at the hands of male owners bent on sexual pleasure while* ***The Importance of "Breeding"*** *and* ***Slavery's Impact on Race and Gender Roles*** *amplifies the confluence of sexual and economic exploitation under the servile institution. By contrast,* ***Black Parents and the Sale of Their Children*** *describe the continuing bonds of affection between black families despite their forced separation by sale. Finally, the tables* ***African Americans and Slavery 1790-1820****, and* ***Slavery in the South, 1860****, illustrates the growth of the system during the 19th century.*

Slave resistance to their servile status took many forms. The most spectacular and dangerous resistance was, of course, servile insurrection. But slaves resisted in other direct and subtle ways including escaping the plantation, malingering and sabotaging tools and equipment. Even the development of certain cultural practices, which had long been considered the slave's imprecise attempt to replicate white cultural norms, was in fact a mechanism for making one's existence less onerous. The development of distinctive slave music and dance fall into that category.

The vignettes explore the varied ways of resistance. ***An Eighteenth Century Slave Revolt****,* ***Gabriel Prosser's Conspiracy****,* ***A Rebellion on the Andry Plantation****,* ***Nat Turner's Confession****, and* ***Turner's Revolt: The Impact in the Slave Quarters****, all describe the direct frontal assault by slaves on the servile institution and its consequences for the black and white South.* ***A Fugitive Slave Responds to His Owner*** *describes the defiance and anger of a fugitive slave during the time when apologists for the system delighted in relating anecdotes of happy, contented slaves.*

Finally, the vignettes, ***African Survivals: The Debate****,* ***African Survivals: Slave Religious Music****,* ***The Gullah Language*** *and* ***The Persistence of Africanisms: Black Funerals****, speculates on the African origins of African-American music and describes the antebellum*

antecedents of two distinct strains of black music--gospel and the blues. They also suggest that a different verbal culture full of metaphor and parallel meanings was emerging in the slave quarters.

Terms For Week Four:

Haitian Revolution

Toussaint L'Overture

George Fitzhugh

Louisa Picquet

slave codes

manumission

Seminole Indian Wars

Gag Bill of 1837

overseers

slave drivers

African Survivals

Stono Rebellion

Vesey's Conspiracy

Prosser's Conspiracy

Nat Turner

Fugitive Slave Act

Underground Railroad

THE PLANTATION COMPLEX

In the following vignette historian Philip Curtin describes the global significance of the emerging plantation system.

Over a period of several centuries, Europeans overseas developed an intricate system of plantation agriculture-different from the agricultural institutions they normally used at home. The term *plantation complex* will be used to describe the economic and political order centering on slave plantations in the New World tropics. It reached a peak in the eighteenth century; but its origins can be traced to the medieval Mediterranean, and it lasted through the first two-thirds of the nineteenth century. This political order came to an end only with the abolition of slavery in Brazil and Cuba in the late 1880s, although many aspects lasted well into the twentieth century.

Although the plantation complex centered on the American tropics, its influence was much wider. Political control lay in Europe. Much of the labor force came from Africa, though some came from Amerindian societies on the South American mainland. At its eighteenth-century apogee, many of the trade goods to buy African slaves came from India, while silver to buy these same Indian goods came from mainland South America. Northern North America and Europe were important trading partners, supplying timber and food to the plantations, and consuming the sugar, rum, indigo, coffee, and cotton the plantations produced.

The earliest clear forerunner of the developed plantation complex was the group of plantations that began growing cane sugar in the eastern Mediterranean at the time of the European Crusades. These plantations, unlike the existing Levantine sugar industry, began to grow sugar mainly for a distant market in Europe. They soon became the center of a widespread commercial network bringing in labor and supplies and carrying off the finished product. With the passage of time, the heart of the complex moved westward, by way of the Atlantic islands, to Brazil and the Caribbean. It ultimately stretched from Rio Grande do Sul in southern Brazil to the Mason-Dixon line, and, at its eighteenth-century prime, it had outliers on the Indian Ocean islands of Reunion and Mauritius. In the nineteenth century, a final spurt of growth carried it as far afield as Natal in South Africa, Zanzibar off the East African coast, coastal Peru in South America, Queensland in Australia, and a variety of new "sugar islands" like Fiji and Hawaii. By that time, the plantation form continued, but the labor, though still less than free, was no longer necessarily that of slaves. It was more often supplied by contract workers drawn mainly from India and China. The plantation complex was therefore much more than an economic order for the tropical Americas alone; it had an important place in world history at large. The plantation complex at its most developed state might be defined by some quantitative measure: demographic, such as the proportion of slaves to total population; economic, such as the degree of specialization in production for sale at a distance. Or, a historian could pick a particular plantation society as an example. A historian of the United States could take the "Cotton Kingdom" as it was in the American South from 1830 to 1860. Or a mixed approach could limit the field of choice to preindustrial examples and to societies with the most specialized production and the most intense slave regime. By that standard, the historical model would be Jamaica, Barbados, or Saint Domingue (now Haiti) in the eighteenth century- with Brazil in the seventeenth or Mauritius in the early nineteenth as near competitors.

These and similar places had a number of features that marked them off from other societies, and especially from contemporaneous Europe, their political master. First, most of the productive labor was forced labor; most people were slaves. This was also the case in Russia,

since serfs were slaves for all practical purposes, but Russian estates were not nearly as specialized as tropical plantations. Nor did preindustrial non-Western slaveholding societies in the Muslim world or Southeast Asia have such a high proportion of slaves in the labor force.

Second, the population was not self-sustaining. Neither the European managerial staff nor the African work force produced an excess of births over deaths. Both groups had to be sustained by a constant stream of new people just to maintain their numbers-still larger population inputs it the system were to grow.

Third, agricultural enterprise was organized in large-scale capitalist plantations. Typically, they might have from fifty to several hundred workers--many more than European farms of the time. The owner of the land and the capital equipment managed all stages of production in person or through his agents. On the plantation itself, his agents gave orders for the conduct of all agricultural operations on a day-to-day and hour-to-hour basis. This again was different from the patterns of work organization and management anywhere in European agriculture.

Fourth, though capitalist, the plantation also had certain features that can be called "feudal." Specifically, the owner not only controlled his work force during their working hours, he also held, at least *de facto*, some form of legal jurisdiction. His agents acted informally as police. They punished most minor crimes and settled most disputes without reference to high authority.

Fifth, the plantations were created to supply a distant market with a highly specialized product--at first mainly sugar, but later other like coffee and cotton. The plantation often grew food to feed its own workers, but at times virtually the whole production was exported. This meant that the whole society was dependent on long-distance trade to carry off the crop and to bring in supplies, people, and food. When this happened, more of its total consumption and total production was carried by long-distance traders than in any other part of the world economy of the time. The possible exceptions might be specialized island producers in Asia, like the Maluku Islands that supplied Europe and most of Asia with cloves--just as the slave plantations of Zanzibar were to do in the nineteenth century. Certainly none of the European or African economies was so intensely export-oriented.

Sixth, political control over the system lay on another continent and in another kind of society. Domination from a distance had occurred often enough in history, rarely from so far away. And political control was fragmented. At various times, Portugal, Spain, Holland, England, France, Brandenburg, Sweden, Denmark, and Kurland (more recently Latvia) were active in either the slave trade or the plantations themselves. This meant that each overseas part of the system in Africa or the Americas was linked to a metropolis in Europe, and all the European mechanisms of the European state system.

Source: Philip D. Curtin, "The Tropical Atlantic in the Age of the Slave Trade," Essays on Global and Comparative History, (Washington, D.C. : American Historical Association, 1991), pp. 1-4.

HAITI AND THE FEARS OF SLAVEHOLDERS

After the Haitian Revolution slaveholders discussed two disparate courses of action. Some such as St. George Tucker, argued that the Revolution left the South no choice but to free its slaves or face the possibility of a similar uprising. The vast majority of slaveholders, however, agreed with Virginia planter John Taylor, who used the Haitian example to call for greater control over the slaves, and ultimately greater control over the Southern society to permanently prevent any repeat in the United States of the conflagration in the Caribbean.

One of the first prominent southerners to comprehend the impact of St. Domingue on the South was St. George Tucker, a law professor at the College of William and Mary and an eminent jurist. Convinced that a dense slave population would eventually result in a revolt, Tucker pointed out that the number of slaves in the United States would double in thirty years and would be over a million in sixty years. He advocated gradual emancipation and colonization for the freed slaves. The jurist was against the forced removal of freedmen, though he thought that they would voluntarily seek asylum elsewhere if they were prevented from bearing arms, for example, or holding office or exercising the franchise or marrying whites. Tucker called for the emancipation of all female slaves at birth so there would be considerable time between the beginning of the process to rid the country of the "troublesome property" and its accomplishment. Tucker quoted Thomas Jefferson to explain why the blacks must eventually be removed to make America a white man's country: "The recent scenes transacted in the French colonies in the West Indies are enough to make one shudder with the apprehension of realizing similar calamities in this country. Such probably would be the event of an attempt to smother those prejudices which have been cherished for a period of almost two centuries." Jefferson endorsed Tucker's plan to separate the two races, and he added that "if something is not done; and soon done, we shall be the murderers of our children." Jefferson feared what he called the "insurrectionary spirit of the slaves." Convinced that nature had connected the South and St. Domingue by the "strong link of mutual necessity," Jefferson thought that the tropics were for the black man and nothing could stop the rebelling slaves from claiming the region, since it was naturally suited to them. After the Republic of Haiti was created in 1804, Jefferson looked upon that nation as a land of opportunity that would attract America's unwanted blacks to fulfill their destinies. The sense of urgency felt by some slavery advocates was shared by most gradual emancipationists, who were motivated by the fear of black retaliation after years of deprivation and by humanitarian concern: "Let us turn our eyes to the West Indies, and there learn the melancholy effects of this wretched policy [slavery]. We may there read them written with the blood of thousands. There you may see the sable...brave sons of Africa engaged in a noble conflict with their inveterate foes. There you may see thousands fired with a generous resentment of the great injuries, and bravely sacrificing their lives at the alter." This warning by the Reverend David Rice, a Presbyterian missionary of Danville, Kentucky, was more sympathetic to the cause of the blacks in St. Domingue than were most moderates, yet his preachings do reveal concern that St. Domingue would be repeated in the South if preventive steps were not taken.

Most southerners did not agree with this interpretation of the events in St. Domingue or with the remedy suggested by the likes of Tucker, Jefferson, and Rice. A prominent planter-politician, John Taylor of Caroline, was one states' rights advocate who assessed the meaning of St. Domingue in quite different terms. Taylor began writing as early as 1803 of the dangers to

the South of a general or a gradual emancipation. Using St. Domingue as his primary example, Taylor argued in his agricultural work, *Arator* (1814), and in his other sociopolitical writings, that emancipation had caused the carnage there. In order to prevent mulattoes and freed slaves from inciting the slaves to rebellion, Taylor urged the removal of all freedmen from their midst. Further, the institution of slavery should be strengthened to ensure that discipline and obedience were paramount. Taylor argued that slavery was a "necessary evil," with emphasis on the *necessary*, since it stood between the white masters and the vengeful

hordes. He encouraged southerners to deal directly with the situation: "The fact is that negro slavery is an evil which the United States must look in the face. To whine over it, is cowardly; to aggravate it, criminal; and to forbear to alleviate it because it cannot be wholly cured, is foolish." Taylor's argument, which became popular with successive generations of southerners, was that if something were not done, the South would reap "a harvest of consequences"-as had happened in St. Domingue. He thought that gradual emancipation, as suggested by Jefferson and Tucker, would end in a "war of extermination" between whites and blacks. This theme-that slavery protected the South against a race war and must therefore be preserved-was one of the cornerstones of the proslavery argument. Before St. Domingue it was possible to discuss gradual emancipation as a long-range answer to the problem of slavery in American society; after St. Domingue it became increasingly difficult, for southerners had time to develop their sense of events in St. Domingue.

Alfred N. Hunt, Haiti's Influence on Antebellum American: Slumbering Volcano in the Caribbean (Baton Rouge, 1988), pp. 121-124.

HAITI: THE AFTERMATH IN THE SOUTHERN STATES

The debate over the best course of action in response to Haiti was lively but short. Once slaveholders chose repression over emancipation, they quickly took steps, as described below by historian Alfred Hunt, to prevent a Haitian-style uprising in the United States.

Southerners were keen observers of what was happening in the Caribbean. They were anxious to defend their economic, political, and social system by applying what they saw as the lessons of the French West Indian experience to their own situation. Nor were they reticent about pointing out, for themselves and the rest of the nation, what they felt were threats to their security. Even though the slave insurrection in St. Domingue broke out only a short time after southerners participated in their own rebellion against a European power, they were not prepared to support a violent black struggle for freedom in an area so close to them. The notions of *liberte* and *egalite,* the catchwords for the French Revolution in Europe and in St. Domingue, were anathema to southern planters who lived in fear of a black revolt at home. Whatever revolutionary sentiment there had been in the South during the American Revolution soon lapsed into silence over the ominous events in St. Domingue. Southerners admitted refugees from St. Domingue as a humanitarian act; they cautiously excluded revolutionary ideology as an act of self-preservation.

Heeding the warnings of John Randolph, the Virginia congressman and states' rights advocate, against the "introduction of slaves into this country, or of the maroons, brigands, or cutthroats from St. Domingo," every southern state legislature passed laws designed to curtail the activities of black population, free and slave, and to prevent the arrival of French West Indian blacks. Since New Orleans was part of Spanish Louisiana during the 1790s, Virginia and South Carolina were the major American ports of entry for refugees fleeing St. Domingue. The French consul estimated that six hundred St. Domingans were living in Charleston by 1796. South Carolina charitably welcomed the unfortunate refugees at first; however, it soon became clear that there were grave risks in admitting blacks--free or slaves--from the island. South Carolinians showed some enthusiasm for the French Revolution, but after the French abolished slavery in 1793 and the Jacobins in France became increasingly antislavery, South Carolinians and other southerners became alarmed at the implications of what was happening in France and in its colonies. Not only did they fear blacks who had either witnessed or participated in the destruction of the white planter class in the Caribbean, they were quick to see the parallel between their situation and that of the besieged planters of St. Domingue.

Consequently, South Carolina was the first state to take legislative action to abolish the slave trade when, in 1792, it prohibited the importation of all slaves. This ban was in part a reaction to an antislavery document published in London that same year by the Quaker abolitionist Thomas Clarkson, who, in *An Inquiry into the Causes of the Insurrection of Negroes on the Isle of Santo Domingo,* concluded that the major reasons for the insurrection were the large-scale importation of blacks from Africa and the white majority's inability to maintain control over the more numerous blacks. While Clarkson's interest was in curtailing the slave trade, Carolinians were concerned about their safety. Legislators took an additional step toward this end by prohibiting Negroes from Hispaniola from entering the state, and an article of an 1803 statue specifically barred any Negro or man of color, free or bond, "who heretofore hath been, or now is, or hereafter shall be resident in any of the French West India islands." Two years later, South Carolinians were worried enough about the problem of whites helping blacks to revolt that they passed a law making it punishable by death for "any person in any way to aid

in an insurrection." Two witnesses were needed for a conviction. This law was aimed at white Frenchmen, suspected Jacobins, who might be in the state.

The state of Georgia then prohibited the importation of blacks from the West Indies, though the African slave trade remained open for five more years. In a long statue passed in December, 1792, Virginia required that those entering the state had to take an oath that they had not imported any slaves from the West Indies or Africa. Virginia legislators tightened their control with a 1793 statue that prescribed the death penalty for any free black convicted of "exciting slavers to insurrection or murder." In 1795, North Carolina also prohibited importing slaver from the West Indies and attempted to promote domestic tranquillity by requiring that a slave could be liberated only if he posted a $200 good-conduct bond. Maryland, which in 1792, had allowed French subjects to bring their personal slaves into the state, repealed this dispensation in 1797, thus joining those states that banned West Indian slaves. Louisiana abolished the slave trade but specifically exempted slaves accompanying their masters into the state. A court case in Louisiana in 1809 illustrates to what lengths slaveholding communities would go to ensure that the example of St. Domingue was not repeated in the South. A refugee, Pierre Dormenon, faced disbarment because he was accused of being a Jacobin who "assisted the negroes in St. Domingo, in their horrible massacres, and other outrages against the whites." A lower court concluded that "no person who has acted in concert with the negroes and mulattoes of St. Domingo, in destroying the whites, ought to hold any kind of office here." Dormenon won his appeal several years later after he was elected to the Louisiana State Legislature....

The southern response to the St. Domingan refugees changed from humanitarian acceptance to increased vigilance and constraints. Southerners relied upon exclusion, of emigres and slaves and of attitudes they deemed hostile to slavery, as a way to protect their social system. Their actions were a portent of their response to domestic militant abolition in the 1830s: it was in the 1790s and the early 1800s that the South began to erect its intellectual blockade against potentially dangerous doctrines. As one concerned South Carolinian said in an address to an agricultural society in Charleston in 1825, with the Denmark Vesey plot no doubt still fresh in everyone's mind, "God will raise up a Toussaint or a Spartacus against us....Our history has verified the melancholy truth, that one educated slave or colored freeman, with a insinuating address, is capable of infusing the poison of insubordination into a whole body of the black population. After St. Domingue, the South often felt that it was perpetually under siege and it was increasingly aware of the instability that a slave society provided. One of the many lessons garnered from the events in "hapless" St. Domingue was that supporters of slavery must develop a consensus on the ideological assumptions concerning white and black relations.

Alfred N. Hunt, Haiti's Influence on Antebellum America: Slumbering Volcano in the Caribbean, (Baton Rouge, 1988), pp. 107-109, 114-115.

AMERICAN SHIPS AND THE ILLEGAL SLAVE TRADE

After 1833 the announced intention of Great Britain to stop and board any slave ship on the high seas and liberate its cargo, and slave importation ban of the Constitution of the United States, which took effect in 1807, had combined to make American participation in the slave trade both illegal and exceedingly dangerous. Nevertheless some American ship captains resorted to various subterfuges to continue to support the trade. Their actions are depicted below by George Brooks.

Slavers derived enormous benefits from the protection afforded their vessels by the use of the Stars and Stripes, almost with impunity. American colors served as their chief disguise and shield from the 1830s onward... Slave traders were doubly served; for the United States' intransigence in denying British warships the privilege to stop vessels flying the Stars and Stripes was coupled with its unwillingness to keep a naval force in West Africa sufficient to prevent the American flag from serving as the refuge of slavers and brigands. An American naval officer commented: "Everything was reduced to a regular mercantile system in carrying on the slave trade. We have the schooner *Hugh Boyle*, from New York, with a crew of nine American citizens, coming to the coast, and having as passengers a crew of ten 'citizens of the world,' or from somewhere else. She is American, with an American crew and papers, until she gets her slaves on board, then her American citizens become passengers, and the 'citizens of the world' take their place as the crew, till she gets her slaves into Cuba." Permutations of these subterfuges were devised to suit varied circumstances.

Confronted by an ever-worsening situation, the British Navy retaliated by seeking to extend existing jurisdictions and practices. Officers boarded suspicious vessels flying the American flag to examine their papers so as to determine their true identity and business on the coast. British spokesmen attempted to downplay the new procedures as merely "visits," not a practice of the right of search long denied by the United States. However, interested parties in the United States aroused American public opinion to protest strenuously against British pretensions. The jingoistic howls of the popular press exacerbated already-strained relations between the two countries. There were mob scenes in Boston in 1840 when a British prize crew returned the Salem brig *Tigris* to the United States for trial as a suspected slaver. The court ruled that there was insufficient evidence for condemnation. The owners, Robert Brookhouse, Jr. and William Hunt, instituted a lawsuit to collect damages from the losses entailed in having their vessel detained in an unlawful manner. The issue of the right of search was one of the principal issues in dispute in the famous Webster-Ashburton negotiations. The treaty resulting in 1842 resolved on a compromise formula. The United States maintained its opposition to the right of search, but it agreed to send a squadron of eighty guns to the coast to undertake joint-cruising with the British Navy, so that suspected vessels flying the Stars and Stripes could be boarded and investigated by American naval officers. Implementation of the agreement was another matter.

The American contribution to suppressing the slave trade was a bitter disappointment to the hopes of the antislavery forces. The Secretary of the Navy in 1843, Abel B. Upshur, was a Southerner, as were five of the eight secretaries who succeeded him. As a group, they were distinguished by their restraint and lack of initiative in the deployment of the men and resources under their command. Upshur proclaimed the African Squadron's paramount goal to be the protection of American commerce and abjured Commodore Matthew Perry, the squadron's commander, not to inflict upon American citizens "injurious and vexatious interruptions" in the

prosecution of lawful pursuits. The same order of priorities was maintained by his successors. Perry's command lasted two years; during that period the squadron captured only one suspected slaver, which was afterwards freed by the New Orleans court to which it was returned for adjudication. The squadron never had more than five vessels assigned to it until 1859, and as was the case with the British Navy, few of the vessels were first-class sailors, or suited to the task assigned.

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Source: George E. Brooks, Yankee Traders, Old Coasters and African Middlemen: A History of American Legitimate Trade with West Africa in the 19th Century, (Boston, 1970), pp. 116-118.

A NORTHERNER'S DESCRIPTION OF SLAVERY

While Abolitionist usually captured the public's attention with their denunciations of slavery, the vast majority of Northerners were ambivalent toward the institution. Ebenezer Kellogg, a 28 year-old professor of languages at Williams College in Massachusetts, visited Charleston, South Carolina in 1817 and provided these impressions.

The character and situation of the black population of this country is one of the most interesting subjects of observation to strangers who visit it. Their number is such as might entitle them to be regarded as the first portion of the population, and the whites only as a kind of agents for them, performing a very important part in the interior economy of this mixed society, but a part subservient rather than superior to the blacks.....[But] the negroes are servants and others masters. I saw only house servants, and those employed in the labours of the town, of the field servants I can say little. Of house servants every family, however small must have at least three, a cook, a chamber maid, and a waiting servant. Every small child must have a nurse till it is several years old. In larger and wealthier families there must be a coachman, a laundress, seamstress, besides assistants in these departments. You will readily believe that where so many are employed their labour cannot be very severe; and this is commonly true. The domestics of a New Englandman, do twice or thrice the work of the same number here.

....As to clothing, that does not in this climate very much affect their comfort. They are usually decent for labouring people.... Yet they sometimes suffer from cold. They seem more sensible to cold than we are.... Little attention is however paid to their comfort in this particular. I have seen the servants in a cold evening seated on mats in the hall before the door of the sitting room. They are obliged to spend hours there or in the back part of the room itself, where it would be unpardonable for them to sit down.

Of their treatment as respect discipline, I saw little. I often heard them scolded without reason. They were frequently blamed when the justification was obvious to every bystander. The worst form in which they are wronged is when they are talked about in their own presence....It has the effect to harden them to the value of a good name, and to blight the first rising of anything like affection or respect. When they are blamed, however unjustly they never answer, never attempt to justify themselves, even when a single word would completely do. I have never seen them whipped though I have heard their cries while under the lash. They must, many of them be whipped if they are to be servants.

A great number from the black population belong to several churches here. The Episcopal churches are said to contain a great number of colored people. The blacks pay nothing toward the support of the churches. They sit on benches or stand along the alles [sic], or have part of the gallery.

These unhappy people are brought to a land that while it enslaves their bodies....saves their soulds [sic] from the slavery of sin, and opens to them the glorious door of hope, which is the highest blessing of the happiest portion of the world.

Source: Stanley I. Kutler, Looking for America: The People's History, Vol.I, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1979), pp. 327-329.

TWO VIEWS OF SLAVERY

George Fitzhugh, a 19th century defender of slavery argued that it was a positive good and in fact advocated the enslavement of white workers in the North to improve their condition. Theodore Weld, however, was an uncompromising abolitionist who wanted to end slavery because it brutalized slaves and made their owners callous to human suffering. Their views are described below.

Fitzhugh: The negro slaves of the South are the happiest, and, in some sense, the freest people in the world. The children and the aged and infirm work not at all, and yet have all the comforts and necessaries [sic] of life provided for them. They enjoy liberty, because they are oppressed neither by care nor labor. The women do little hard work, and are protected from the despotism of their husbands by their masters. The negro men and stout boys work, on the average, in good weather, not more than nine hours a day....Besides, they have their Sabbaths and holidays. White men, with so much of license and liberty, would die of ennui; but negroes luxuriate in corporeal and mental repose. With their faces upturned to the sun, they can sleep at any hour; and quiet sleep is the greatest of human enjoyments....The free laborer must work or starve. He is more of a slave than the negro, because he works longer and harder for less allowance than the slave, and has no holiday, because the cares of life with him begin when its labors end. He has no liberty, and not a single right.

Weld: The slaves in the United States are treated with barbarous inhumanity.... they are overworked, underfed, wretchedly clad and lodged, and have insufficient sleep.... they are often made to wear round their necks iron collars armed with prongs, to drag heavy chains and weights at their feet while working in the field....they are often kept confined in the stocks day and night for weeks together, made to wear gags in their mouths for hours or days, have some of their front teeth torn out or broken off, that they may be easily detected when they run away....they are frequently flogged with terrible severity, have red pepper rubbed into their lacerated flesh, and hot brine, spirits of turpentine, etc., poured over the gashes to increase the torture....they are often stripped naked, their backs and limbs cut with knives, bruised and mangled by scores and hundreds of blows with the paddle, and terribly torn by the claws of cats, drawn over them by their tormentors.

Source: George Fitzhugh, Cannibals All,(New York, 1857); and Theodore Dwight Weld, Slavery As It Is, (Boston, 1839).

THE IMPORTANCE OF "BREEDING"

In the following account historian Deborah G. White describes the crucial importance of female slave reproduction to the growth of plantation wealth in the antebellum South.

To own a male slave was only to own his body and his labor, but because a child inherited the status of its mother, to own a woman was to own her race. Women made up the nucleus of any estate. Once a plantation was well stocked with women, it was only a matter of time before the would be more Negroes to work the land. A Virginia legislator explained the rudiments of slaveholding this way: "....the master forgoes the service of the female slave, has her nursed and attended during the period of gestation and raises the helpless infant offspring. The value of the property justified the expense; ....in its increase consists much of our wealth." Young girls, therefore, were valuable more for their progeny than for the labor they would be expected to do in the field. If handled properly, females made for the masters a "mine of wealth." A Louisiana planter told William Howard Russell just how to get the most from them: "The way to get them right," he explained, "is not to work the mothers too hard when they are near their time; to give them plenty to eat and not to send them to the fields too soon." A Mississippian though, had different ideas: "Labor is conducive to health, a healthy woman will rear the most children." When his slave women got pregnant he gave them good and fair work, but not so much as to "tax the animal economy."

Southerners bragged about their "breeding wenches" the way they bragged about their horses, cows and mules. A Virginia planter was certain he had the most prolific "brood" in the state. His women, he proudly proclaimed, were "uncommonly good breeders." No women on earth bred faster than his, he never heard of babies coming so fast as they did on his plantation. A rice planter in South Carolina would have disagreed. As evidenced by the five per cent per year increase on his plantation, his women were better still. Even James Madison did not conceal his pride in his slave women. As reported to Harriet Martineau, one-third of his slaves were under five years of age. Since planters figured at least five or six percent of their profit would result from natural increase of the slave population, it is no wonder that Frederick Olmsted so frequently heard people boast of the breeding potential of female slaves. Before he left the South he was convinced that "a slave women is commonly esteemed least for her working qualities, most for those qualities which give value to a brood mare...."

Deborah G. White, "Ain't I a Woman? Female Slaves in the Antebellum South," (PhD. dissertation, University of Illinois at Chicago, 1979) pp. 77-80.

SLAVERY'S IMPACT ON RACE AND GENDER ROLES

Black feminist theorist Michelle Wallace suggests in the passage below the various ways in which slavery's racial and gender roles impacted on the attitudes toward black people and particularly on the dynamics of interaction between black women and men.

As the function of the Southern white woman changed, the life of the black woman continued just as if the country were in its first stages of growth. She labored in the fields beside he husband, developed muscles in her arms, bore the lash and the wrath of her master. Her labor and trials became inextricably associated with her skin color, even though not so long before the colonial woman had not been much better off....

Gradually a network of lies developed to justify the continuance of the master/slave relationship, the selling of children away from their mothers, the separation of wives and husband, the breeding of slaves like animals. After the constitutional ban on slave importation, which took effect in 1808, the market required that a brutal emphasis be placed upon the stud capabilities of the black man and upon the black woman's fertility. The theory of the inferiority of blacks began to be elaborated upon and take hold. It was at this point that the black woman gained her reputation for invulnerability. She was the key to the labor supply. No one wished to admit that she felt as any woman would about the loss of her children, or that she had any particularly deep attachment to her husband, since he might also have to be sold. Her first duty had to be to the master of the house.

She was believed to be not only emotionally callous but physically invulnerable-stronger than white women and the physical equal of any man of her race. She was stronger than white women in order to justify her performing a kind of labor most white women were now presumed to be incapable of. She had to be considered at least the physical equal of the black man so that he would not feel justified in attempting to protect her.

She was labeled sexually promiscuous because it was imperative that her womb supply the labor force. The father might be her master, a neighboring white man, the overseer, a slave assigned to her by her master; her marriage was not recognized by law.

Every tenet of the mythology about her was used to reinforce the notion of the spinelessness and unreliability of the black man, as well as the notion of the frivolity and vulnerability of white women. The business of sexual and racial definition, hideously intertwined, had become a matter of balancing extremes. That white was powerful meant that black had to be powerless. That white men were omnipotent meant that white women had to be impotent. But slavery produced further complications: black women had to be strong in ways that white women were not allowed to be, black men had to be weak in ways that white men were not allowed to be.

Source: Michele Wallace, Black Macho and the Myth of Superwoman, (New York, 1979) pp. 137-138.

AFRICAN AMERICANS AND SLAVERY IN THE UNITED STATES, 1790-1820

REGION	BLACKS AS % OF TOTAL POPULATION	SLAVES AS % OF BLACKS
New England (New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Vermont, Maine)		
1790	1.7%	22.2%
1800	1.5%	7.2%
1810	1.4%	2.1%
1820	1.3%	.7%
Mid-Atlantic States (New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania)		
1790	5.3%	72.0%
1800	4.6%	54.0%
1810	4.1%	32.8%
1820	3.3%	19.9%
Seaboard South (Delaware,* Maryland, District of Columbia, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia)		
1790	36.4%	95.2%
1800	37.6%	93.0%
1810	40.4%	91.0%
1820	41.6%	90.8%
SELECTED STATES		
Massachusetts		
1790	1.4%	0%
1800	1.5%	0%
1810	1.4%	0%
1820	1.3%	0%
New York State		
1790	7.6%	81.9%
1800	5.3%	66.7%
1810	4.2%	37.2%
1820	2.9%	25.6%
Virginia		
1790	40.9%	95.7%
1800	41.6%	94.5%
1810	43.4%	92.7%
1820	43.4%	92.0%
South Carolina		
1790	43.7%	98.3%
1800	43.2%	97.8%
1810	48.4%	97.7%
1820	52.8%	97.4%

*Delaware is grouped with the Southern states because in terms of both the proportion of blacks and the durability of slavery it was closer to the Southern than to the Northern states.

Source: Donald Robinson, Slavery in the Structure of American Politics, 1765-1820, (New York, 1979), pp. 23, 39.

SLAVERY AND SOCIAL CONTROL

The slave system included a variety of restrictions and punishments designed to maintain social control over the black population. In this account Moses Grandy, a fugitive slave, described some of the measures.

....We had to work, even in long summer days, till twelve o'clock, before we tasted a morsel, men, women, and children all being served alike. At noon the cart appeared with our breakfast....There was bread, of which a piece was cut for each person, there was small hominy boiled....and two herrings for each of the men and women, and one for each of the children. Our drink was the water in the ditches.... The salt fish made us always thirsty. However thirsty a slave may be, he is not allowed to leave his employment for a moment to get water; he can only have it when the hands have reached the ditch, at the end of the rows. The overseer stood with his watch in his hand to give us just an hour; when he said, `Rise,' we had to rise and go to work again.... One black man in kept on purpose to whip the others in the field; and if he does not flog with sufficient severity, he is flogged himself. The treatment of slaves is mildest near the border, where the free and slave states join; it becomes more severe, the farther we go from the free states. It is more severe in the west and south than where I lived....On the frontier between the slave and free States there is a guard; no colored person can go over a ferry without a pass. By these regulations, and the ....patrols, escape is made next to impossible.

Formerly slaves were allowed to have religious meetings....but after the [Nat Turner] insurrection....they were forbidden to meet even for worship. Often they are flogged if they are found singing or praying at home. They may go to the places of worship used by the whites; but they like their own meetings better....A number of slaves went into a wood to hold meetings; when they were found out, they were flogged.... Three were shot, two of whom were killed.

....There are men who make a trade of whipping negroes; they ride about inquiring for jobs of persons who keep no overseer; if there is a negro to be whipped, whether man or woman, this man is employed when he calls, and does it immediately; his fee is half a dollar. Widows and other females, having negroes, get them whipped this way. Many mistresses will insist on the slave who has been flogged begging pardon for her fault on her knees, and thanking her for the correction....

The severe punishments....for trifling offenses, or none at all....and the agonizing feelings they endure at being separated from the dearest connections, drive many of them to desperation.... They hide themselves in the woods, where they remain for months, and, in some cases for years. When caught, they are flogged....their backs pickled, [vinegar applied to the back] and the flogging repeated. After months of this torture, the back is allowed to heal, and the slave is sold away.

Source: Moses Grandy, Narrative of the Life of Moses Grandy, (Boston, 1844), pp. 16-17, 34-41.

BLACK PARENTS AND THE "SALE" OF THEIR CHILDREN

In the brief vignette below historian Herbert Gutman challenges the assertion by fellow historian Eugene Genovese that African American slave parents "reconciled" themselves to the sale of their children.

No evidence in Roll, Jordan, Roll-or anywhere else for that matter-discloses that slave parents accepted the sale of their children, whatever their age, as "a fact of life." That statement may reconcile the "organic" relationship between slaves and owners to the fact of frequent sale, but it does so by confusing the realistic expectations of slave parents about owner behavior with slave moral and social beliefs. Most slave sales apart from estate divisions and bankruptcies involved teenagers and young adults. That was known to most slaves. Sale nearly always, but especially after 1815 and as a consequence of the interregional movement of slaves from the Upper to the Lower South, separated such persons from immediate families and enlarged kin groups.

But if the social system sanctioned such sale as essential to the transfer of labor from the Upper to the Lower South and from the inefficient to the efficient owner, it does not follow that the slaves accepted that "norm" as "a fact of life." It is inconceivable that the sale of a slave child or teenager named for its grandparent or another close relation caused its parents and other king to "grieve" the loss but to accept it as "a fact of life" and not "hate" the owner who had made such decisions. It is far more likely that slave parents and older kin accommodated their behavior, not their beliefs, to the expectation that a child might be sold. That expectation might cause a slave parent to work harder or to ingratiate himself or herself with an owner or an overseer. The same expectation probably served as reason to socialize one's children to prepare for possible sale, a damaging and unenviable task for any parent.

Whether sale occurred later in life is beside the point. Parents and other kin forced into such difficult relationships with slave children had very good reason to "hate" those who had imposed that circumstance upon them. "Good" masters hesitated making such sales; "bad" masters did not; all masters poisoned the relationship between slave parents and their children.

Source: Herbert Gutman, The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925 (New York, 1976) pp. 318-319

AN ACT PROHIBITING THE TEACHING OF SLAVES TO READ

In 1831 the North Carolina legislature passed a bill to outlaw the teaching of slaves to read and write. This legislation was typical of Southern laws designed to prevent slaves from reading abolitionist newspapers, forging passes, and "knowing too much."

Whereas the teaching of slaves to read and write, has a tendency to excite dissatisfaction in their minds, and to produce insurrection and rebellion, to the manifest injury of the citizens of this State:

Therefore,
Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of North Carolina, and it is hereby enacted by the authority of the same, That any free person, who shall hereafter teach, or attempt to teach, any slave within the State to read or write, the use of figures excepted, or shall give or sell to such slave or slaves any books or pamphlets, shall be liable to indictment in any court of record in this State having jurisdiction thereof, and upon conviction, shall, at the discretion of the court, if a white man or woman, be fined not less than one hundred dollars, nor more than two hundred dollars, or imprisoned; and if a free person of color, shall be fined, imprisoned, or whipped at the discretion of the court, not exceeding thirty nine lashes, nor less than twenty lashes.

II. *Be it further enacted*, That if any slave shall hereafter teach, or attempt to teach, any other slave to read or write, the use of figures excepted, he or she may be carried before any justice of the peace, and on conviction thereof, shall be sentenced to receive thirty nine lashes on his or her bare back.

III. *Be it further enacted*, That the judges of the Superior Courts and the justices of the County Courts shall give this act in charge to the grand juries of their respective counties.

Source: Acts Passed by the General Assembly of the State of North Carolina at the Session of 1830-1831, (Raleigh, 1831) p. 11.

SLAVERY AND SEXUAL ABUSE

In the following account historian Deborah G. White describes how the institution of slavery, with its inherent patterns of dominance, supported and encouraged an environment where African American women were cast as amoral and thus opportune targets for the aggressions of slaveowners and overseers.

The idea that black women were exceptionally sensual first gained credence when whites went to Africa to buy slaves. Unaccustomed to the tropics and the lifestyle it dictated, Europeans mistook semi-nudity for lewdness. Similarly they misinterpreted African cultural traditions so that polygamy was attributed to the African's uncontrolled lust, tribal dances were reduced to the level of orgy, and African religions lost all the sacredness which had sustained generations of ancestral worshippers.

The travel accounts of Europeans contained superficial analysis of African life and spurious conclusions about the character of black women. Perhaps it was the warm climate of Africa that prompted William Bosman to describe the women he saw on the coast of Guinea as "fiery" and "warm" and "so much hotter than the men." William Smith must have fallen under the same influence....since he reported that black women kept the company of, and mated with, Satyr-like creatures that resembled the Mandrill or Ourang-Outang....

Southerners too, were convinced that slave women were lewd and lascivious, that they invited the sexual overtures made by white men, and that any resistance they displayed was mere feigning.... A Louisiana planter expressed his belief that there was not "a likely-looking black girl in this state that is not the paramour of a white man."

The matter of reproduction provides an excellent example of how conditions under which the slave woman labored were transformed into theories about promiscuity. American slavery was dependent on natural increase of the slave population and through the use of innumerable incentives, planters made sure that slave women were prolific. But casual correlations have always been drawn between sensuality and fecundity and the increase of the slave population seemed to many to be evidence of the slave woman's lust.... An Alabama master....linked the birth rate on his plantation to the fact that he "did not know more than one negro woman that he could suppose to be chaste...." More important....slave reproduction was a subject given such public attention that the slave women's procreative capacity was discussed openly, with little diffidence. Major periodicals carried articles detailing optimal conditions under which slave women were known to reproduce, and the merits of a particular "breeder" were often the topic of parlor or dinner-table conversations. The fact that something so personal and private should have become a matter of public discussion prompted an ex-slave to declare "Women wasn't nothing but cattle." Once reproduction became a topic of public conversation, so did the slave woman's sexual activities....

The conditions under which women worked and were sold and punished also created an atmosphere conducive to such thoughts. Southerners were extremely squeamish about women and their "place" in society. Layers of clothing adorned the "respectable" white women and unless she sought to arouse the ire of her husband and community, she never exposed even her legs or arms to public view. But the slave woman's body commanded no such respect.... On the auction block women's bodies were exposed and dandled, most often to determine their capacity for childbearing.... The auction of a mulatto woman [involved] her being "stripped to be bid off and looked at." One auctioneer introduced a women with the following remarks: "Show your

neck, Betsey. There's a breast for you; good for a round dozen before she's done child bearing." Occasionally, when there was doubt about a women's reproductive ability, she was taken by the buyer and a physician to a private room where she was inspected more minutely.

The majority of Southerners never attended a slave auction but conditions on the plantation had the same, if not more profound effect. Johann Schoepf, a European visitor, wrote that the clothes of some women were so tattered they were almost naked. In addition, slaves were often exposed because of the nature of the work they did. Women on the rice plantations worked in the water with their dressed "reefed up" around their hips, exposing their legs and thighs. Similarly many female field hands worked with their skirts pinned up to keep them out of the dirt.

On almost every plantation women's bodies were exposed during whippings. Christopher Nichols remember how his master laid a woman on a bench, threw her clothes over her head and whipped her. Another ex-slave remembered that when his mother was whipped, she was stripped completely naked.... Some of the whippings had definite sexual overtones. Ex-slave Henry Bibb wrote.... "I have often heard Garrison say that he had rather paddle a female than eat when he was hungry--that it was music for him to hear them scream, and to see their blood run." Suspicions were also aroused when a thirteen year old Georgia slave girl was beaten with a horse whip which drew blood.... The girl was put on all fours "sometimes her head down, and sometimes up" and beaten until froth ran from her mouth. Solomon Northup's master was not above whipping his slave Patsey in such a manner either. This twenty-three year old woman was alternately raped and whipped by her master, a man possessed, in Northup's words, with "brute passion." "Nothing pleased Master Eppes more than having a few drinks and whipping Patsey."

Source: Deborah G. White, "Ain't I A Woman? Female Slaves in the Antebellum South," (PhD. dissertation, University of Illinois at Chicago, 1979) pp. 175-191.

THE SAGA OF LOUISA PICQUET

Abolitionists often argued that slavery undermined the moral fiber of both blacks and whites by easily facilitating white male access to black female slaves. In the account below one mulatto slave, Louisa Picquet, describes her ordeal as a concubine to her slaveowner.

I was born in Columbia, South Carolina. My mother's name was Elizabeth. She was a slave owned by John Randolph, and was a seamstress in his family. She was fifteen years old when I was born. Mother's mistress had a child only two weeks older than me. Mother's master, Mr. Randolph, was my father. So mother told me. I looked so much like Madame Randolph's baby that she got dissatisfied, and mother had to be sold.

Was your mother white?

Yes, she pretty white; not white enough for white people. She have long hair, but it was kind a wavy....

Who was Mr. Williams? I didn't know then, only he lived in New Orleans. Him and his wife had parted, some way_he had three children, boys. When I was going away I heard some one cryin', and prayin' the Lord to go with her only daughter, and protect me. I felt pretty bad then, but hadn't no time only to say good-bye. I wanted to go back and get the dress I bought with the half-dollars....but Mr. Williams would not let me go back and get it. He said he'd get me plenty of nice dresses....

Well, how was it with you after Mr. Williams bought you?

Well, he took me right away to New Orleans.

How did you go?

In a boat, down the river. Mr. Williams told me what he bought me for, soon as we started for New Orleans. He said he was getting old, and he thought he'd buy me, and end his days with me. He said if I behave myself he'd treat me well: but, if not, he'd whip me almost to death.

How old was he?

He was over forty; I guess pretty near fifty. He was gray headed. That's the reason he was always so jealous. He never let me go out anywhere.

Did you never go to church?

No, sir; I never darken a church door from the time he bought me till after he died. I used to ask him to let me go to church.... He'd sometimes say, "Go on, I'll catch up with you." But I never dare go once.

Had you any children while in New Orleans?

Yes; I had four.

Who was their father?

Mr. Williams.

Was it known that he was living with you?

Everybody knew I was housekeeper, but he never let on that he was the father of my children. I did all the work in his house_nobody there but me and the children.

What children?

My children and his. You see he had three sons.

Were your children mulattoes?

No, sir! They were all white. They look just like him. The neighbors all see that....

Was he rich?

Oh no, sir. He had to borrow some of the money of his brother to buy me.... He said he would leave me the things. He hadn't any thing to leave me but the things.

What things? The things in the house_the beds, and tables, and such things....
Then, in about a month....he died. I didn't cry nor nothin', for I was glad he was dead; for I thought I could have some peace and happiness then. On Sunday, I dressed myself and went out to go to church; and that was the first time I had been to church in six years.

Source: Bert J. Loewenberg and Ruth Bogin, Black Women in Nineteenth-Century American Life, (University Park, Pa: 1976), pp. 55-56, 56-58, 59.

SLAVERY IN THE SOUTH, 1860

Whites and Blacks in the Total Southern Population

State	*Total Population*	*% White*	*% Black Slave*	*% Free Blacks*
South Carolina	703,708	*42*	*57*	*1*
Mississippi	791,278	*45*	*55*	*
Louisiana	708,002	*50*	*47*	*3*
Alabama	964,201	*55*	*44*	*1*
Florida	140,424	*55*	*44*	*1*
Georgia	1,057,286	*56*	*44*	*
Virginia	1,596,318	*56*	*39*	*5*
Texas	604,215	*64*	*33*	*3*
North Carolina	992,622	*70*	*30*	*
Arkansas	435,450	*74*	*26*	*
Tennessee	1,109,801	*74*	*25*	*1*
Maryland	687,049	*75*	*13*	*12*
Kentucky	1,155,684	*80*	*20*	*
Delaware	112,216	*81*	*2*	*17*
Missouri	1,182,012	*90*	*10*	*
UNITED STATES	31,443,321	*86*	*13*	*1*

Composition of Southern White Society:
Nonslaveholders *78.1%*
Slaveholders *21.9%*

* Free Blacks comprised less than 1% of the state's total population.

Source: Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, Population by Age, Sex, Race of the United States.

AFRICAN SURVIVALS: THE DEBATE

For nearly three decades two intellectuals, E. Franklin Frazier, a sociologist, and Melville Herskovits, an anthropologist, debated the presence of African survivals in African American culture. The outlines of there respective positions are provided below.

Herskovits: It has long been understood that contacts between groups representing different customs, practices and beliefs result in mutual borrowings. In the instance of contacts with Negroes in the United States, however, this principle is either blandly overlooked or emotionally denied. Why is the proposition that the Negro contributed nothing of his African heritage to American life so firmly rooted in American thought? The answer is not difficult to find, if it be sought in terms of those social and economic forces that lodge deep in the historical past of our country; and, more directly, in the institution of slavery.... With this in mind, we can understand why it is generally believed that the Africans brought to this country had neither innate capabilities nor cultural endowments that they could transmit to their white masters.

An impartial investigation of the facts, however, will show, first, that those who were brought...to the United States....came preponderantly from regions of West Africa where the high and complex civilizations of the continent are found; that...they brought with them a culture that provided much they might offer in exchange for the European tradition of their masters. And in the second place, those Negroes who were enslaved constituted at least an adequate cross-section of the human resources of the region from which they were taken....Is it not possible that the enslaved Negroes had cultural traits of their own that were handed on to their masters? If this is the case, it should be possible to find that Africanisms, in however modified a form, are present in....the white population of the country....

* * *

Frazier: Slaves freshly imported from Africa usually had to be "broken in" to the plantation regime.... It is likely that these new slaves with their African ways and memories of Africa had to face the....hostility of Negroes who had become accommodated to the slave regime. They were most likely to meet such an attitude [from] household slaves, who because of their intimate association with the whites, had taken over the culture of the latter.... African patterns of thought and behavior could survive only where the Negroes were isolated and where there was sufficient common understanding among them to give significance to African survivals. But the isolation of the Negro from the whites was always limited.... More important....the African family, the chief means of cultural transmission, was destroyed [under slavery]. Under such circumstances African languages were lost and the African social organization could not be reconstituted in the new environment. Consequently Negroes acquired new habits and modes of thought.... During this process of adjusting themselves to American civilization, the majority of the Negroes have sloughed off completely the African heritage.

Source: Melville J. Herskovits, The New World Negro (Bloomington, 1966) pp. 168-169; E. Franklin Frazier, The Negro in the United States (New York, 1957), pp. 7-8, 20-21.

AFRICAN SURVIVALS: SLAVE RELIGIOUS MUSIC

The two passages below by historian Albert Rabateau suggest the variety of ways in which African music evolved into African American music. The first passages describes the African influences on the African American singing styles which emerge in the 18th Century black church. The second passage describes the "tension" between the slaves who sang secular songs and others whose singing was confined to religious tribute. This dichotomy suggests the modern rivalry between rhythm and blues, jazz, and "pop" music and gospel music.

It is in the context of action, the patterns of motor behavior preceding and following the ecstatic experience, that there may be continuity between African and American forms of spirit possession. While the rhythms of the drums, so important in African and Latin American cults, were by and large forbidden to the slave in the United States, hand-clapping, foot-tapping, rhythmic preaching, hyperventilation, antiphonal (call and response) singing, and dancing are styles of behavior associated with possession both in Africa and in this country.

The strong emphasis on rhythmic preaching, singing, moving, and dancing in the religious behavior of the American slaves has long been noted by observers. Ex-slave Robert Anderson described the patterns of religious expression which he saw in his youth during slavery:

> The colored people...have a peculiar music of their own, which is largely a process of rhythm, rather than written music. Their music is largely, or was...a sort of rhythmical chant. It had to do largely with religion and the words adopted to their quaint melodies were largely of a religious nature. The stories of the Bible were placed into words that would fit the music already used by the colored people. While singing these songs, the singers and the entire congregation kept time to the music by the swaying of their bodies or by the patting of the foot or hand. Practically all of their songs were accompanied by a motion of some kind...the weird and mysterious music of the religious ceremonies moved old and young alike in a frenzy of religious fervor...We also had religious dances, which were expressions of the weird, the fantastic, the mysterious, that was felt in all our religious ceremonies.

The singing style of the slaves, which was influenced by their African heritage, was characterized by a strong emphasis on call and response, polyrhythms, syncopation, ornamentation, slides from one note to another, and repetition. Other stylistic features included body movement, hand-clapping, foot-tapping, and heterophony. This African style of song performance could not be reduced to musical notations, which explains why printed versions do not capture the peculiar flavor of the slave songs, which were consistently labeled "wild," "strangely fascinating," of "peculiar quality," and "barbaric" by white observers.

Despite the African style of singing, the spirituals, like the "running spirituals" or ring shout, were performed in praise of the Christian God. The names and words of the African gods were replaced by Biblical figures and Christian imagery. African style and European hymnody met and became in the spiritual a new, Afro-American song to express the joys and sorrows of the religion which the slaves had made their own.

* * *

In the evenings, after work, while religious slaves met to pray, sing, and shout, other sounds also rang out in the slave cabins. Apparently, the traditional conflict between sacred and secular music in Afro-American culture was alive even then, as the antecedents of gospel and blues clashed in the quarters. Harry Smith's recollection could only hint at the riot of sound:

After eating, often preaching and prayer meetings by some of the old folds in some of the cabins and in others fiddles would ring out. It was a scene never to be forgotten, as the old christians sing and pray until four in the morning, while at the other cabins many would be patting, singing and dancing.

To the religious slaves, fiddling, dancing, and secular music were the devil's work. According to John Thompson, when a master on one plantation wished to halt a revival among his slaves he shrewdly hired a slave named Martin who was a talented fiddler. Thompson reported that the plan succeeded: "what the whip failed to accomplish, the fiddle completed, for it is no easy matter to drive a soul from God by cruelty, when it may easily be drawn away by worldly pleasures." The backsliding was temporary, however, since Martin left with his fiddle when his term of hire expired and the revival of Christianity sprang up anew. The only form of "dancing" allowed to the converted was the movement which occurred in prayer meetings under the influence of the holy spirit, as in the ring shout.

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Source: Albert J. Raboteau, Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South, (New York, 1978), pp. 64-65, 74, 222.

THE GULLAH LANGUAGE

In this brief account below, Linda Koh, a former History 250 student, describes the origin and evolution of "Gullah," the language of African Americans in the South Carolina Low Country. Her discussion of the history of Gullah was part of a comparative paper on Creoles in colonial Singapore and Charleston.

Various factors account for the emergence of Gullah. Ripped from his African family and friends in childhood, herded into the wretched and stinking hold of a slave ship, and sold at auction to a Waccamaw rice planter, the slave found himself among various other enslaved Africans whose speech he could not understand and with strange customs with which he was unfamiliar. Masters in this new environment shouted commands at them, which they struggled to comprehend. Little by little in their efforts to communicate with one another, they discovered common grammatical patterns in their diverse African languages, as they were simultaneously learning their master's words. These two great needs, the need to comprehend the master and to understand one another had a profound influence on the linguistic response of the Africans to their enslavement. While the social dominance of the masters served as a strong incentive to learn English, the numerical dominance of the blacks facilitated their retention of African patterns of speech. While they lacked a common linguistic heritage, through trial and error in their efforts to communicate with one another, Africans increasingly became aware of common elements in their diverse tongues as they found other speakers of their own or similar African languages. Out of the opposing tendencies to learn English and to retain African speech patterns, they created a new language.

This new language took root to such an extent among enslaved Africans that it was passed on to succeeding generations on the Waccamaw, in Charleston, and elsewhere in the low country. To African-born slaves Gullah would have remained a pidgin, a second language, but to the American-born generations it was a creole, a native tongue. Once Gullah acquired native speakers and assumed all the functions of a language, it expanded rapidly in complexity. From then on, incoming Africans learned Gullah neither through trial-and-error nor from the plantation whites, but from American-born blacks.

The African fondness of using indirect and highly ambiguous speech, for speaking in parables, was adapted by these creole slaves. By employing the grammar of African proverb performance and the largely English vocabulary of the creole language, they were able to transform older African proverbs into metaphors of their collective experience on the rice plantations.

Source: Linda Koh, "Creole Societies in Colonial Charleston and Colonial Singapore," Unpublished Paper for History 250, pp. 9-10.

THE PERSISTENCE OF AFRICANISM: BLACK FUNERALS

In the account below historian Allan Kulikoff describes the African forms of mourning that carried over to colonial-era New World African Americans.

Native-born slaves continued to observe African forms of mourning and celebrating, but they did not place these forms within the structure of Anglican religion, nor did masters give them time enough to expand these occasional ceremonies into an indigenous Afro-American religion. Whites sometimes observed these strange practices. Thomas Bacon, for instance, preached to blacks on Maryland's Eastern Shore in the 1740s at services they directed at their funerals to such small congregations as their marriages have brought together." Two early nineteenth-century observers connected similar services they saw to the slaves' remote African past. Henry Knight, who traveled to Virginia in 1816, explained that masters permitted slaves a holiday to mourn the death of a fellow slave. The day of the funeral, perhaps a month after the corpse is interred, is a jovial day with them; they sing and dance and drink the dead to his new home, which some believe to be in old Guinea," the home of their grandparents and great-grandparents. A Charlotte County, Virginia, cleric saw more solemn but equally emotional services. He contended that there were many remains . . . of the savage customs of Africa. They cry and bawl and howl around the grave and roll in the dirt, and make many expressions of the most frantic grief sometimes the noise they make may be heard as far as one or two miles."

The slaves' music and dance, though often unconnected to their religion, displayed a distinctly African character. Afro-American slaves continued to make and to play two instruments (the banjo and balafo) of African origin. In 1774 Nicholas Cresswell, a British visitor, described slave celebrations in Charles County, Maryland. On Sundays, he wrote, the blacks generally meet together and amuse themselves with Dancing to the Banjo. This musical instrument . . . is made of a Gourd something in the imitation of a Guitar, with only four strings." Their poetry," Cresswell reported, is like the music--Rude and uncultivated. Their Dancing is most violent exercise, but so irregular and grotesque. I am not able to describe it. Cresswell's reaction to the dancing suggests that it contained African rhythms unknown in European dance.

If the form was African, it was placed in an American context: the slave songs Cresswell heard generally relate the usage they have received from their Masters or Mistresses in a very satirical stile and manner." Native slaves retained folk beliefs that may have been integral parts of West African religions. Slaves sometimes turned to magic, sorcery, and witchcraft to resolve conflicts within their own community or to strike back at harsh or unreasonable masters. Some African medicine men, magicians, sorcerers, and witches migrated and passed on their skills to other slaves. These men were spiritual leaders (or powerful, if evil men) in many African communities, including those of the Ibos, and they continued to practice among creole slaves who believed in their powers.

Source: Allan Kulikoff, Tobacco and Slaves: The Development of Southern Cultures in the Chesapeake, 1680-1800, (Chapel Hill, 1986), pp. 348-349.

AN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY SLAVE REVOLT

Most students of African American history are familiar with 19th Century slave revolts such as Nat Turner's Insurrection in 1831. However the most extensive rebellions occurred in the Eighteenth Century. Here is a first hand account of the Stono Rebellion in South Carolina in 1739.

Sometime since there was a Proclamation published at Augustine, in which the King of Spain (then at Peace with Great Britain) promised Protection and Freedom to all Negroes [sic] Slaves that would resort thither. Certain Negroes belonging to Captain Davis escaped to Augustine, and were received there. They were demanded by General Oglethorpe who sent Lieutenant Demere to Augustine, and the Governour....showed his Orders from the Court of Spain, by which he was to receive all Run away Negroes. Of this other Negroes having notice....four or five who were Cattel-Hunters, and knew the Woods, some of whom belonged to Captain Macpherson, ran away with His Horses, wounded his Son and killed another Man. These marched for Georgia, and were pursued..... They reached Augustine, one only being killed and another wounded by the Indians in their flight. They were received there with great honours, one of them had a Commission given to him, and a Coat faced with Velvet. Amongst the Negroe Slaves there are a people brought from the Kingdom of Angola in Africa, many of these speak Portugueze .... The good reception of the Negroes at Augustine was spread about, Several attempted to escape to the Spaniards, & were taken, one of them was hanged at Charles Town....

On the 9th day of September last being Sunday which is the day the Planters allow them to work for themselves, Some Angola Negroes assembled, to the number of Twenty; and one who was called Jemmy was their Captain, they suprized a Warehouse belonging to Mr. Hutchenson at a place called Stonehow [Stono]; they there killed Mr. Robert Bathurst, and Mr. Gibbs, plundered the House and took a pretty many small Arms and Powder, which were there for Sale. Next they plundered and burnt Mr. Godfrey's house, and killed him, his Daughter and Son..... They marched on towards Mr. Rose's resolving to kill him; but he was saved by a Negroe, who having hid him went out and pacified the others. Several Negroes joyned them, they calling out Liberty, marched on with Colors displayed, and two Drums beating, pursuing all the white people they met with, and killing Man Woman and Child when they could come up to them..... They increased every minute by new Negroes coming to them, so that they were above Sixty, some say a hundred, on which they halted in a field, and set to dancing, Singing and beating Drums, to draw more Negroes to them, thinking they were now victorious over the whole Province, having marched ten miles & burnt all before them without Opposition, but the Militia being raised, the Planters with great briskness pursued them and when they came up, dismounting; charged them on foot. The Negroes were soon routed, though they behaved boldly, several being killed on the Spot....

In the whole action about 40 Negroes and 20 whites were killed. The Lieutenant Governour....immediately ordered a Troop of Rangers to be ranged, to patrole through Georgia.... It is hoped these measures will prevent any Negroes from getting down to the Spaniards.

Source: Thomas A. Bailey and David M. Kennedy, The American Spirit, Vol. I., (Lexington, Mass., 1984), pp. 61-63.

GABRIEL PROSSER'S CONSPIRACY

The following passage describes the first major 19th Century confrontation between slaves and slaveholders, the Gabriel Prosser Conspiracy of Henrico County, Virginia in 1800.

...Probably the most fateful year in the history of American Negro slave revolts is that of 1800, for it was then that Nat Turner and John Brown were born, that Denmark Vesey bought his freedom, and it was then that the great conspiracy named after Gabriel, slave of Thomas H. Prosser of Henrico County, Virginia, occurred. This Gabriel, the chosen leader of thee rebellious slaves, was a twenty-four year old giant of six feet two inches, "fellow of courage and intellect above his rank in life," who had intended "to purchase a piece of silk for a flag, on which they would have written 'death or liberty'." Another leader was Jack Bowler, four years older and three inches taller than Gabriel, who felt that "we had as much right to fight for our liberty as any men." Gabriel's wife, Nanny, was active, too, as were his brothers, Solomon and Martin. The former conducted the sword making, and the latter bitterly opposed all suggestion of delaying the outbreak, declaring, "Before he would any longer bear what he had borne, he would turn out and fight with his stick."

The conspiracy was well-formed by the spring of 1800, and there is a hint that wind of it early reached Governor [and future president, James] Monroe, for in a letter to Thomas Jefferson, dated April 22, he referred to "fears of a negro insurrection." Crude swords and bayonets as well as about 500 bullets were made by the slaves through the spring, and each Sunday Gabriel entered Richmond, impressing the city's features upon his mind and paying particular attention to the location of arms and ammunition. Yet....it was "kept with incredible Secrecy for several months," and the next notice of apprehensions of revolt appears in a letter of August 9 from Mr. J. Grammer of Petersburg to Mr. Augustine Davis of Richmond. This letter was given to the distinguished Dr. James McClurg, who informed the military authorities and the Governor. The next disclosure came during the afternoon of the day, Saturday, August 30, set for the rebellion and was made by Mr. Mosby Sheppard, whose slaves, Tom and Pharaoh, had told him of the plot.

Monroe, seeing that speed was necessary and secrecy impossible, acted quickly and openly. He appointed three aides for himself, asked for and received the use of the federal armory at Manchester, posted cannon at the capitol, called into service well over six hundred and fifty men, and gave notice of the plot to every militia commander in the State.... Nevertheless about one thousand slaves, some mounted, armed with clubs, scythes, home-made bayonets, and a few guns, did appear at an agreed-upon rendezvous six miles outside the City, but, as already noted, attack was not possible, and the slaves disbanded....

The next few days the mobilized might of an aroused slave State went into action and scores of Negroes were arrested. Gabriel had attempted to escape via a schooner, *Mary*, but when in Norfolk on September 25, he was recognized and betrayed by two Negroes, captured, and brought back, in chains, to Richmond. He was quickly convicted and sentenced to hang, but the execution was postponed until October 7, in the hope that he would talk. James Monroe personally interviewed him, but reported, "From what he said to me, he seemed to have made up his mind to die, and to have resolved to say but little on the subject of the conspiracy."

Along with Gabriel fifteen other rebels were hanged on the seventh of October. Twenty-one were reported to have been executed prior to this, and four more were scheduled to die after October 7.... It appears that at least thirty-five Negroes were hanged, four condemned slaves escaped from prison (and no reference to their recapture has been seen), while one committed

suicide in prison. These Negroes, who were conscious revolutionists, behaved nobly. A resident of Richmond declared, in a letter of September 20, 1800, "Of those who have been executed, no one has betrayed his cause. They have uniformly met death with fortitude." An eminent eye-witness of the rebels' conduct while in custody, John Randolph, six days later, stated, "The accused have exhibited a spirit , which, if it becomes general, must deluge the Southern country in blood. They manifested a sense of their rights, and contempt of danger, and a thirst for revenge which portend the most unhappy consequences."

Source: Herbert Aptheker, American Negro Slave Revolts, (New York, 1970) pp. 219-223.

A REBELLION ON THE ANDRY PLANTATION

One of the most brutally suppressed slave revolts was "Andry's Rebellion" in 1811, so named not after the leader of the uprising but after the Louisiana plantation that was the source of the uprising. Historian Herbert Aptheker provides a description of the revolt.

...During the afternoon of January 9, 1811, the people of New Orleans were thrown in the "utmost dismay and confusion" on discovering wagons and carts straggling into the city, filled with people whose faces "wore the masks of consternation" and who told of having just escaped from "a miniature representation of the horrors of St. Domingo." They had fled from a revolt of slaves, numbering about four or five hundred of St. Charles and St. John the Baptist Parishes, about thirty-five miles away from the city. These slaves, one of whose leaders, Charles Deslondes, was described as " a free mulatto from St. Domingo," rose in the evening of January 8, starting at the plantation of a Major Andry.

They were originally armed with cane knives, axes, and clubs. After killing Andry's son and wounding the Major, they took possession of a few guns, drums, and some sort of flags, and started marching from plantation to plantation, slaves everywhere joining them. They killed at least one other white man, and destroyed a few plantations.

Major Andry, according to his own statement, organized about eight well-armed planters and, on the ninth of January, attacked the slaves, "of whom we made great slaughter." Many, however, escaped this first attack and continued their depredations. Andry ordered "several strong detachments to pursue them through the woods," and, he wrote, on January 11, "at every moment our men bring in or kill them."

Meanwhile, in New Orleans, Governor Claiborne had, on January 9, appointed seven aides for himself, called out the militia, and forbidden male Negroes from going at large. Brigadier-General Wade Hampton immediately left that city with four hundred militiamen and sixty United States Army men for the scene of action. Major Milton left Baton Rouge at about the same time with two hundred additional soldiers.

These forces, very early on the morning of the tenth, attacked the rebellious slaves and decimated them. Sixty-six were killed or executed on the spot, sixteen were captured and sent to New Orleans, and seventeen were reported as missing and were "supposed generally to be dead in the woods, as many bodies have been seen by the patrols." All those tried in the City were executed, at least one, a leader named Gilbert, by a firing squad; and their heads were strung aloft at intervals from New Orleans to Andry's plantation.

Source: Herbert Aptheker, American Negro Slave Revolts, (New York, 1970), pp. 249-250.

NAT TURNER'S CONFESSION

In 1831 Nat Turner led the largest 19th slave rebellion. It began on August 21, 1831 in Southampton County, Virginia. Sixty whites and over one hundred blacks died in the fighting. Fourteen blacks including Turner, who was captured on October 30, 1831, were executed. Hours before his execution Turner gives an interview to Thomas R. Gray which explains his motivation. The first passage reprinted below is an abbreviated version of that interview. The second passage provides Gray's assessment of Turner.

Turner: Sir, you have asked me to give ah history of the motives which induced me to undertake the late insurrection, as you call it. To do so I must go back to the days of my infancy. I was thirty-one years of age the second of October last, and born the property of Benjamin Turner, of this county.....My grandmother, who was very religious, and to whom I was much attached....noticing the singularity of my manners, and my uncommon intelligence for a child, remarked I had too much sense to be raised, and, if I was, I would never be of any service to anyone as a slave.

The manner in which I learned to read and write, not only had great influence on my own mind, as I acquired it with the most perfect ease,--so much so, that I have no recollection whatever of learning the alphabet.... This was a source of wonder to all in the neighborhood, particularly the blacks....

All my time not devoted to my master's service, was spent either in prayer, or in making experiments in casting different things in molds made of earth, in attempting to make paper, gunpowder, and many other experiments, that, although I could not perfect, yet convinced me of its practicability if I had the means.....

Knowing the influence I had obtained over the minds of my fellow-servants (not by means of conjuring and such-like tricks--for I always spoke of such things with contempt), but by the communion of the Spirit, whose revelations I often communicated to them....I now prepared them for my purpose, by telling them something was about to happen that would terminate in fulfilling the great promise that had been made to me.

And on the 12th of May, 1828, I heard a loud noise in the heavens the Spirit instantly appeared to me and said the Serpent was loosened, and Christ had laid down the yoke he had borne for the sins of men, and that I should take it on and fight against the Serpent, for the time was fast approaching when the first should be last and the last should be first.... I should arise and prepare myself, and slay my enemies with their own weapons.

I took my station in the rear, and, as it was my object to carry terror and devastation wherever we went, I placed fifteen or twenty of the best armed and most relied on in front, who generally approached the houses as fast as their horses could run. This was for two purposes--to prevent their escape, and strike terror to the inhabitants ....Having murdered Mrs. Waller and ten children, we started for Mr. William Williams'--having killed him and two little boys that were there; while engaged in this, Mrs. Williams fled and got some distance from the house, but she was pursued, overtaken, and compelled to get up behind one of the company, who brought her back, and, after showing her the mangled body of her lifeless husband, she was told to get down and lay by his side, where she was shot dead.

I am here load with chains, and willing to suffer the fate that awaits me.

* * *

Grey: Nat had survived all his followers, and the gallows will speedily close his career. His own account of the conspiracy... reads an awful, and it is hoped, a useful lesson, as to the operations of a mind like his, endeavoring to grapple with things beyond his reach... [The conspiracy] was not instigated by motives of revenge or sudden anger, but the result of long deliberation, and a settled purpose of mind....

... It has been said he was ignorant and cowardly and that his object was to murder and rob for the purpose of obtaining money to make his escape. It is notorious, that he was never known to have a dollar in his life; to swear an oath, or drink a drop of spirits. As to his ignorance, he certainly never had the advantages of education, but he can read and write, (it was taught to him by his parents,) and for natural intelligence and quickness of apprehension, [he] is surpassed by few men I have ever seen. As to his being a coward,, his reason as given for not resisting Mr Phipps [his captor] shews [sic] the decision of his character. When he saw Mr. Phipps present his gun, he said he knew it was impossible for him to escape as the woods were full of men; he therefore though it was better to surrender, and trust to fortune for his escape. He is a complete fanatic, or plays his part most admirably. On other subjects he possesses an uncommon share of intelligence, with a mind capable of attaining any thing; but warped and perverted by the influence of early impressions. He is below the ordinary in stature, though strong and active, having the true negro face, every feature of which is strongly marked. I shall not attempt to describe the effect of his narrative, as told and commented on by himself, in the condemned hole of the prison. The calm, deliberate composure with which he spoke of his late deeds and intentions, the expression of his fiend-like face when excited by enthusiasm, still bearing the blood of helpless innocence about him; clothed with rags and covered with chains; yet daring to raise his manacled hands to heaven, with a spirit soaring about the attributes of man; I looked on him and my blood curdled in my veins.

Source: Thomas R. Gray, The Confessions of Nat Turner....As Fully and Voluntarily Made to Thomas Gray, (Baltimore, 1831), pp. 7-21.

TURNER'S REVOLT: THE IMPACT IN THE SLAVE QUARTERS

In the account below Harriet Jacobs, a North Carolina slave, describes the aftermath of the Nat Turner Revolt upon her plantation community.

Not far from this time Nat Turner's insurrection broke out; and the news threw our town into great commotion. Strange that they should be alarmed, when their slaves were so "contented and happy"! But so it was. It was always the custom to have a muster every year. On that occasion every white man shouldered his musket. The citizens and the so-called country gentlemen wore military uniforms. The poor whites took their places in the ranks in every-day dress, some without shoes, some without hats. This grand occasion had already passed; and when the slaves were told there was to be another muster, they were surprised and rejoiced. Poor creatures! They thought it was going to be a holiday. I was informed of the true state of affairs, and imparted it to the few I could trust. Most gladly would I have proclaimed it to every slave; but I dared not. All could not be relied on. Mighty is the power of the torturing lash.

By sunrise, people were pouring in from every quarter within twenty miles of the town. I knew the houses were to be searched; and I expected it would be done by country bullies and the poor whites. I knew nothing annoyed them so much as to see colored people living in comfort and respectability; so I made arrangements for them with especial care. I arranged every thing in my grandmother's house as neatly as possible. I put white quilts on the beds, and decorated some of the rooms with flowers. When all was arranged, I sat down at the window to watch. Far as my eye could reach, it rested on a motley crowd of soldiers. Drums and fifes were discoursing martial music. The men were divided into companies of sixteen, each headed by a captain. Orders were given, and the wild scouts rushed in every direction, wherever a colored face was to be found. It was a grand opportunity for the low whites, who had no negroes of their own to scourge. They exulted in such a chance to exercise a little brief authority, and show their subserviency to the slaveholders; not reflecting that the power which trampled on the colored people also kept themselves in poverty, ignorance, and moral degradation. Those who never witnessed such scenes can hardly believe what I know was inflicted at this time on innocent men, women, and children, against whom there was not the slightest ground for suspicion.

Colored people and slaves who lived in remote parts of the town suffered in an especial manner. In some cases the searchers scattered powder and shot among their clothes, and then sent other parties to find them, and bring them forward as proof that they were plotting insurrection. Every where men, women, and children were whipped till the blood stood in puddles at their feet. Some received five hundred lashes; others were tied hands and feet, and tortured with a bucking paddle, which blisters the skin terribly. The dwellings of the colored people, unless they happened to be protected by some influential white person, who was nigh at hand, were robbed of clothing and every thing else the marauders thought worth carrying away.

All day long these unfeeling wretches went round, like a troop of demons, terrifying and tormenting the helpless. At night, they formed themselves into patrol bands, and went wherever they chose among the colored people, acting out their brutal will. Many women hid themselves in woods and swamps, to keep out of their way. If any of the husbands or fathers told of these outrages, they were tied up to the public whipping post, and cruelly scourged for telling lies about white men.

The consternation was universal. No two people that had the slightest tinge of color in their faces dared to be seen talking together. I entertained no positive fears about our household,

because we were in the midst of white families who would protect us. We were ready to receive the soldiers whenever they came. It was not long before we heard the tramp of feet and the sound of voices. The door was rudely pushed open; and in they tumbled, like a pack of hungry wolves. They snatched at every thing within their reach. Every box, trunk, closet, underwent a thorough examination. A box in one of the drawers containing some silver change was eagerly pounced upon. When I stepped forward to take it from them, one of the soldiers turned and said angrily, "What d'ye foller us fur? D'ye s'pose white folks is come to steal?" I replied, "You have come to search; but you have searched that box, and I will take it, if you please."

At that moment I saw a white gentleman who was friendly to us; and I called to him, and asked him to have the goodness to come in and stay till the search was over. He readily complied. His entrance into the house brought in the captain of the company, whose business it was to guard the outside of the house, and see that none of the inmates left it. This officer was Mr. Litch, the wealthy slaveholder whom I mentioned.... as being notorious for his cruelty. He felt above soiling his hands with the search. He merely gave orders; and, if a bit of writing was discovered, it was carried to him by his ignorant followers, who were unable to read.

My grandmother had a large trunk of bedding and table cloths. When that was opened, there was a great shout of surprise; and one exclaimed, "Where'd the damned niggers git all dis sheet an' table clarf?" My grandmother, emboldened by the presence of our white protector, said, "You may be sure we didn't pilfer 'em from your houses. " "Look here, mammy," said a grim-looking fellow without any coat, "you seem to feel mighty gran' 'cause you got all them 'ere fixens. White folks oughter have 'em all."

His remarks were interrupted by a chorus of voices shouting, "We's got 'em! We's got 'em! Dis 'ere yaller gal's got letters!" There was a general rush for the supposed letter, which, upon examination, proved to be some verses written to me by a friend. In packing away my things, I had overlooked them. When their captain informed them of their contents, they seemed much disappointed. He inquired of me who wrote them. I told him it was one of my friends. "Can you read them?" he asked. When I told him I could, he swore, and raved, and tore the paper into bits. "Bring me all your letters!" said he, in a commanding tone. I told him I had none. "Don't be afraid....bring them all to me. Nobody shall do you any harm." Seeing I did not move to obey him, his pleasant tone changed to oaths and threats. "Who writes to you? half free niggers?" I replied, "O, no; most of my letters are from white people. Some request me to burn them after they are read, and some I destroy without reading."

The search of.the house was completed, and nothing found to condemn us. The captain called his men together, and, after a short consultation, the order to march was given. As they passed out of the gate, the captain turned back, and said he thought [our house] ought to be burned to the ground, and each of its inmates receive thirty-nine lashes. We came out of this affair very fortunately; not losing any thing except some wearing apparel. Towards evening the turbulence increased. The soldiers, stimulated by drink, committed still greater cruelties. Shrieks and shouts continually rent the air. Not daring to go to the door, I peeped under the window curtain. I saw a mob dragging along a number of colored people, each white man, with his musket upraised, threatening instant death if they did not stop their shrieks. Among the prisoners was a respectable old colored minister. They had found a few parcels of shot in his house, which his wife had for years used to balance her scales. For this they were going to shoot him on Court House Green. What a spectacle was that for a civilized country! A rabble, staggering under intoxication, assuming to be the administrators of justice! The better class of the community exerted their influence to save the innocent, persecuted people; and in several instances they succeeded, by keeping them shut up in jail till the excitement abated. At last the white citizens found that their own property was not safe from the lawless rabble they had summoned to protect

them. They rallied the drunken swarm, drove them back into the country, and set a guard over the town.

The next day, the town patrols were commissioned to search colored people that lived out of the city; and the most shocking outrages were committed with perfect impunity. Every day for a fortnight, if I looked out, I saw horsemen with some poor panting negro tied to their saddles, and compelled by the lash to keep up with their speed, till they arrived at the jail yard. Those who had been whipped too unmercifully to walk were washed with brine, tossed into a cart, and carried to jail. One black man, who had not fortitude to endure scourging, promised to give information about the conspiracy. But it turned out that he knew nothing at all. He had not even heard the name of Nat Turner. The poor fellow had, however, made up a story, which augmented his own sufferings and those of the colored people.

The day patrol continued for some weeks, and at sundown a night guard was substituted. Nothing at all was proved against the colored people, bond or free. The wrath of the slaveholders was somewhat appeased by the capture of Nat Turner. The imprisoned were released. The slaves were sent to their masters, and the free were permitted to return to their ravaged homes. Visiting was strictly forbidden on the plantations. The slaves begged the privilege of again meeting at their little church in the woods, with their burying ground around it. It was built by the colored people, and they had no higher happiness than to meet there and sing hymns together, and pour out their hearts in spontaneous prayer. Their request was denied, and the church was demolished. They were permitted to attend the white churches, a certain portion of the galleries being appropriated to their use. There, when every body else had partaken of the communion, and the benediction had been pronounced, the minister said, "Come down, now, my colored friends." They obeyed the summons, and partook of the bread and wine, in commemoration of the meek and lowly Jesus, who said, "God is your Father, and all ye are brethren."

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Source: Harriet A. Jacobs, Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl: Written by Herself, (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 63-67.

A FUGITIVE SLAVE RESPONDS TO HIS OWNER

The Fugitive Slave Act proved unenforceable in the North because abolitionists refused to assist local authorities in capturing runaway slaves. As a consequence, some African Americans, aware of their newly discovered security in the North, wrote to their former owners. The two letters below by Tennessee-born slaves, J.W. Lougen, living in Syracuse, N.Y. in 1860 and by Jourdan Anderson in Rochester, N.Y. in response to their former owners who asked that they return, suggests that former slaves clearly understood both the injustice of their bondage in their former homes and the inestimable value of their freedom in their new homes.

Mrs. Sarah Logue:

Yours of the 20th of February is duly received, and I thank you for it. You sold my brother and sister, Abe and Ann, and twelve acres of land, you say, because I ran away. Now you have the meanness to ask me to return and be your chattel, or in lieu thereof, send you $1,000 to redeem the *land* but not to redeem my poor brother and sister! If I were to send you money, it would be to get my brother and sister, and not that you should get land. You say you are a *cripple*....to stir my pity, for you knew I was susceptible in that direction. I do pity you from the bottom of my heart. Nevertheless, I am indignant beyond the power of words to express, that you should be so cruel as to tear the hearts I love so much all in pieces; that you should be willing to crucify us all, out of compassion for your poor *foot* or *leg*. Wretched woman! I value my freedom, to say nothing of my mother, brothers and sisters more than your whole body; more, indeed, than my own life, more than all of the lives of all the slaveholders and tyrants under heaven.

You say you have offers to buy me, and that you shall sell me if I do not send you $1,000, and in the same breath and almost in the same sentence, you say, "You know we raised you as we did our own children." Woman, did you raise your *own children* for the market? Did you raise them for the whipping-post? Did you raise them to be driven off, bound to a coffle in chains? Where are my poor bleeding brothers and sisters? Can you tell? Who was it that sent them off into sugar and cotton fields, to be kicked and cuffed, and whipped, and to groan and die.... Do you say you did not do it? Then I reply, your husband did, and *you* approved the deed--and the very letter you sent me shows that your heart approves it all. Shame on you!

You say I am a thief, because I took the old mare along with me. Have you got to learn that I had a better right to the old mare than Mannasseth Logue had to me? Is it a greater sin for me to steal a horse, than it was for him to rob my mother's cradle and steal me? If he and you infer that I forfeit all my rights to you, shall not I infer that you forfeit all your rights to me? Have you got to learn that human rights are mutual and reciprocal, and if you take my liberty and life, you forfeit your own liberty and life? Before God and high heaven, is there a law for one man which is not a law for every other man?

If you or any other speculator on my body and rights, wish to know how I regard my rights, they need but come here, and lay their hands on me to enslave me....Did you think to terrify me by presenting the alternative to give my money to you, or give my body to slavery? I stand among a free people, who, I thank God, sympathize with my rights and the rights of mankind....

* * *

Sir:

I got your letter, and was glad to find that you had not forgotten Jourdon, and that you wanted me to come back and live with you again, promising to do better for me than anybody else can...

I want to know particularly what the good chance is you propose to give me. I am doing tolerably well here. I get $25 a month, with [food] and clothing; have a comfortable home for Mandy--the folks here call her Mrs. Anderson--and the children--Milly, Jane, and Grundy--go to school and are learning well. The teacher says Grundy has a head for a preacher.. They go to Sunday School, and Mandy and me attend church regularly. We are kindly treated. Sometimes we overhear others saying, "Them colored people were slaves" down in Tennessee. The children feel hurt when they hear such remarks; but I tell them it was no disgrace in Tennessee to belong to Colonel Anderson. Many darkeys would have been proud, as I used to be, to call you master. Now if you will write and say what wages you will give me, I will be better able to decide whether it would be to my advantage to move back again.

Mandy says she would be afraid to go back without some proof that you were disposed to treat us justly and kindly; and we have concluded to test your sincerity by asking you to send us our wages for the time we served you. This will make us forget and forgive old scores, and rely on your justice and friendship in the future. I served you faithfully for 32 years, and Mandy 20 years. At $25 a month for me, and two dollars a week for Mandy, our earnings would amount to $11,680. Add to this the interest for the time our wages have been kept back, and deduct what you paid for our clothing, and three doctor's visits to me, and pulling a tooth for Mandy, and the balance will show what we are in justice entitled to.

In answering this letter, please state if there would be any safety for my Milly and Jane, who are now grown up, and both good looking girls. You know how it was with poor Matilda and Catherine. I would rather stay here and starve--and die, if it comes to that--than have my girls brought to shame by the violence and wickedness of their young masters. You will also please state if there has been any school opened for colored children in your neighborhood. The great desire of my life is to give my children an education, and have them form virtuous habits.

Say howdy to George Carter, and thank him for taking the pistol from you hand when you were shooting at me.

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Source: Stanley I. Kutler, Looking for America: The People's History, Vol. I, (New York, 1979), pp. 342-343; Milton Meltzer, ed., In Their Own Words: A History of the American Negro, 1619-1865 (New York, 1967), pp. 171-172.

CHAPTER FIVE:

Free Blacks in a Slave Society

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Ten percent of the black population was legally classified as free before the Civil War. Despite their small numbers and their marginalization in American society, these women and men often dedicated their careers and often gave their lives to the cause of freedom for those still held in bondage. Those not actively engaged in the anti-slavery struggle nevertheless tried, given the limitations imposed upon them by the larger society, to raise the standard of living and improve the quality of life for themselves and other free blacks, hoping in this manner to hasten the day when prejudice and discrimination would no longer determine black lives.

The first vignettes, ***The Free African Society****,* ***Richard Allen and the Founding of the AME Church*** *provides an account of the establishment of the oldest black-controlled institutions in the United States while* ***Benjamin Banneker's Letter to Thomas Jefferson****, dispenses a refutation of Jefferson's belief in the inherent inferiority of African-Americans. The rules and preamble of* ***The Free African Society*** *provide a brief glimpse into the mind of Northern free blacks in the years following the Revolution.* ***European Immigrants and American Racism*** *describes how ante-bellum immigrants such as the Irish adopted views of black inferiority. The vignettes,* ***Eliza Gallie Goes to Court*** *and* ***Black Women, Marriage, and Slavery****, describe the impact of slavery on free black women in the South. The two vignettes,* ***Freedom's Journal's First Editorial*** *and* ***A Black Woman Speaks on Women's Rights*** *and* ***Black Men Assess Women's Rights*** *reflect the growing concern of urban blacks with Northern race and gender issues in addition to their campaign to destroy slavery.*

Western historians and African American leaders in the West have long contended that this region differed in both its attitude toward and treatment of African Americans. At one level they are correct; the very nature of frontier society, its rough egalitarianism borne of newly emerging societies, allowed African Americans a freedom often absent elsewhere in the United States. Yet the West was not the racial paradise its promoters often claimed, for the very reasons--its newness and ability to be molded by settlers--that usually provided the context for black freedom. White settlers hoping to "steer clear of the troublesome presence" often generated legislation which either excluded African Americans or made them unwelcome. The vignettes included in this chapter reflect this paradox of greater black freedom and of white fear of that very freedom.

The vignette, ***Afro-Spaniards in the Far Southwest****, describes the black and mulatto settlers in colonial California.* ***Free Blacks on the Texas Frontier*** *describes the initially successful effort by some African Americans to find freedom and economic security on the "cultural frontier" of Mexican Texas. A brief discussion of Mexican attitudes toward slavery is provided in* ***Santa Anna and Black Freedom*** *and* ***Frederick Law Olmsted Describes San Antonio****.* ***Slaves and Free Blacks in Indian Territory*** *explores the relationship between two non-white groups on the frontier.* ***The Mormons and Black Slavery*** *describes how this major religious denomination came to accept black slavery and ideas of black inferiority. The vignettes,* ***Black Rights in Antebellum Oregon****,* ***Oregon Territory Bans African Americans*** *and* ***The O.B. Francis Petition*** *reflect the desire to exclude most blacks and the desire to attract all people committed to the region's development. The last three vignettes,* ***African Americans in Gold Rush California****,* ***The First California Negro Convention*** *and* ***Address to the People of California****, describe the attempts to limit rights in the state that in the 1850s was home to the vast majority of blacks in the Far West, and the African American response to those attempts.*

Terms For Week Five:

Benjamin Banneker

Paul Cuffee

Free African Society

James Forten

Mirror of the Times

Richard Allen

Bethel A.M.E. Church

Eliza Gallie

Freedom's Journal

Charlotte Forten

Biddy Mason

Abner H. Francis

Elijah Abel

Oregon's Black Laws

Philip Bell

Mary Ellen Pleasant

"Black Laws" of Oregon

Jacob Vanderpool

Afro-Spaniards

THE FREE AFRICAN SOCIETY

The following account by Gary B. Nash provides a brief glimpse into the Free African Society of Philadelphia, possibly the first African American "betterment" organization formed in the United States, including the schism between its two most prominent members Absalom Jones and Richard Allen.

....Almost all the early black institutions in the North used the adjective "African" in their titles--the Free African Society, the African School, the African Church of Philadelphia. [Thus] these ex-slaves identified positively with their ancestral homelands and did not subscribe to the common white characterizations of Africa as a dismal, cultureless environment. Nonetheless, white racism impinged on their lives at every turn and, although not of the virulent form it would assume early in the 19th Century, it tended to keep cowed the poorest and weakest members of the emerging black communities..... Only a few years out of bondage in the 1780s, Philadelphia's free blacks thus lived in a highly fluid situation full of dangers and opportunities. Their lowly position made it imperative to accept the support of benevolent whites who offered education, jobs, and almost always moral guidance. Likewise, they could hardly hope to obtain the release of their racial brethren still in bondage without white leadership and support....

It is within this ideological context that we can see the Free African Society of Philadelphia as much more than a black mutual aid society. Beginning as an organization in which free blacks were taking the first halting steps toward developing their own leaders and solving their own problems, it became a society which founded churches, assumed a supervisory role over the moral life of the black community, and worked to create a visionary black consciousness out of the disparate human material that had found its way to Philadelphia in this period....

[Absalom] Jones and [Richard] Allen enlarged the activities of the Free African Society. In early 1790 the Society attempted to lease the Stranger's Burial ground in order to turn it into a black cemetery under black control. In the next month the Society instituted "a regular mode of procedure with respect to....marriages" and began keeping a book of marriage records. Having assumed quasi-ecclesiastical functions, the Society took the final step in September 1790 when a special committee led by Jones recommended the initiation of religious services....

The Quaker leanings of many Free African Society members caused Richard Allen great pain. He made no objections when the African Society adopted Quaker-like visiting committees in early 1788 to call on black families or when they instituted the disownment practices of the Quakers in September of that year to disenroll wayward members. But two months later when the Society adopted the Friendly practice of beginning meetings with fifteen minutes of silence, Allen led the withdrawal of "a large number" of dissenters whose Methodism had accustomed them to "an unconstrained outburst of their feelings in religious worship. Jones made repeated efforts to bring Allen back into the bosom of the group and censured him "for attempting to sow division among us." When their efforts failed, they followed the Quaker procedure of declaring that "he has disunited himself from membership with us."

Source: Gary B. Nash, "Absalom Jones: Free Black Leader," in Gary B. Nash and Ronald Schultz, ed., Retracing the Past: Readings in the History of the American People Vol. 1, To 1865, (New York, 1990), pp. 139-141.

RICHARD ALLEN AND THE FOUNDING OF THE AME CHURCH

The black church has, and continues to play a central role in the African-American community. In the following account we see the establishment of Bethel AME (Mother Bethel) Church founded by Richard Allen in Philadelphia in 1787. Bethel AME is now over two centuries old.

Black converts began to fill the seats in St. George's [the predominately white Methodist Church] until no more empty ones remained. In the future, who would stand and who would sit during Sunday worship? The answer was hardly a problem. The black Methodists were asked to give up their seats, and, said Allen, they were "placed...around the wall."

The revised seating arrangements failed to solve the predicament at St. George's. The church was clearly overcrowded, with the only sensible solution being the addition of new facilities. The membership embarked on a rebuilding, refurbishing campaign, with black members contributing a significant share of muscle and money. When the project was completed, the members naturally resumed their old seating patterns, but black parishioners were told that henceforth they would have to sit in the new galleries above the seats they had previously occupied on the main floor.

Many of Allen's racial contemporaries....were beginning to recognize discriminatory treatment as inevitable in other areas of their lives, and its current appearance in their church life only served to remind them that segregated seating was becoming an integral part of a developing pattern. [But] the newly redecorated sanctuary itself was a vivid testimonial to the contributions of black members to St. George's. Further, Allen who as a recognized lay preacher, was entitled to a certain amount of respect and consideration, was convinced that church officials regarded the "colored brethren" as "a nuisance," and local leaders were suspicious of African designs for separate worship facilities.

When Allen and his friends, arriving just after the service had begun, were directed by the sexton to seats in the gallery. The places they occupied were apparently not the ones intended for them, for shortly after prayers had begun, and while everyone was kneeling, a trustee approached Absalom Jones and began to pull him off his knees. Jones asked the man to wait until the prayer had ended, but the impatient trustee refused to be put off a moment longer. "`No,'" he said, "`you must get up now, or I will call for aid and force you away.'" The white man motioned to another trustee to assist him in pulling the praying Africans from their knees. Just as they were ready to act, the prayer ended, the black group walked out in a body, and, according to Allen, "they were no more plagued with us in the church."

The dramatic withdrawal of the black Methodists, perhaps the most significant event that Allen witnessed in his lifetime, marked the beginning of the independent black church movement. Unlike previous Southern attempts to practice religious separatism, this move initiated a sustained effort, carried out under black direction, and frequently in opposition to white demands to desist. The withdrawal from St. George's came in November 1787, seven months after the Preamble for the Free African Society was first composed.

Source: Carol V. R. George, Segregated Sabbaths: Richard Allen and the Emergence of Independent Black Churches, 1760-1840, (New York, 1973), pp. 53-55.

BENJAMIN BANNEKER'S LETTER TO THOMAS JEFFERSON

Benjamin Banneker was the wealthiest and most noted black inventor of the late 19th Century. Yet many white Americans dismissed his achievements as insignificant. Thomas Jefferson, himself an inventor, was particularly critical, prompting Banneker to write the future President in 1792 to challenge him to test Banneker's claims. The long letter also allowed Banneker to point out the contradictions in Jefferson's professions of liberty and his continued ownership of slaves. Part of the letter is reprinted below.

To Thomas Jefferson

I am fully sensible of that freedom, which I take with you in the present occasion; a liberty which seemed to me scarcely allowable, when I reflected on that distinguished and dignified station in which you stand, and the almost general prejudice and prepossession, which is so prevalent in the world against those of my complexion....

Sir, suffer me to recall to your mind that time, in which the arms and tyranny of the British crown were exerted, with every powerful effort, in order to reduce you to a state of servitude: look back, I entreat you, on the variety of dangers to which you were exposed....

This, Sir, was a time when you clearly saw into the injustice of a state of slavery, and in which you had just apprehensions of the horror of its condition. You publicly held forth this true and invaluable doctrine, which is worthy to be recorded and remembered in all succeeding ages: `We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, and that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Here was a time, in which your tender feelings for yourselves had engaged you thus to declare, you were then impressed with proper ideas of the great violation of liberty, and the free possession of those blessings, to which you were entitled by nature; but, Sir, how pitiable is it to reflect, that although you were so fully convinced of the benevolence of the Father of Mankind, and of his equal and impartial distribution of these rights and privileges, which he hath conferred upon them, that you should at the same time counteract his mercies, in detaining by fraud and violence so numerous a part of my brethren, under groaning captivity, and cruel oppression, that you should at the same time be found guilty of that most criminal act, which you professedly detested in others, with respect to yourselves.

[I have] taken up my pen in order to direct to you, as a present, a copy of my Almanac, which I have calculated for the succeeding year. This calculation is the product of my arduous study, in this most advanced stage of life; for having long had unbounded desires to become acquainted with the secrets of nature, I have had to gratify my curiosity herein through my own assiduous application to Astronomical Study, in which I need not recount to you the many difficulties and disadvantages which I have had to encounter.

Source: Herbert Aptheker, ed. A Documentary History of the Negro People (New York: Citadel Press, 1969), pp. 23-26.

THE FREE AFRICAN SOCIETY, 1787

The Free African Society was one of the earliest benevolent, self-help organizations in black America. Its Preamble and organizational rules are reprinted below.

Preamble: Whereas Absalom Jones and Richard Allen, two men of the African race who, for their religious life and conversation have obtained a good report among men, these persons, from a love to the people of their complexion whom they beheld with sorrow, because of their irreligious and uncivilized state, often communed together upon this painful and important subject in order to form some kind of religious society, but there being too few to be found under the like concern, and those who were, differed in their religious sentiments; with these circumstances they labored for some time, till it was proposed, after a serious communication of sentiments that a society should be formed, without regard to religious tenets, provided, the persons lived an orderly and sober life, in order to support one another in sickness and for the benefit of their widows and fatherless children.

The Society's Financial Rules

We, the Free Africans and their descendants of the City of Philadelphia in the State of Pennsylvania or elsewhere do unanimously agree for the benefit of each other, to advance one shilling in silver, Pennsylvania currency, monthly and after one year's subscription from the date hereof then to hand forth to the needy of this society....

And it is further agreed that no drunkard or disorderly person be admitted a member, and if they should prove disorderly after having been received, the said disorderly person shall be disjoined from us... without having any of his subscription money returned to him.

And if any should neglect paying his monthly subscription for three months and no sufficient appearing for such neglect, if he do not pay the whole at the next ensuing meeting, he shall be disjoined from us by being informed by two of the members as an offender, without having any of his subscription money returned.

We apprehend it to be just and reasonable that the surviving widow of a deceased member should enjoy the benefits of this society as long as she remains his widow, complying with the rules thereof, excepting the subscriptions.

And we apprehend it to be necessary that the children of our deceased members be under the care of the society so far as to pay their schooling, if they cannot attend the free school; also to put them out as apprentices to suitable trades or places if required.

Source: William Douglass, Annals of the First African Church, in the United States of America, now styled The African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas, Philadelphia... (Philadelphia, 1862), p. 15.; R. R. Wright, The Negro in Pennsylvania (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1918), p. 31.

EUROPEAN IMMIGRANTS AND AMERICAN RACISM

Nineteenth Century European immigrants were clearly subjected to numerous forms of discrimination that occasionally rivaled the ostracism faced by blacks, Indians, Asians and Mexican-Americans. But as the account below by immigration historian Thomas Archdeacon reveals, immigrants often practiced racism against non-white groups.

Compared with the blacks, Indians, and Mexicans, the European immigrants of the mid-nineteenth century were in an ambiguous position. As whites they were safe from being categorized as hopelessly inferior and as refugees from the political and economic darkness of the Old World they were evidence that mankind recognized America's mission. But the immigrants were, at the same time, a serious challenge to the establishment of a Christian utopia in the United States. The newcomers became strongly identified with the industrialization and urbanization that was changing the nation in ways disfavored by many socially conscious and concerned people. Foreigners provided the manpower for the growth of the American economy, but their presence also helped make the nation's new factories distressingly similar to those of Europe and their low status belied the magic of the United States as a society of open-ended economic mobility.... Because of the desperate circumstances in which they came, the Europeans were the agents and victims of crime, disease, and disorder with a frequency that far exceeded their proportion of the population. Perhaps worst of all large numbers of the immigrants flouted Protestant America's version of civic morality and rejected the use of public institutions to propagate this view.... That the most numerous and troublesome of the early arrivals came from Catholic Ireland, whose people and religion had been hated and distrusted in America since colonial times only aggravated the multiple problems. Conflict was unavoidable in such an atmosphere, and bitter clashes between natives and immigrants colored American history throughout the pre-Civil War era.

Immigrants, like other white Americans, assumed that the Africans were inferior, and as the group most directly in competition with free black labor they grasped this belief all the more tightly. The foreign born shared the fetid urban living quarters of the blacks, vied with them for the unskilled jobs available in the eastern cities, and took advantage of their own light skins to oust Afro-Americans gradually from domestic and personal service occupations. Ironically, in asserting cultural and moral superiority over their competitors, the immigrants did unto the blacks what they were suffering themselves at the hands of the natives. The Irish, the most marginal of the newcomers, were probably the worst offenders. But immigrants of other nationalities who were in frequent contact with blacks also showed bias; indeed, members of the large German population in Texas went so far as to own slaves.

Immigrants fed their hostility to abolition on the awareness that it and nativism overlapped. It was only partly fortuitous that Harriet Beecher Stowe, the author of *Uncle Tom 's Cabin*, was the daughter of the Reverend Lyman Beecher, whose sermons had helped incite a mob to burn the convent of the Ursuline nuns in Charlestown, Massachusetts, in August 1834. And, though regrettable, the Reverend Arthur Tappan's involvement with the production of *Monk's Awful Disclosures* was not entirely inconsistent with his role as a founder of the American and Foreign Antislavery Society. Abolition and the anti-Catholic agitation that polluted the natives' reception of the foreign-born were integral parts of the general Protestant reform movement that distinguished the second third of the nineteenth century. The sense of civic responsibility and Christian perfectionism and the desire to reestablish social preeminence

that combined in the Sabbatarian, temperance, and antipopery movements also infused abolitionism. Morally conscious Americans reasonably felt guilty for the existence of slavery, and the coming of the immigrants inflamed their sensibilities. The nation's willingness to accept benighted foreigners as voting citizens while denying American blacks, free as well as bound, basic rights highlighted the country's racism, and the newcomers' bestowal of their allegiance on the prosouthern Democratic party limited the prospect of ending slavery. The mutual antipathy of abolitionists and major foreign-born groups had unfortunate longlasting results. This situation shut off the possibility of the newcomers' receiving substantial assistance from the most progressive groups in the United States and helped create an attitudinal gulf that has constantly divided America's ethnic groups, particularly the urban Catholic ones, from the Protestant, middle-class reform tradition.

The antipathy between immigrant and native-stock Americans became one of the most disruptive forces in the United States in the 1840s and 1850s. In May 1844, three days of rioting in Kensington, an Irish, working-class suburb of Philadelphia, culminated in the burning of two churches, St. Michael's and St. Augustine's, and of other Catholic property. A network of cultural, economic, and social antagonisms underlay the clash of Irishmen and natives, but the immediate spark was the mistaken belief that Bishop Francis Kenrick was attempting to banish the Bible from the public schools. In fact, the bishop had simply sought and received permission for Catholic students to read their own version of the Scriptures in the classroom. When the threat of violence spread to New York, Bishop Hughes placed armed men around his churches and warned that the city would become a second Moscow if any of the edifices were attacked. Fortunately, cooler heads prevailed. Though undoubtedly the most dramatic, these were not the only instances of ethnic and religious violence in the era. The troubles reached another peak in the 1850s. An American tour in 1853 by a papal nuncio, Gaetano Bedini....inflamed the populace, and itinerant preachers like John S. Orr, "the Angel Gabriel," kept the fires of antiCatholicism going.... The result was the burning of a dozen Catholic churches, the desecration of many others, and physical attacks on priests and nuns.

Thomas J. Archdeacon, Becoming American: An Ethnic History (New York, 1983), p. 70, 80-81.

ELIZA GALLIE GOES TO COURT

In the vignette below historian Suzanne Lebsock describes the saga of Eliza Gallie, a free black woman who attempted to challenge a sentence handed down to her in a Petersburg, Virginia court. Her story, as Lebsock illustrates, reminds us of the vulnerable position of black women in society even as they were described as "matriarchs."

In November 1853, Eliza Gallie, a free black woman of Petersburg, was arrested and charged with stealing cabbages from the patch of Alexander Stevens, a white man. She was tried in mayor's court and sentenced to thirty-nine lashes. There was nothing unusual in this; free black women were frequently accused of petty crimes, and for free blacks as for slaves, whipping was the punishment prescribed by law. What made the case a minor spectacle was that Eliza Gallie had resources, and she fought back. She filed an appeal immediately, and two weeks later she hired three of Petersburg's most eminent attorneys and one from Richmond as well. "If the Commonwealth, God bless her, has not met her match in Miss Liza," a local newspaper commented, "it won't be for lack of lawyers."

The case came up in hustings court in March 1854. Gallie's lawyers argued first of all that her ancestors were of white and Indian blood and that she should therefore be tried as a white person. The court was unconvinced. On the trial's second day, her counsel argued that she was innocent of the theft. The court was again unconvinced. Gallie was pronounced guilty and sentenced to "twenty lashes on her bare back at the public whipping post...." At first, she set another appeal in motion, but deciding that the case was hopeless, Eliza Gallie dismissed her lawyers and took her punishment.

Gallie's case was in many ways an unusual one, and yet her story cuts straight to the central contradiction in our common image of the historic black woman. Eliza Gallie was, relatively speaking, a powerful woman, propertied, autonomous (divorced, actually), and assertive. But she was helpless in the end, the victim of the kind of deliberate humiliation that for most of us is past imagining. So it is with our perception of the history of black women as a group. On the one hand, we have been told that black women, in slavery and afterward, were formidable people, "matriarchs," in fact. And yet we know that all along, black women were dreadfully exploited. Rarely has so much power been attributed to so vulnerable a group. The contradiction can be resolved, with sufficient attention to definition and evidence.... But it needs to be understood from the beginning that the term "matriarch" would never have been applied to black women in the first place were it not for our culture's touchiness over reduced male authority within the family.... Women are called matriarchs when the power they exercise relative to the men of their own group is in some respect greater than that defined as appropriate by the dominant culture. Given this standard, women need not be the equals of men much less men's superiors, in order to qualify as matriarchs.... The woman who had no vote, no money, and no protection under the law was nonetheless a "matriarch," so long as she also had no man present to compete with her for authority over her children.

Source: Suzanne Lebsock, The Free Women of Petersburg: Status and Culture in a Southern Town, 1784-1860, (New York, 1984), pp. 87-88.

BLACK WOMEN, MARRIAGE, AND SLAVERY

In the following vignette Suzanne Lebsock describes the particular difficulties facing free black women who choose to marry in a slave-based, racially biased society.

Slavery may....have had a....direct influence on women's decisions against marriage. It may well have been that women so recently emancipated and women accustomed to providing for themselves did not give up their legal autonomy lightly. Unless the man owned property, legal marriage brought the woman no economic benefits. Moreover, free black women had unique incentives for staying single. For the woman who hoped to buy an enslaved relative, legal wedlock meant that her plan could be sabotaged at any time by her husband or by her husband's creditors. The common-law disabilities of married women added an ironic twist to chattel slavery's strange fusion of persons and property: Matrimony could pose a threat to the free black woman's family.

Once again, it is not clear what free black women themselves thought of their position of relative strength vis-a-vis black men. What is clear is that the relative equality between free black women and men was never granted any legitimacy by whites and was never used to call white gender arrangements into question. On the contrary, deviations from white standards of marital behavior were treated, if they were treated at all, as burlesque. The *SouthSide Democrat* [a Virginia newspaper], for example, reported a domestic quarrel of 1856 between Mary Wright and William Smith, free blacks who, it was pointed out, lived together but were not married. The fight was over the question of "whether a lady or gentleman should preside at the head of the table." Such a question presumably would not have arisen among white ladies and gentlemen. In any case, William picked up an iron bar and struck Mary on the head with it; "had it hit her anywhere else," the reporter commented, "the blow might have killed her." The joke was completed when the mayor ordered William twenty lashes.

This is not a pretty story by any telling, but if we take it seriously, we can learn more from it than the reporter from the *SouthSide Democrat* did. And what we learn bears on whites as well as blacks. Mary Wright and William Smith were engaged in a real power struggle; while the evidence is too thin to permit firm judgment, it would stand to reason that among the free blacks of Petersburg there was a relatively high degree of open antagonism between the sexes. Companionate marriage increased the incidence of overt conflict as wives assumed the right to opinions and as they gained new opportunities for encroachment on male territory. It is not clear whether "companionate" is an appropriate term for conjugal relations between free blacks, but the same reasoning applies: Free black women had relatively little cause to defer to their men, and the result may have been a substantial amount of conjugal conflict.

To say that there were battles between the sexes is not to risk giving aid and comfort to the old notion that there was something uniquely pathological about black family life. Pathology there undoubtedly was. Settling a dispute with an iron bar was a symptom of it; whatever William Smith's particular animus, poverty and the daily, personal assaults of racism on human character had to have done some damage. There was nothing inherently pathological about conflict between the sexes, however, no more than there was anything inherently pathological about female-headed households. Insofar as conflict grew out of leverage and assertiveness on the part of women, it was a sign of health; it was, in any case, better than routine, abject submission. It should no longer be necessary to defend the historic black family by minimizing the existence of domestic conflict or by minimizing the importance of women. At the same time,

it would be foolish to revive the old idea of a matriarchy; Mary Wright's assertiveness, after all, earned her a concussion. We are back once more to that unsettling pairing of autonomy with oppression, assertiveness with victimization.

Source: Suzanne Lebsock, The Free Women of Petersburg: Status and Culture in a Southern Town, 1784-1860, (New York, 1984), pp. 109-115.

FREEDOM'S JOURNAL'S FIRST EDITORIAL

In March 1827 John Russwurm and Samuel Cornish began publishing the first black newspaper in the United States, Freedom's Journal in New York City. Part of their first editorial is reprinted below:

The peculiarities of this Journal, renders it important that we should advertise to the world our motives by which we are actuated, and the objects which we contemplate.

We wish to plead our own cause. Too long have others spoken for us. Too long has the public been deceived by misrepresentations, in things which concern us dearly, though in the estimation of some mere trifles; for though there are many in society who exercise towards us benevolent feelings; still (with sorrow we confess it) there are others who make it their business to enlarge upon the least trifle, which tends to the discredit of any person of colour; and pronounce anathemas and denounce our whole body for the misconduct of this guilty one. We are aware that there are many instances of vice among us, but we avow that it is because no one has taught its subjects to be virtuous; many instances of poverty, because no sufficient efforts accommodated to minds contracted by slavery, and deprived of early education have been made, to teach them how to husband their hard earnings, and to secure to themselves comfort...

The civil rights of a people being of greatest value, it shall ever be our duty to vindicate our brethren, when oppressed; and to lay the case before the public. We shall also urge upon our brethren, (who are qualified by the laws of the different states) the expediency of using their elective franchise; and of making an independent use of the same. We wish them not to become the tools of party...

Useful knowledge of every kind, and everything that relates to Africa, shall find a ready admission into our columns; and as that vast continent becomes daily more known, we trust that many things will come to light, proving that the natives of it are neither so ignorant nor stupid as they have generally been supposed to be.

And while these important subjects shall occupy the columns of the *FREEDOM'S JOURNAL*, we would not be unmindful of our brethren who are still in the iron fetters of bondage. They are our kindred by all the ties of nature; and though but little can be effected by us, still let our sympathies be poured forth, and our prayers in their behalf, ascend to Him who is able to succor them.

Source: Freedom's Journal, March 16, 1827

A BLACK WOMAN SPEAKS ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS, 1827

Soon after its founding Freedom's Journal began publishing letters from readers expressing various concerns and raising issues for the black community. One woman, known only as Matilda, discussed women's rights and discrimination against women.

Messrs. Editors,

Will you allow a female to offer a few remarks upon a subject that you must allow to be all important. I don't know that in any of your papers, you have said sufficient upon the education of females. I hope you are not to be classed with those, who think that our mathematical knowledge should be limited to "fathoming the dish-kettle," and that we have acquired enough of history, if we know that our grandfather's father lived and died. 'Tis true the time has been, when to darn a stocking, and cook a pudding well, was considered the end aim of a woman's being. But those were days when ignorance blinded men's eyes. The diffusion of knowledge has destroyed those degraded opinions, and men of the present age, allow, that we have minds that are capable and deserving of culture.

There are difficulties, and great difficulties in the way of our advancement; but that should only stir us to greater efforts. We possess not the advantages with those of our sex, whose skins are not coloured like our own, but we can improve what little we have, and make our one talent produce two-fold. The influence that we have over the male sex demands, that our minds should be instructed and improved with the principles of education and religion, in order that this influence should be properly directed. Ignorant ourselves, how can we be expected to form the minds of our youth, and conduct them in the paths of knowledge?

There is a great responsibility resting somewhere, and it is time for us to be up and doing. I would address myself to all mothers, and say to them, that while it is necessary to possess a knowledge of cookery, and the various mysteries of pudding-making, something more is requisite. It is their bounden duty to store their daughters' minds with useful learning. They should be made to devote their leisure time to reading books, whence they would derive valuable information, which could never be taken from them. I will not longer trespass on your time and patience. I merely throw out these hints, in order that some more able pen will take up the subject.

Matilda

Source: Freedom's Journal, August 10, 1827.

BLACK MEN ASSESS WOMEN'S RIGHTS

In the following account historian Rosalyn Terborg-Penn describe the response of prominent black male abolitionists to Nineteenth Century women's rights issues.

During the early nineteenth century, black organizations with both men and women in attendance were prevalent long before the "women question" became prominent in white reform circles. Although some black male advocates of temperance, abolitionism, moral reform resisted sharing equal status with black women, their antifemale prejudice was considerably milder than that of their white male counterparts....They empathized with the plight of women because much of the legal and political discrimination that black men suffered was shared by all women as well.

One of the earliest Afro-American societies of men and women was the Union Society of Africans of Newport Rhode Island. A self-help society, two of its goals were to work for the good of the race and for the abolition of slavery. In 1789, this organization listed Bess Browning and Rebecca Folger as members.

In 1845, feminist supporter and abolitionist William C. Nell was among the men of the militant New England Freedom Association who shared leadership roles with black women. Three females were among the thirteen officers of this group, dedicated to assisting fugitive slaves....

Although black women were not always invited to participate fully in conventions and societies on an equal basis with black men, male resistance to such participation seemed short-lived and less hostile than white male opposition during the period. After 1848, Negro conventions generally seated women, although the men reluctantly shared decision making with them. For example, journalist and feminist Mary Ann Shadd was admitted to the Philadelphia Negro Convention in 1855 after a heated discussion in which she spoke in her own behalf. On the other hand in 1859 the delegates to the New England Convention of Colored Citizens elected Ruth Remond and a Mrs. Lawton to the business committee. In addition, Ellen Sherman and Ann E. Gray were appointed to the finance committee.

In contrast, during the 1840s and 1850s white males were more adamant in excluding white women from their reform societies. White males often criticized women when they attempted to speak publicly. Abolitionist and feminist supporter Samuel May recalled the prejudice among men against female orators like Lucretia Mott during the early years of antislavery movement. Former slaveholders Sarah and Angelina Grimke were challenged by men who felt they were stepping out of the traditional female place in society when addressing mixed groups of men and women about the evils of slavery. Even the American Anti-Slavery Society split, in 1841, over the question of allowing women equal status with men in the society....

James Forten, Sr., the wealthy sailmaker of Philadelphia, headed a family of antebellum reformers which included his sons and his three daughters, all of whom were members of the national female antislavery movement. The Forten men believed in an egalitarian relationship between the sexes. Women as well as men were expected to gain meaningful education and to exercise their moral obligation to uplift the race and the society. Forten's son Robert sent his daughter Charlotte to Salem, Massachusetts, to be educated; under the Philadelphia school board polices she had been denied admission to the public schools. James Forten, Jr., speech to the American Moral Reform Society in 1837 indicated his recognition of the literary talents of Afro-

American women as well as their right to higher education. He denounced men who selfishly opposed extensive education for women.

By the 1840s, men like Martin R. Delany and Frederick Douglass had also emphasized the importance of educating women in general and black women in particular. Delany and Douglass edited the *North Star* on the eve of the formation of the feminist movement; they were both active in the Negro convention movement as well as the antislavery movement. Delany, unlike Douglass, was a black nationalist who viewed the problems of Afro-American women in a white-dominated society as similar to those of Afro-American men. Douglass, on the other hand, was a integrationist, a master reformer concerned with temperance and peace as well as woman's rights. Although these men viewed the "woman question" from two different perspectives, they both perceived women as equal to men in the struggle....

William C. Nell also expressed gratitude for female support in the antislavery movement. An important Boston activist, he worked not only for the abolition of slavery but for equal school rights for black children with white children in Boston. In 1848, Nell addressed the Women's Rights Convention at Rochester, New York, where he commended the energies and devotion of thee women in the abolitionist struggle-who, he believed, were equal to men. Nell added that he would be grateful always to the female abolitionists for the work to set blacks free.

The *North Star* editors seem to have supported women in the reform movement from the newspaper's beginning. Frederick Douglass admitted later, in his autobiography, that his main concern during the period had been the abolition of slavery; however, like many of his peers, he was grateful to women's groups and assisted them whenever he could. From March 24 to August 11, 1848 the *North Star* contained the "Address of the Anti-Slavery Women of Western New York," whose appeal was published weekly without interruption. Douglass also attended the Woman's Rights Convention at Rochester in the same year and reported the proceedings in the paper. Among several things, he detected male resistance among the whites at the meeting and noted the sexist statement of a least one, who thought a woman's place should be in the home rather than on a public platform. Douglass editorialized that black men should become more involved in the struggle for woman's rights because of their common plight. He also criticized the argument used by patronizing men who claimed that because women were inferior to men they needed male protection.

Rosalyn Terborg-Penn, "Black Male Perspectives on the Nineteenth Century Woman," in Sharon Harley and Rosalyn Terborg-Penn, eds., The Afro-American Woman: Struggles and Images (Port Washington, N.Y., 1978) pp. 29-31, 33-34.

AFRO-SPANIARDS IN THE FAR SOUTHWEST

In the account below historian Jack Forbes describes the first settlers of Los Angeles, Santa Barbara and other 18th Century Spanish California cities.

Africans appeared in Mexico in the earliest days of the Spanish conquest and soon were numerous enough to stage rebellions.... They were also recruited into most Spanish expeditions, which penetrated the Southwest by the 1530s. As a result Negroes [often] became the first non-Indian settlers in New Mexico and, possibly, Kansas.... Many men of African ancestry were recruited into the Spanish armed forces and in 1744 the Marquis de Altamira wrote that many garrison troops along the northern frontier and especially in Texas were mulattos... In 1774 a royal official asserted that the Hispano population of northern Mexico was of Negro, Indian and European ancestry and were so intermixed as to make it difficult for anyone to trace their ancestry. Nevertheless, Spanish census records continued to enumerate race or color until 1800.

In general, as the status of a person improved, his race changed. he might begin life as a Negro...and end life as a mulatto or Eurafrican, *mestizo* or Eurindian, or even as *Espanol*. Race, therefore, was not definite by the late 18th Century and many people were simply *de color quebrado*, that is to say, "all mixed up." Some insight into the racial characteristics of the Spanish-speaking Southwest can be gained, however, from an examination of California. Mulattos accompanied the first expeditions which occupied San Diego and Monterey in 1769.... More revealing, however, are census records for individual communities in California. The total population of Los Angeles in 1781 consisted of 45 persons, of whom 26 were African or part-African. Thus the Afro-American percentage was 56.5%...Of the 191 persons in Santa Barbara whose racial identity is given in the census, at least 37 or 19.3% were part-Negro.... Of the total number of settlers at San Jose in 1790, 24.3% were part Negro....and at Monterey the mulattos constituted 18.5%....

At least 20% of the Hispano-Californians were part-Negro in 1790, while probably 25% of the Hispano-Baja Californians possessed African ancestry.... The physical appearance of the Spanish-speaking Californians did not remain static. From the earliest intrusion of Spanish settler in 1769, intermarriage with Indians was encouraged both by the Spanish government and by the dearth of Spanish-Speaking women....the people of Caucasian, Indian and Negro ancestry steadily mixed their stocks so as to produce....a new race.

The change from Spanish to Mexican rule in 1822 helped ease the situation for the mixed bloods. Many Mexicans began to take pride in possessing....indigenous ancestry, and several governors were dark-complexioned. Manuel Victoria (1831-32) was described as a Negro, and Jose Figueroa (1833-1835) was of Aztec ancestry.... California's Afro-American pioneers were able to live in a society where color was not an absolute barrier....The rapid process of miscegenation allowed their children to win acceptance simply as *Californios* and their granddaughters frequently intermarried with incoming Angloamericans or Europeans. Their blood now flows in the veins of many thousands of Californians who cannot speak Spanish and who are totally unaware of their African heritage.

Source: Jack D. Forbes, "Black Pioneers: The Spanish-speaking Afroamericans of the Southwest," Phylon, 27:3 (Fall 1966), pp. 233-246.

FREE BLACKS ON THE TEXAS FRONTIER

In the 1965 article George R. Woolfolk argues that although Southern white settlers brought slavery to Texas, free blacks nevertheless sought the province in the 1820s and 1830s when it was still part of Mexico, and in the 1840s after it was annexed by the United States because the area represented a "cultural frontier" where they could easily gain land and were accepted by their German and Mexican neighbors. Part of his article is reprinted below.

Free persons of color whose connections with white parents, husbands or wives made their position untenable in Southern society [moved to Texas]. In this group would be John Bird, Negro [grandson] of General Bird of Virginia. John and his son, Henry, had "emigrated and settled in Texas under the belief that they would be received as citizens under the colonization laws of the Mexican United States and entitled as such to land. David (white) and his wife Sophia (Negro) Townes fled to Texas with their children in 1827 where they could be married legally under the Mexican regime. Samuel McCullouch came....before the Texas Declaration of Independence with Peggy and Rose, two women of color, "desiring [they] should....remain free all the remainder of their lives."

More poignant still was the plight of the free persons of color whose wives and children were slaves. When the master moved to Texas, ties...pulled these husbands and fathers after their own. Single men and women who were either emancipated or bought their freedom in the old South [also] fled to Coahuila and Texas to remain free. Nelson Kavanaugh, a barber freed in Richmond, Kentucky was to find such sanctuary in Houston as did Zylpha Husk and child, one of a number of extraordinary Negro women who found both freedom and opportunity on this cultural frontier.

Land hunger....pulled free persons of color to Texas.... Land was not only an item of wealth, but also a badge of citizenship. Samuel Hardin and his wife came to Texas "under laws that invited their emigration and acquired rights and property..." William Goyens "accumulated considerable property in land.... The fabulous Ashworth clan moved from Louisiana into Coahuila and Texas, and, by taking advantage of every homestead and headright provision, acquired vast holdings that reached from Jefferson County on the Southeast to Angelina County in deep East Texas. Both black and mulatto free Negroes brought to the Texas cultural frontier the full range of [old South] skills. Free Negroes....engaged in stock raising and serving as herdsmen. A goodly representation of domestic servant, artisan and diversified laboring skills were to be found in this group; and there were a few professionals.

Few urban free Negroes chose the plantation areas of East Texas. The Mexican area below the German barrier [area of heavy German settlement] was the locale of the urban Free Negro with the towns of Galveston, San Antonio, Brownsville, and Austin being preferred. Free Negro farmers were concentrated in the plantation area of East Texas running roughly from Nacogdoches County to the Galveston-Jefferson County region. Stock-raising Free Negroes tended to concentrate in Jackson County, an old area for cattle. Artisans, servants and some agricultural laborers also found the German-Mexican areas of central-south Texas more hospitable and concentrated there....

Source: George R. Woolfolk, "Turner's Safety-Valve and Free Negro Westward Migration," Journal of Negro History, 50:3 (July, 1965), pp. 193-196.

SANTA ANNA AND BLACK FREEDOM

While most histories of Texas depict the Texas Revolution of 1835-36 as the struggle of liberty-loving Texans against a brutal Mexican dictator, Lopez de Santa Anna, the black slaves of Texas clearly understood that their personal freedom rested with the success of the Mexican Army. In the account below, historian Paul Lack describes the relationship between the antislavery sentiments of Mexico and black liberation.

Mexico did not officially invite a slave rebellion. In fact its army marched northward without a clear policy regarding slavery. As late as February, 1836, Santa Anna queried government officials in Mexico: "Shall we permit those wretches to moan in chains any longer in a country whose kind laws protect the liberty of man without distinction of caste or color?" At the end of the month F. M. Diaz Noriega replied that the contract system of Texas was an illegal pretext for slavery. In fact, those "unhappy people became free solely by the act of stepping into our territory," and he advised recruiting blacks for the army so they could discover and claim their own freedom.... Minister of war Jose Maria Tornel wrote Santa Anna on March 18, agreeing that the "philanthropy of the Mexican nation" had already freed Texas slaves. He advised Santa Anna to grant their "natural rights," including "the liberty to go to any point on the globe that appeals to them...."

Whatever hesitation may have been shown in published Mexican policy, the Mexican army had an actual disposition toward black freedom. The ranks of the first troops to arrive in Bexar even included some black infantrymen and servants. Until March the location of the fighting limited contact between Mexican soldiers and slaves, but the army's basic attitude became clear when Joe, a black servant of William B. Travis, survived the slaughter at the Alamo, the only male to do so. During the six week interval that followed this victory, the Mexican army moved east of the Colorado and then the Brazos River and thus into the region where most Texas bondsmen lived. General [Sam] Houston attempted to secure the slave property of those who fled but did not always succeed in preventing blacks from "joining the enemy," as one observer described it. Slaves often seized the opportunity of running away, frequently in group ventures, and gained refuge with the invaders. Fourteen slaves and their families became free by fleeing to the command of General Jose de Urrea near Victoria on April 3, 1836. Even in retreat the Mexican forces attracted runaways: a Matagorda resident who returned to his home in early May discovered that at least thirteen blacks had "left my neighborhood" with the southbound army. He complained, too, that many cattle and eight wagons loaded with provisions, property that he valued at a total of $100,000, had been taken by the enemy. According to General Vicente Filisola, at least some of the plundered goods were taken by slaves who robbed houses in their flights for liberty. The Mexicans found these fugitives often ready to serve as well as to seek protection. Blacks aided river crossings, acted as messengers, and performed other chores for their liberators.

Source: Paul D. Lack, "Slavery and the Texas Revolution," Southwestern Historical Quarterly 89:2 (October 1985), pp. 193-194.

FREDERICK LAW OLMSTED DESCRIBES SAN ANTONIO

In the passage below Frederick Law Olmstead, who visited Texas in 1856, describes the interaction of Mexicans, "Americans" and Germans in San Antonio, Texas in the 1850s, two decades after Texas Independence. But his discussion also indicates that blacks reside in and near the town and suggests differences between Mexicans and Anglos over the manner of their treatment.

We entered the square of the Alamo. This is all Mexican. Windowless cabins of stakes, plastered with mud and roofed with river-grass...or low, windowless, but better thatched houses of adobes (gray, unburnt bricks), with groups of brown idlers lounging at their doors...

From the bridge we enter Commerce Street, the narrow principal thoroughfare, and here are American houses, and the triple nationalities break out into the most amusing display, till we reach the main plaza.... The sauntering Mexicans prevail on the pavements, but the bearded Germans and the sallow Yankees furnish their proportion...

A day or two after our arrival, there was the hanging of a Mexican. The whole population left the town to see. Family parties, including the grandmother and the little negroes, came from all the plantations and farms within reach, and little ones were held up high to get their share of warning. The Mexicans looked on imperturbable.

San Antonio, excluding Galveston, is much the largest city of Texas. After the Revolution it was half deserted by its Mexican population, who did not care to come under Anglo-Saxon rule. Since then, its growth had been rapid and steady. At the census of 1850, and in 1856 it is estimated at 10,500. Of these about 4,000 are Mexicans, 3,000 Germans, and 3,500 Americans. The money-capital is in the hands of the Americans, as well as the officers and the Government. Most of the mechanics and the smaller shopkeepers are German. The Mexicans appear to have almost no other business than that of carting goods.... Some of them have small shops for the supply of their won countrymen and some live upon the produce of farms and cattle-ranches owned in the neighborhood. Their livelihood is...exceedingly meager, made up chiefly of corn and beans.

The houses of the rich differ little for those of the poor, and the difference in their style of living must be small, owing to the want of education and of all ambition. The majority are classed as laborers. Their wages are small, usually, upon farms near San Antonio, $6 or $8 a month with corn and beans....

[Mexicans] consort freely with the negroes, making no distinction from pride of race. A few, of old Spanish blood, have purchased negro servants, but most of them regard slavery with abhorrence.

Source: Frederick Law Olmsted, A Journey Through Texas (New York, 1857, pp. 149-165.

SLAVE AND FREE BLACKS IN INDIAN TERRITORY

The Five Civilized Tribes, the Chickasaw, Choctaw, Cherokees Creeks and Seminoles all developed black slavery in their native homes stretching from North Carolina to Mississippi. Upon their removal to Indian Territory (Oklahoma) in the 1830s, they brought slaves with them. In the account below Daniel and Mary Ann Littlefield describe the status and treatment of African Americans, slave and free, among the Five Tribes.

The greatest population, by far, was among the Seminoles. Between 1838 and 1843, nearly 500 blacks, both slave and free, removed with them. Many were freed by voluntary acts of their Seminole masters. Some....were free by virtue of their assistance to the United States as informers, guides, and scouts. The Seminoles had no laws restricting free blacks, who, like the Seminole slaves, were allowed to own property and carry weapons. Because they spoke English as well as the Indians' native tongue, several of the free blacks served as interpreters.

A number of free blacks also lived among the Creeks. Decades before their removal to the West, the Creeks had written laws which provided for the manumission of slavery by individual owners. A census of 1832 showed 21,762 Creeks and 502 slaves with only a few Creeks owning more than ten slaves. Among the Creeks were several free blacks who were heads of households. The free blacks were removed with the Creeks, and by the time the Civil War began some of them owned businesses such as boarding houses and stores....

There were fewer free blacks among the Cherokees despite large numbers of slaves among them. In 1835, on the eve of removal, there were 16,543 Cherokees and 1,592 slaves. By 1859 the number of slaves in the Cherokee Nation had reached 4,000. Slavery among the Cherokees was little different from that in the white South and the status of slaves and free blacks declined as laws became more severe.... All persons of "negro or mulatto parentage" were excluded from holding office. The Cherokee Council [governing legislature] prohibited the teaching of slaves and free blacks not of Cherokee blood to read and write....and in the aftermath of a slave revolt in 1842, [it] ordered all free blacks, not freed by Cherokee citizens, to leave the nation by January 1, 1843.

Fewer slaves lived in the Choctaw Nation. An 1831 census listed 17,963 Choctaws and 512 slaves [and] eleven free blacks. In 1838 the Choctaws forbade cohabitation with a slave, the teaching of a slave to read or write without the owner's consent and the council's emancipating slaves without the owner's consent. Other laws prohibited intermarriage and persons of African descent from holding office.

The Chickasaws did not hold large numbers of slaves before removal. But at that time many Chickasaws sold their homes in invested in slaves whom they moved to the West [and] opened large plantations [using] their blacks in agricultural labor.... The Chickasaws....regarded their slaves in the same manner as white owners. In the late 1850s the Chickasaws forbade their council from emancipating slaves without the owner's consent....County judges were authorized to order [free] blacks out of their respective counties. Those who refused to go were to be sold....as slaves....

Source: Daniel F. Littlefield, Jr., and Mary Ann Littlefield, "The Beams Family: Free Blacks in Indian Territory," Journal of Negro History, 61:1 (January 1976), pp. 17-21.

THE MORMONS AND BLACK SLAVERY

By 1852 Utah had become the only territory to legalize both black and Indian slavery. Lester Bush, Jr., a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, described the evolution of Mormon doctrines on blacks and slavery against the background of the antebellum slavery controversy. Part of his account is reprinted below.

There once was a time, albeit brief, when a "Negro problem" did not exist for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. During those early months in New York and Ohio....the Gospel was for "all nations, kindreds, tongues and peoples...." A Negro, "Black Pete," was among the first converts in Ohio... W.W. Phelps opened a mission to Missouri in July, 1831, and preached to....Negroes among his first audience. The following year another black, Elijah Abel, was baptized in Maryland. [Abel was later named a priest in the church and lived for a time in Prophet Joseph Smith's home.]

This initial period was brought to an end by the influx of Mormons into the Missouri mission in late 1831 and early 1832....In less than a year a rumor was afoot that [the Mormons] were "tampering" with the slaves. In the summer of 1833, W.W. Phelps published an article....Missourians interpreted as an invitation "to free negroes from other states to become 'Mormon' and settle among us." The local citizenry immediately drafted a list of accusations against the Saints, prominently featuring the anti-slavery issue.... In response Phelps issued an "Extra" explaining that he had been 'misunderstood'....and declared [no blacks] "will be admitted into the Church." The Mormons, in spite of their repeated denials, continued to be charged with anti-slavery activity in Missouri. In response, the next issue of the Messenger and Advocate, [the Church newspaper] was devoted to a rebuttal of abolitionism.... However, far from professing divine insight the authors [including Joseph Smith] made it expressly clear that these were their personal views.

The Mormon exodus to the Salt Lake Valley did not free the Saints from the slavery controversy, for much of the national debate was focused on the West.... The constitution of Deseret was intentionally without reference to slavery and Brigham Young declared "as a people we are adverse to slavery but we do not wish to meddle in the subject." Though no law authorized....slavery in Utah, there were slaves in the territory. They were fully at liberty to leave their masters if they chose. Slaveowning converts were instructed to bring their slaves west if the slaves were willing to come, but were otherwise advised to "sell them" or let them go free. The first group of Mormons to enter the Salt Lake valley were accompanied by three Negro "servants." By 1850 nearly 100 blacks had arrived, approximately two-thirds of whom were slaves.

The "laissez-faire" approach to slavery came to an end in 1852. In his request for legislation on slavery Governor Brigham Young....declared "while servitude may and should exist...and [there are] those who are naturally designed to occupy the position of 'servant of servants'....we should not....make them beasts of the field, regarding not the humanity with attaches to the colored race....nor elevate them....to an equality with those whom Nature and Nature's God has indicated to be their masters."

Source: Lester E. Bush, Jr., "Mormonism's Negro Doctrine: An Historical Overview," Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought, 8:(1973), pp. 11-25.

THE O. B. FRANCIS PETITION, 1851

When the Oregon Territorial Legislature enacted a law banning black migration to Oregon, Portland citizens successfully petitioned to grant an exemption to merchant O. B. Francis. The petition is reprinted below:

To the Honorable Members of the Council and House of Representatives of the Territory of Oregon:

We the undersigned citizens of the Territory of Oregon in view of an existing law passed by your honorable body in September 1849 prohibiting Negroes and mulattoes from settling in the territory beg leave to call your attention to the severity of the law and the injustice often resulting from the enforcement of it.

There are frequently coming into this territory a class of men whom this law will apply. They have proved themselves to me industrious and civil. Having no knowledge of this law some of them have spent their all by purchasing property or entering into business to gain an honest living. We see the injustice done to them my more unworthy and designing men lodging complaint against them under this law and they thus ordered at great sacrifice to leave the territory. We humbly ask this body to repeal or so modify this law that all classes of honest and industrious men may have an equal chance. We would also represent to your honorable body that the reasons which dictated the law, namely the dangers arising from a colored population instilling hostility into the Indians has ceased.

We petitioners further ask your honorable body that a special act may be passed at the earliest period possible permitting O.B. Francis, citizen from the state of New York located in business in Portland to remain. They having for no crime but a malicious intent on the part of another been arraigned before Judge Pratt on the 11th of September past and proved to be of that class of men who came under this act, were ordered to leave within four months which time will soon expire. All of which your humble body will please grant to your humble consideration.

The Petition is signed by 211 people including two territorial officials and Thomas Dryer, editor of the Portland *Oregonian*.

Source: Archives of the Oregon Historical Society

BLACK RIGHTS IN ANTEBELLUM OREGON

Historian Elizabeth McLagan describes the legal exclusion of Jacob Vanderpool from Oregon in 1851 and suggests the motives for the action.

On August 20, 1851, a black man named Jacob Vanderpool, who owned a saloon, restaurant and boarding house across the street from the offices of the *Oregon Statesman* in Salem, was arrested and jailed. His crime was living illegally in Oregon because he was black. Theophilus Magruder had filed a complaint against him, saying that his residence in Oregon was illegal because of an exclusion law passed by the Territorial government in 1849. Five days later, Vanderpool was brought to trial. His defense lawyer argued that the law was unconstitutional since it had not been legally approved by the legislature. The prosecution produced three witnesses who verified the date of Vanderpool's arrival in Oregon. All three were vague. A verdict was rendered the following day, and Judge Thomas Nelson ordered Jacob Vanderpool to leave Oregon.... The decision was delivered to him the same day by the sheriff of Clakamas County.... Jacob Vanderpool was the only black person of record to be expelled from Oregon because of his race.

From the beginning of governmental organization in Oregon the question of slavery and the rights of free black people were discussed and debated. Slavery existed, although consistently prohibited by law. Exclusion laws designed to prevent black people from coming to Oregon were passed twice during the 1840s, considered several times and finally passed as part of the state constitution in 1857. The takeover of Indian lands prompted hostility between Indians and whites; the "Cockstock Affair" raised fears that without an exclusion law settlers might have two hostile minority groups to deal with.

The people who settled in Oregon tended to come from the frontier areas of the Middle West, particularly the Ohio and Mississippi River valleys. The move West for many included the expectation that they could settle in an area untroubled by racial concerns.... Laws restricting the rights of black people were not an original idea in Oregon, nor were they unknown outside the South. In the first fifty years of the 19th Century Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, and Missouri had passed laws restricting the rights of black people. These laws denied them the vote, restricted free access into the territory, restricted testimony in court, required the posting of bonds for good behavior, demanded that black people carry proof of freedom, or excluded them altogether from living in these territories. Exclusion laws similar to those enacted in Oregon were passed in Indiana and Illinois and considered, though never passed, in Ohio. Familiar with laws passed in other frontier areas and desirous of keeping Oregon free from troublesome racial questions, settlers who brought racist attitudes with them across the plains saw legal restrictions as the best solution to the problem.

Source: Elizabeth McLagan, A Peculiar Paradise: A History of Blacks in Oregon, 1788-1940 (Portland, 1980), pp. 23-25.

OREGON TERRITORY BANS AFRICAN AMERICANS

The Oregon Territorial Legislature in 1854 reenacted an earlier statute which banned the entry of African Americans into Oregon. The new measure is reprinted below.

A BILL TO PREVENT NEGROES AND MULATTOES FROM COMING TO, OR RESIDING IN OREGON

Sect. 1 Be it enacted by the Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Oregon that it shall not be lawful for any negro or mulatto to enter into, or reside within the limits of this Territory. Providing that nothing in this act shall ....apply to any negro or mulatto now resident in this Territory, nor shall it apply to the offspring of any such as are residents....

Sect. 2 That Masters and owners of vessels having negroes or mulattoes in their employ on board of vessel may bring them into Oregon Provided that in so doing such master, or owner, shall be responsible for the conduct of such negro or mulatto....and shall be liable to any person aggrieved by such negro or mulatto.

Sect. 3 No negro or mulatto shall be permitted to leave the port where the vessel upon which they are or may be employed shall be lying without the written permission of such master or owner....

Sect. 4 That it shall be the duty of masters and owners of vessels having brought negroes or mulattoes into Oregon as aforesaid to cause such negro or mulatto to leave this territory with such vessel upon which the shall have been brought into the Territory, or from some other vessel within forty days.

Sect. 5 If any master or owners of a vessel having brought negroes or mulattoes as provided for in the second section of this act into this Territory, shall fail to remove and take the same with them when leaving the Territory.... shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor....and on conviction, shall be fined and imprisoned at the discretion of the court; Provided that the fine in no case shall be less than five hundred dollars.

Sect. 6 If any negro or mulatto shall be found in this Territory, except as hereinbefore provided and except such as may now be permanent residents, it shall be the duty of any Judge or Justice of the Peace to....to issue a warrant for the apprehension of such negro or mulatto, directed to any sheriff or constable....to arrest....such negro or mulatto....

Sect. 7 If any negro or mulatto shall be found a second time unlawfully remaining in this Territory he shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor and shall....upon conviction be fined and imprisoned at the discretion of the court.

Sect. 8 The Governor of this Territory shall cause this act to be published in some one or more of the California newspapers and such other newspapers as he may think necessary in order to carry out the spirit of the same.

Sect. 9 This act to take effect and be in force from and after its passage.

Source: Archives of the Oregon Historical Society

AFRICAN AMERICANS IN GOLD RUSH CALIFORNIA

The status of blacks in California during the first decade of statehood indicated the precarious position of African Americans who sought freedom and opportunity in the West. Although only 1,000 blacks resided in California in 1850 out of a population of 175,000, they became the focus of intense legislative debate. In the account below historian Malcolm Edwards describes the debate which prompted 400 black Californians, ten percent of the state's black population in 1858, to emigrate to British Columbia in that year.

As early as the autumn months of 1849 the proper position of black people in California had been debated long and heatedly by the constitutional convention at Monterey. San Francisco's delegated had been instructed "by all honorable means to oppose any act, measure, provision, or ordinance that is calculated to further the introduction of domestic slavery into the territory of California" and they and their fellows agreed that slavery was unacceptable within the boundaries of the proposed state....

Having disposed of the slavery question directly, the convention then moved to the critical question regarding the exclusion of "free persons of color" from California.... M.M. McCarver, born in Kentucky and arrived in Sacramento in 1848 urged the exclusion of all free persons of color and "to effectively prevent the owners of slaves from bringing them into this State for the purpose of setting them free". McCarver's logic, and that of many conventioneers, was that slaves freed by their masters solely to become indentured servants in the mines would constitute a threat to order "greater that slavery itself."

The prejudice against free blacks expressed in the constitutional convention carried over into the first legislature and maintained momentum as the debate progressed. The state's first governor, Peter Burnett, openly opposed....free negroes within California's boundaries. The legislature, which gathered in 1850, was divided on the question.... Northern and Southern whites representing the mining districts, feared economic competition with alien or colored races and worked....without success for the exclusion of blacks. The majority was [opposed to] prohibition but promptly began to write statutes which humiliated, restricted, and periled any blacks who chose to enter California.

By 1858 eight California legislatures had built an appallingly extensive body of discriminatory laws including: the prohibition of testimony in civil and criminal actions involving whites; the institution of poll and property taxes; the invalidation of marriages between whites and blacks or mulattoes; exclusion from the state homestead law; exclusion from jury eligibility; and the lapsing of legislation affection free blacks' rights under Fugitive Slave laws. In practical terms this meant that free blacks, and those brought in indenture to California during the late 1840s and early 1850s, lived a lean socio-political existence.

Source: Malcolm Edwards, "The War of Complexional Distinction: Blacks in Gold Rush California and British Columbia," California Historical Quarterly, 56:1 (Spring 1977), pp. 34-37.

THE FIRST CALIFORNIA NEGRO CONVENTION, 1855

Black Californians shared the concerns of their African-American brethren in the East but they were particularly disturbed about the rash of anti-black laws enacted by the state assembly. The McClay Negro Testimony Bill was the most objectionable measure because it prevented blacks from testifying in court even on their own behalf. Delegates from throughout the state met at the Colored Methodist Church in Sacramento in November, 1855, to voice their concern. This resolution of the convention appears below and the "Appeal to the Citizens of California" appears on the following page.

Whereas, We the colored people of the State of California, believing that the laws of this State, relating to the testimony of colored people in the courts of justice, recorded in 394th section of chapter 3d of an act entitled "an act for regulating proceedings in the court practice of the courts of this State," as follows: "And persons having one-half or more of Negro blood, shall not be witnesses in an action or proceeding to which a white person is a party"--to be unjust in itself and oppressive to every class in the community; that this law was intended to protect white persons from a class whose intellectual and social condition was supposed to be so low as to justify the depriving them of their testimony.

And, whereas, We believe that careful inquiries into our social, moral, religious, intellectual, and financial condition, will demonstrate that, as a class, allowing for the disabilities under which we labor, we compare favorably with any class in the community.

And whereas, We believe that petitions to the Legislature, to convene in January, praying for the abrogation of this law will meet with a favorable response; believing, as we do, that it cannot be sustained on the ground of sound policy or expediency...

Resolved, That we memorialize the Legislature at its approaching session, to repeal the third and fourth paragraphs of section three hundred and ninety-four of an Act passed April 20th, 1851, entitled, "An Act to regulate proceeding in civil cases, in the Courts of Justice of this State," and also for the repeal of sections fourteen of an Act entitled "An Act concerning Crimes and Punishments," passed April 6th, 1850.

Resolved, That a State Executive Committee be appointed by the Convention, with full powers to adopt such measures as may be deemed expedient to accomplish the object in view.

Resolved, That we recommend the organization of a State Association, with auxiliaries in every county, for the purpose of collecting statistical and other evidences of our advancement and prosperity; also to encourage education, and a correct and proper deportment in our relations towards our white fellow citizens and to each other.

Resolved, That we regret and reprobate the apathy and timidity of a portion of our people, in refusing to take part in any public demonstration, having for its object the removal of political and other disabilities, by judicious and conservative action.

Resolved, That we recommend the creation of a contingent fund of twenty thousand dollars, to be controlled by a Committee having discretionary powers, to enable us to carry forward any measure that has for its object the amelioration of our condition.

ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE OF CALIFORNIA

The colored citizens of this Commonwealth, would respectfully represent before you, their state and condition; and they respectfully ask a candid and careful investigation of facts in relation to their true character.

Our population numbers about 6,000 persons, who own capital to the amount of near $3,000,000. This has been accumulated by our own industry, since we migrated to the shores of the Pacific.

Most of us were born upon your soil; reared up under the influence of your institutions; become familiar with your manners and customs; acquired most of your habits, and adopted your policies. We yield alle+ r, New York

1854	Cleveland, Ohio
1855	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Major Convention Leaders:

The 1830s	Bishop Richard B. Allen James Forten Sarah Forten Samuel Cornish
The 1840s	Rev. Henry Highland Garnet Frederick Douglass Maria W. Stewart Samuel Ringgold Ward
The 1850s	Rev. Henry Highland Garnet Martin R. Delaney

CONVENTION ADDRESS AT THE SECOND NEGRO CONVENTION, 1831

The second Negro Convention met in New York City at a black church. Fifteen delegates attended representing five states including Virginia. The goals of the Convention were announced in the Convention Address partly reprinted below.

Respected Brethren and Fellow Citizens--

Our attention has been called to investigate the political standing of our brethren wherever dispersed, but more particularly the situation of those in this great Republic...

The cause of general emancipation is gaining powerful and able friends abroad. Britain and Denmark have performed such deeds as will immortalize them for their humanity, in the breasts of the philanthropists of the present day; whilst, as a just tribute to their virtues, after ages will yet erect unperishable monuments to their memory. (Would to God we could say thus of our own native soil!)...

This spirit of persecution was the cause of our Convention. It was that first induced us to seek an asylum in the Canadas; and the Convention feel happy to report to their brethren, that our efforts to establish a settlement in that province have not been made in vain. Our prospects are cheering; our friends and funds are daily increasing; wonders have been performed far exceeding our most sanguine expectations; already have our brethren purchased eight hundred acres of land--and two thousand of them have left the soil of their birth, crossed the lines, and laid the foundation for a structure which promises to prove an asylum for the coloured population of these United States. They have erected two hundred log houses and have five hundred acres under cultivation...

A plan has been proposed to the Convention for the erection of a College for the instruction of young men of colour, on the manual labour system, by which the children of the poor may receive a regular classical education, as well as those of their more opulent brethren, and the charge will be so regulated as to put it within the reach of all. In support of this plan, a benevolent individual has offered the sum of one thousand dollars, provided that we can obtain subscriptions to the amount of nineteen thousand dollars in one year...

The Convention has not been unmindful of the operations of the American Colonization Society, and it would respectfully suggest to that august body of learning, talent, and worth, that, in our humble opinion, strengthened, too, by the opinions of eminent men in this country, as well as in Europe, that they are pursuing the direct road to perpetuate slavery, with all its unchristianlike concomitants, in this boasted land of freedom; and, as citizens and men whose best blood is sapped to gain popularity for that Institution, we would, in the most feeling manner, beg of them to desist; or, if we must be sacrificed to their philanthropy, we would rather die at home. Many of our fathers, and some of us, have fought and bled for the liberty, independence, and peace which you now enjoy and, surely, it would be ungenerous and unfeeling in you to deny us a humble and quiet grave in that country which gave us birth!...

Source: The Liberator, October 27, 1831.

THE NORTH STAR: THE FIRST EDITORIAL

In 1847 Frederick Douglass established the North Star, in Rochester, New York, to provide an alternative to William Lloyd Garrison's the Liberator, the oldest abolitionist newspaper in the nation. The editorial below appeared in the first issue of the North Star.

We solemnly dedicate the "North Star" to the cause of our long oppressed and plundered fellow countrymen. May God bless the undertaking to your good! It shall fearlessly assert your demand for you instant and even-handed justice. Giving no quarter to slavery at the South, it will hold no truce with oppressors at the North.

While it shall boldly advocate emancipation for our enslaved brethren, it will omit no opportunity to gain for the nominally free complete enfranchisement. Every effort to injure or degrade you or your cause originating wheresoever, or with whomsoever shall find in it a constant, unswerving and inflexible foe...Remember that we are one, that our cause is one, and that we must help each other, if we would succeed. We have drank to the dregs the bitter cup of slavery; we have worn the heavy yoke; we have sighed beneath our bonds, and writhed beneath the bloody lash. We are one with you under the ban of prejudice and proscription, one with you under the slander in inferiority, one with you in social and political disfranchisement.

It is scarcely necessary for us to say that our desire to occupy our present position at the head of an Anti-Slavery Journal, has resulted from no unworthy distrust or ungrateful want of appreciation of the zeal, integrity or ability of the noble band of white laborers in this department of our cause but, from the sincere and settled conviction that such a Journal, if conducted with only moderate skill and ability, would do a most important and indispensable work which it would be wholly impossible for our white friends to do for us. It is neither a reflection on the fidelity, nor a disparagement of the ability of our friends and fellow-laborers, to assert what "common sense affirms and only folly denies," that the man who has suffered the wrong is the man to demand redress, that the man STRUCK is the man to CRY OUT and that he who has endured the cruel pangs of Slavery is the man to advocate Liberty.

It is evident we must be our own representatives and advocates not exclusively, but peculiarly not distinct from, but in connection with our white friends. In the grand struggle for liberty and equality now waging it is meet, right and essential that there should arise in our ranks authors and editors, as well as orators, for it is in these capacities that the most permanent good can be rendered to our cause.

Source: The North Star, December 3, 1847, p. 2.

FREDERICK DOUGLASS ON THE MEXICAN WAR, 1848

Frederick Douglass, like most abolitionists, was opposed to the U.S. declaration of war with Mexico. In an editorial published in his paper, The North Star, he continues his criticism of the conflict even as his fellow Americans congratulate themselves on the nation's victory.

PEACE! PEACE! PEACE!

The shout is on every lip, and emblazoned on every paper. The joyful news is told in every quarter with enthusiastic delight. We are such an exception to the great mass of our fellow-countrymen, in respect to everything else, and have been so accustomed to hear them rejoice over the most barbarous outrages committed upon an unoffending people, that we find it difficult to unite with them in their general exultation at this time; and for this reason, we believe that by peace they mean plunder.

In our judgment, those who have all along been loudly in favor of a vigorous prosecution of the war, and heralding its bloody triumphs with apparent rapture, and glorifying the atrocious deeds of barbarous heroism on the part of wicked men engaged in it, have no sincere love of peace, and are not now rejoicing over peace, but plunder.

They have succeeded in robbing Mexico of her territory, and are rejoicing over their success under the hypocritical pretence of a regard for peace. Had they not succeeded in robbing Mexico of the most important and most valuable part of her territory, many of those now loudest in their professions of favor for peace, would be loudest and wildest for war--war to the knife.

Our soul is sick of such hypocrisy. We presume the churches of Rochester will return thanks to God for peace they did nothing to bring about, and boast it as a triumph of Christianity! That an end is put to the wholesale murder in Mexico, is truly just cause for rejoicing; but we are not the people to rejoice, we ought rather blush and hang our heads for shame, and in the spirit of profound humility, crave pardon for our crimes at the hands of a God whose mercy endureth forever.

Source: The North Star, March 17, 1848, p. 2.

BLACK VOTERS ENDORSE THE REPUBLICAN TICKET, 1856

The Republican Party, formed in 1854, was the first major party to challenge the power of the slaveholders in the national government. Not surprisingly, its first presidential candidate, John C. Fremont, received overwhelming support from black voters, creating an association between African-Americans and the GOP that would last until the 1930s. Yet Boston blacks, in the passage below, explain why they could not enthusiastically embrace the new party.

Resolved, That we, the colored citizens of Boston, will support with our voices and our votes, John C. Fremont, of California, as President of the United States, and William L. Dayton, of New Jersey, as Vice President.

Resolved, That while we regard the Republican party as the people's party, the resolve in the Republican platform endorsing the Kansas free State Constitution, which prohibits colored men from going into that territory, and the determination of the Republican press to ignore the colored man's interest in the party, plainly shows us that it is not an anti-slavery party; and while we are willing to unite with them to resist aggressions of the Slave Power, we do not pledge ourselves to go further with the Republicans than the Republicans will go with us.

Source: The Liberator, September 5, 1856.

THE DRED SCOTT DECISION

In 1857 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in Dred Scott v. Sanford that a black slave was undeniably property and that neither free blacks or slaves could ever claim American citizenship. The ruling also argued that since no citizen could be deprived of his property without due process of law as guaranteed by the Fifth Amendment, Congress could not outlaw slavery in any territory under its jurisdiction. The decision understandably sent shock waves through the black community and, moreover, angered anti-slavery advocates throughout the country. Part of that controversial decision is printed below.

The question is simply this: Can a negro, whose ancestors were imported into this country, and sold as slaves, become a member of the political community formed and brought into existence by the Constitution of the United States, and as such become entitled to all the rights, and privileges, and immunities, guarantied [sic] by that instrument to the citizen? One of which rights is the privilege of suing in a court of the United States....

In the opinion of the court, the legislation and histories of the times, and the language used in the Declaration of Independence, show that neither ....slaves, nor their descendants, whether they had become free or not, were acknowledged as a part of the people....

They had for more than a century before been regarded as beings of an inferior order, and altogether unfit to associate with the white race, either in social or political relations; and so far inferior that they had no rights which the white man was bound to respect.

....The general words [of the Declaration of Independence] would seem to embrace the whole human family, and if they were used in a similar instrument at this day would be so understood. But is too clear for dispute, that the enslaved African race were not intended to be included and formed no part of the people who framed and adopted this declaration; for if the language, as understood in that day, would embrace them, the conduct of the distinguished men who framed the Declaration of Independence would have been utterly and flagrantly inconsistent with the principles they asserted; and instead of the sympathy of mankind, to which they so confidently appealed, they would have deserved and received universal rebuke and reprobation.

....They perfectly understood the meaning of the language they used, and how it would be understood by others; and they knew that it would not in any part of the civilized world be supposed to embrace the negro race, which, by common consent, had been excluded from civilized Governments and the family of nations, and doomed to slavery.... The unhappy black race were separated from the white by indelible marks, and laws long before established, and were never thought of or spoken of except as property, and when the claims of the owner or the profit of the trader were supposed to need protection.

It is the judgment of this court...that the plaintiff is not a citizen of Missouri, in the sense in which that word is used in the Constitution....and that the Circuit Court of the United States had no jurisdiction in the case, and could give no judgement in it....

Source: Benjamin C. Howard, Report of the Decision of the Supreme Court of the United States in the Case of Dred Scott, Washington, 1857), pp. 9-17, 60.

OSBORNE ANDERSON DESCRIBES JOHN BROWN'S RAID

Of John Brown's original party which struck the federal arsenal at Harper's Ferry, Virginia (now West Virginia), five were blacks: Shields Green, Dangerfield Newby, Sherrard Lewis Leary, John A. Copeland, and Osborne P. Anderson. Anderson, the only black to survive, wrote an account of the raid titled A Voice From Harper's Ferry. Part of the account is reprinted below.

From the prisoner taken by us who had participated in the assault upon Kagi's position, we received the sad details of the slaughter of our brave companions. Seven different times during the day they were fired upon, while they occupied the interior part of the building, the insurgents defending themselves with great courage, killing and wounding with great precision. At last, overwhelming numbers, as many as five hundred blocked up the front of the building, battered the doors down and forced their way into the interior. The insurgents were then forced to retreat the back way, fighting, however, all the time. They were pursued, when they took to the river, and waded out to a rock, mid-way, and there, made a stand, being completely hemmed in, front and rear. Some four or five hundred shots were fired at them before they were conquered. They would not surrender into the hands of the enemy, but kept on fighting until every one was killed....

The party at the rifle factory fought desperately till the last, from their perch on the rock. Slave and free, black and white, carried out the special injunction of the brave old Captain, to make sure work of it. The unfortunate targets for so many bullets from the enemy, some of them received two or three balls.... But they were all "honorable" men, noble, noble fellows, who fought and died for the most holy principles.

Of the various contradictory reports made by slaveholders about the time of the Harper's Ferry conflict, none were more untruthful than those relating to the slaves....They were charged specially with being unreliable, with deserting Captain Brown the first opportunity, and going back to their masters; and with being so indifferent to the work of their salvation from the yoke, as to have to be forced into service by the Captain, contrary to their will.... On the Sunday evening of the outbreak, when we visited the plantations and acquainted the slaves with our purpose to effect their liberation....one old mother, white-haired from age, and borne down with the labors of many years in bonds, when told of the work in hand, replied: "God bless you! God bless you!"

The truth of the Harper's Ferry "raid," as it has been called, in regard to the part taken by the slaves, and the aid given by colored men generally, demonstrates clearly: First, that the conduct of the slaves is a strong guarantee of the weakness of the institution, should a favorable opportunity occur; and, secondly, that the colored people, as a body, were well represented by numbers, both in fight, and in the number who suffered martyrdom afterward.

Source: Osborne Anderson, A Voice from Harper's Ferry, (Boston, 1861), pp. 6-15.

ONE BLACK WOMAN'S RESPONSE TO JOHN BROWN'S RAID, 1859

In the wake of the Harper's Ferry Raid and the arrest of John Brown and his surviving companions, blacks wrote letters, passed resolutions, meet and staged demonstrations of support. The letter of Francis Ellen Watkins, a black abolitionist, is reprinted below as an example of the response. Brown probably never saw the letter because it was written only seven days before his execution.

Kendallville, Indiana
November 25, 1859

Dear Friend:

Although the hands of Slavery throw a barrier between you and me, and it may not be my privilege to see you in your prison-house, Virginia has no bolts or bars through which I dread to send you my sympathy. In the name of the young girl sold from the warm clasp of a mother's arms to the clutches of a libertine or a profligate,--in the name of the slave mother, her heart rocked to and fro by the agony of her mournful separation,--I thank you, that you have been brave enough to reach out your hands to the crushed and blighted of my race. You have rocked the bloody Bastille; and I hope that from your sad fate great good may arise to the cause of freedom. Already from your prison has come a shout of triumph against the giant sin of our country. The hemlock is distilled with victory when it is pressed to the lips of Socrates. The Cross becomes a glorious ensign when Calvary's page-bowed sufferer yields up his life upon it. And, if Universal Freedom is ever to be the dominant power of the land, your bodies may be only her first stepping stones to dominion. I would prefer to see Slavery go down peaceably by men breaking off their sins by righteousness and their iniquities by showing justice and mercy to the poor; but we cannot tell what the future may bring forth. God writes national judgments upon national sins; and what may be slumbering in the storehouse of divine justice we do not know.

We may earnestly hope that your fate will not be a vain lesson, that it will intensify our hatred of Slavery and love of Freedom, and that your martyr grave will be a sacred altar upon which men will record their vows of undying hatred to that system which tramples on man and bids defiance to God. I have written to your dear wife, and sent her a few dollars, and I pledge myself to you that I will continue to assist her. May the ever-blessed God shield you and your fellow-prisoners in the darkest hour. Send my sympathy to your fellow-prisoners; tell them to be of good courage; to seek a refuge in the Eternal God, and lean upon His everlasting arms for a sure support. If any of them, like you, have a wife or children that I can help, let them send me word.

Yours in the cause of freedom.

Source: Herbert Aptheker, A Documentary History of the Negro People of the United States, (New York: Citadel Press, 1969), pp. 440-441.

CHAPTER SEVEN:

The Civil War

CHAPTER SEVEN: The Civil War

The Civil War ended black slavery and the vignettes in this chapter explores black participation in the war effort. The first vignette, ***Race and the Civil War****, however, emphasizes the role of racial fear and prejudice in prompting the war between the states.* ***Seeking the Right to Fight****, and* ***Douglass Calls on Blacks to Fight for Liberty and Union****, describes the first unsuccessful efforts of blacks to join the Union Army immediately after the firing on Fort Sumter while* ***Black "Contraband"*** *describes the first African American refugees of the war.* ***The Emancipation Proclamation*** *declares slaves free in the regions still controlled by Confederate forces on January 1, 1863 while* ***A Chronology of Emancipation*** *puts the end of American slavery in the larger perspective of the world-wide struggle against human bondage. The evolving transformation of slaves into free people is explained in two vignettes,* ***Charlotte Forten Teaches the Ex-Slaves*** *and* ***Susie King Taylor and Black Freedom****.*

Two vignettes, ***The New York Draft Riot, 1863*** *and* ***The New York Draft Riot, An Eyewitness Account*** *provide examples of the response of some Northerners to the prospect of large-scale black emancipation. Nonetheless, by July 1863 blacks who were now a permanent part of the Union forces, increasingly concentrated their efforts against their Confederate opponents. In the vignette,* ***A Black Soldier Writes Home, 1863****, we see a description of black soldiers in battle.* ***A Day "Worth Living For"*** *describes the nearly forgotten all-black 5th Massachusetts Cavalry, overshadowed by the recent interest in the movie "Glory" which focuses on the 54th Infantry Regiment.* ***The Fort Pillow Massacre*** *suggests the particular burden African American soldiers had to carry in their fight for freedom.* ***Reluctant Liberators: Northern Troops in the South*** *indicates the ambivalent attitudes of white troops toward the African American slaves they, after 1863, are ordered to liberate.* ***A Proposal to Enlist Blacks in the Confederate Army*** *reflects both the desperation of the Confederacy during the early months of 1865 and a belated recognition of the fighting capacity of their African-American Union opponents. The final vignette,* ***A Black Soldier Describes the Fall of Richmond, 1865*** *describes the participation of black troops in the capture of the capital of the Confederacy.*

Finally the vignettes ***Sojourner Truth Meets President Lincoln*** *and* ***An Ex-Slave at the White House****, indicate the surprisingly close proximity of some African American "servants" to the highest levels of government.*

Terms for Week Seven:

"contraband"

General David Hunter

General James Lane

Emancipation Proclamation

New York City Draft Riot

54th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment

Charlotte Forten

Susie King Taylor

Fort Pillow

Battle of the Crater

Major Civil War Battles involving black troops

Fort Wagner, 1863 *Vicksburg, 1863*
Port Hudson, 1863 *Nashville, 1864*
Cold Harbor, 1864 *Petersburg, 1864, 1865*

XXV Corps

Major Martin Delany

Captain P.B.S. Pinchback

Major Francis E. Dumas

Captain Robert Smalls--"The Planter"

RACE AND THE CIVIL WAR

In the following vignette historian James A. Rawley argues that race or rather the continued subjugation of the African American race through slavery in order to maintain social control, was the central theme of the coming Civil War. Rawley also argues that a different set of racial fears motivated Northerners to fight. Part of his argument is outlined below.

Scholars have advanced an astounding variety of interpretation of the causes of the American Civil War. In their quest for causation they have discovered the origins of conflict, among many places, in a constitutional crisis, in an aggressive slave power, in slavery, in economic rivalry, in sectionalism, in moral attitudes toward slavery, in blundering statesmen, in political disorganization, in fanaticism, and in slavery conjoined with race adjustment.

This confusion of tongues evidences the diversity of forces at work in the fifties. Accepting the weightiness of many of the opinions of previous scholars, I have sought to invite attention to neglected racial attitudes.... Antislavery men as well as proslavery men, northerners as well as southerners, disfavored social equality between the races. Presidents and politicians, statesmen and lickspittles, poets and preachers, planters and plowmen, artisans and poor whites shared a nearly universal aversion to racial equality. Acceptance of Negro inferiority...pervaded American social thought...

Negro servitude, it is true, began as a labor arrangement in the seventeenth century, but it soon was set off from white labor, free and indentured, by the color bar. Slavery formalized the racial difference. Thereafter it became impossible to extinguish slavery because of racialist preconceptions. The ante-bellum educator, President Elliot of Planters' College, Mississippi, uttered a home truth when he pointed out that the word "slave" in the United States described not a kind of servant but "the African race." The vice president of the Confederacy, Alexander H. Stephens, candidly explained the racial basis of the Confederate States of America. The Confederate cornerstone was not....states rights, nor slavery, but racial inequality. The question of "the proper status of the negro," he said at Savannah in March, 1861, "was the immediate cause" of secession. "Our new Government is founded," he continued, "upon the great truth that the negro is not equal to the white man."

Similarly, the Richmond editor, E.A. Pollard, found the "true ground" of the South's defense of slavery to have been the race barrier. "The true question which the war involved," he declared [was] the felt necessity to maintain an inferior race in slavery.... When the war was well on its way, indeed nearly, lost, the fear of forcibly imposed racial equality impelled the South to fight on." The same insight distinguished the professional historian, Ulrich B. Philips, an native of Georgia, who forthrightly framed his view in his essay "The Central Theme of Souther History." The central theme he found to be not slavery but the South's resolution to keep the land of Dixie a white man's country; the South defended slavery as a guarantee of white supremacy and Caucasian civilization. Slavery was the means of solving the problem of race control....

The British historian Alan A. Conway, in a summary statement of the war's causes sustains the view that slavery was crucial but takes exception to the argument that Lincoln's election signified a first step by the North to racial equality. The rank and file of northerners, Conway contends, feared "that, if slavery could not be contained, they would be faced with the competition from Negro slave labour in the free states and territories." Northerners in 1860 dreaded economic competition and the loss of status from free Negroes, if there should be emancipation, and from the slaves, if there should be expansion of slavery. Southerners in 1860

dreaded Negro assimilation into southern society, if there should be emancipation. "They both fought out of illogical fear. "The Negro as a Negro rather than as a slave," he concludes, "was the critical point."

Source: James A. Rawley, Race and Politics: "Bleeding Kansas" and the Coming of the Civil War (Philadelphia, 1969), pp. 257-262.

SEEKING THE RIGHT TO FIGHT, 1861-1862

When the Civil War first broke out blacks attempted unsuccessfully to join the Union Army. The two reprints below reflect their desire to defend the nation and deal a fatal blow to slavery. The first reprint is a letter written by Jacob Dodson, a former explorer with John C. Fremont, and the second is a resolution passed by the black citizens of New York City.

Washington, April 23d, 1861

Hon. Simon Cameron,
Secretary of War

Sir: I desire to inform you that I know of some three hundred of reliable colored free citizens of this City, who desire to enter the service for the defence of the City.

I have been three times across the Rocky Mountains in the service of the Country with Fremont and others.

I can be found about the Senate Chambers, as I have been employed about the premises for some years.

Yours respectfully,
Jacob Dodson,
(Colored)

Resolution of Negro Mass Meeting

Whereas, the traitors of the South have assailed the United States Government, with the intention of overthrowing it for the purpose of perpetrating slavery; and,

Whereas, in such a contest between North and South--believing, as we do, that it is a contest between liberty and despotism--it is as important for each class of citizens to declare, as it is for the rulers of the Government to know, their sentiments and position; therefore,

Resolved, That our feelings urge us to say to our countrymen that we are ready to stand by and defend the Government as the equals of its white defenders--to do so with "our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor," for the sake of freedom and as good citizens; and we ask you to modify your laws, that we may enlist--that full scope may be given to the patriotic feelings burning in the colored man's breast--and we pledge ourselves to raise an army in the country of fifty thousand colored men.

Resolved, That more than half of the army which we could raise, being natives of the South, knowing its geography, and being acquainted with the character of the enemy, would be of incalculable service to the Government.

Resolved, That the colored women would go as nurses, seamstresses, and warriors, if need be, to crush rebellion and uphold the Government.

Resolved, That the colored people, almost without an exception, "have their souls in arms, and all eager for the fray," and are ready to go at a moment's warning, if they are allowed to go as soldiers.

Resolved, That we do immediately organize ourselves into drilling companies, to the end of becoming better skilled in the use of fire-arms; so that when we shall be called upon by the country, we shall be better prepared to make a ready and fitting response.

Source: The Liberator, May 31, 1861.

BLACK "CONTRABAND"

In May 1861, less than a month after the beginning of the Civil War, over 12,000 Federal troops arrived at Fortress Monroe, off the Virginia coast at Hampton, to insure that the military facility would remain in Union hands. Their presence allowed Hampton's slaves their first opportunity for freedom in the Civil War. In the following account historian Robert Engs describes the short flight to freedom of three slaves, Shepard Mallory, Frank Baker, and James Townsend, to Fortress Monroe, and the subsequent development of the "contraband" policy by Union General Benjamin Butler which thousands of other African Americans would use to gain their freedom. Ironically Butler's "contraband" policy would prove popular among Northern abolitionists and unsettling with President Lincoln, in stark contrast to the response given his earlier policy of returning fugitive slaves to their owners which he developed while serving as military commander of Maryland.

On the night of 24 May 1861, three slave men fled across the causeway that led from Old Point Comfort to Fortress Monroe and appealed for sanctuary. The following morning, Major John Cary of the Virginia Artillery appeared at the Fort under a flag of truce. He demanded the return of the three escaped slaves as required under the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act. Cary further requested permission to evacuate the residents of Hampton to the southside of Hampton Roads and northward up the Peninsula. Both the escaped slaves and Major Cary were interviewed by the Fortress commander, General Benjamin Butler, who had arrived only two days before.

Butler was a mon of some military experience through his ante-bellum leadership of the Massachusetts militia. He was also a prominent Democratic politician with aspirations to the Massachusetts governorship or higher. At that moment in the spring of 1861, Butler was both an asset and liability to Abraham Lincoln. He was a nationally known Democrat vocally loyal to the Republican administration; but if he broke with the administration, many other Northern Democrats might follow him.

Butler had already demonstrated his potential to create divisiveness. He had used armed federal troops to occupy Baltimore against the wishes of the Union's commanding general, Winfield Scott. Lincoln and Scott feared such action might propel Maryland into secession; Butler felt occupation might be the only way to prevent secession. For his initiative, Butler was reassigned to Fortress Monroe, which both he and the administration mistakenly though of as an out-of-the-way post. The problems raised by the presence of three fugitive slaves and Major Cary from the opposing army were early indications that Hampton would be at the center...of events during the war.

Butler had to decide whether the three slaves, Shepard Mallory, Frank Baker, and James Townsend, should be returned to their master, Colonel Charles Mallory. His decision could have major national implications. President Lincoln had formulated no policy on escaping slaves. Lincoln and other more conservative Republicans still hoped to draw the South back into the Union with little further bloodshed. Any Northern undermining of the South's slave system would destroy such hopes and might cause the border states to bolt to the Confederacy as well. The radical Republicans were more inclined to see the war as an assault on slavery. They wanted escaping slaves welcomed into Union lines whenever they appeared. Butler dared not exceed his instructions again, as he had in Baltimore....but he did not wish to offend Northern abolitionists, especially since so many were residents of his home state, Massachusetts.

Butler questioned the three fugitives and found they had run away because their master meant to take them along in his flight to North Carolina with the Confederate army. The three slaves would have to leave their wives and families behind. After pondering this information, Butler struck upon a shrewd plan which turned Southerners' insistence that slave were chattel property--just like pigs or cows--upon its head. The three fugitives, Butler decreed, were "contraband of War," enemy property so as to deny its use to the enemy. It was a novel solution that fired the imagination of Northern abolitionists. Butler was soon acclaimed all over the North for his initiative. Lincoln was uneasy both over the "contraband" theory and the fact that Butler had thought of it; but the policy did sidestep the issue of the slaves' status after the war, and Lincoln did not countermand it.

Having decide the status of the fugitives, Butler was ready to meet Major Cary. To the major's request that the slaves be returned, the general responded with an emphatic "No." The Fugitive Slave Law of the United States could hardly apply if Virginia was, as it claimed, a foreign nation. He added, however, if Colonel Mallory, their owner, would come in and take an oath of allegiance to the Union, he would gladly return his human property. The interviews with Butler marked the end of the harmonious interracial world of Hampton. The blacks and whites had been forced to take a dispute between them to an outsider, to a *Yankee*, and the blacks had won. Nothing in Hampton would ever be the same again.

That afternoon of 25 May the village of Hampton was abandoned; the majority of its residents fled to the Confederate lines drawn across the northern edge...of the peninsula. The Hamptonians going north, however, were mostly white.... On the day of evacuation, 8 more slaves crossed the causeway to the Fort; the next day 47 more came. This stream rapidly became a flood. Intermittent skirmished between Union and Confederate troops and Union capture of Newport News made escape easy. By July over 900 contraband had found protection around the Fortress.

These were freedom's first opportunists. In the ensuing three decades, they and the thousands who would join them in Hampton would test freedom's meaning with a determination and sophistication that at once surprised and dismayed many whites including erstwhile allies. Yet to these blacks each action the followed their initial escape was as logical as the first. Freedom had to be something one could go to, lay hold of, and use, or it had no meaning.

Robert Francis Engs, Freedom's First Generation: Black Hampton, Virginia, 1861-1890 (1979), pp. 18-22.

CHARLOTTE FORTEN TEACHES THE EX-SLAVES

Charlotte Forten was born into a home of privilege, comfort and elegance. The granddaughter of James Forten, the successful Philadelphia sailmaker who was one of the wealthiest antebellum black businessmen and the niece of abolitionist, Robert Purvis, she was destined to lead a conservative, secure life. In 1856 she was appointed the first black teacher of white children in Salem, Massachusetts. However when the Civil War began Forten siezed the opportunity to teach the ex-slaves in Union-occupied South Carolina. In this 1862 letter to William Lloyd Garrison, she describes conditions on the plantation surrounding her school.

I am staying at the same house in which a store is kept for the freed people by a Quaker gentleman sent here by the Philadelphia Commission. One has an excellent opportunity here for observing the negroes. I am particularly pleased with their manners. They are always perfectly courteous to each other, as well as to us.... As far as I have observed, they seem to me honest, industrious, and anxious to improve in every way. This is wonderful, considering the crushing and degrading system to which they have been subjected. They certainly are not the stupid, degraded people that many at the North believe them to be.

The plantation on which we live was owned by a man whom all the people unite in calling a "hard master." And his wife, it is said, was even more cruel than himself..... They were kept half-starved for some time_as a punishment for daring to be ill, I suppose. The whip was used freely.... If a fowl or anything else on the plantation was missed, and the thief could not be discovered, every slave would receive a number of lashes. They were wretchedly clothed. One poor woman had her feet and limbs so badly frozen from exposure, that she was obliged to have both legs amputated above the knee. She is living here now, and is one of the best women on the place.

From such a life as these poor people.... are overflowing with gratitude to the "Yankees," for coming here, and giving them their freedom. One very old man,_who came into the store this morning.... dressed in an original suit, made entirely of carpeting,_expressed to Mr. H. [John A. Hunn, the Philadelphia Quaker referred to above] his delight at the new state of things:_"Don't have me feelin's hurt now, massa. Used to have me feelin's hurt all de time; but don't hab 'em hurt now, no more."

As I bring this letter to a close, my thoughts revert to New England_to Massachusetts, which I believe I am in the habit of considering as all New England. And I recall with pleasure the many happy Thanksgiving Days passed there. But it has been reserved for me to spend here, in South Carolina, the happiest, the most jubilant Thanksgiving Day of my life. We hear of cold weather and heavy snow storms up in the North land; but here roses and oleanders are blooming out of doors, figs are ripening, the sunlight is warm and bright, and over all shines gloriously the blessed light of freedom, freedom forevermore.

I am, dear friend, very truly yours, C.L.F.

Source: The Liberator, December 19, 1862

SUSIE KING TAYLOR AND BLACK FREEDOM

Born a slave in 1848, Susie King Taylor eventually gained an education in Savannah and became a teacher to ex-slaves on the coast of Georgia. Her account of her work there provides a valuable glimpse into the world of the newly emancipated slaves.

I was born under the slave law in Georgia, in 1848, and was brought up by my grandmother in Savannah. My brother and I being the two eldest, we were sent to a friend of my grandmother, Mrs. Woodhouse, a widow, to learn to read and write. She was a free woman and lived....about half a mile from my house. We went every day about nine o'clock, with our books wrapped in paper to prevent the police or white persons from seeing them. She had twenty five or thirty children whom she taught.... The neighbors would see us going in sometimes, but they supposed we were there learning trades, as it was the custom to give children a trade of some kind.... I remained at her school for two years when I was sent to Mrs. Mary Beasley, where I continued until May, 1860, when she told my grandmother she had taught me all she knew....I had a white playmate about this time, named Katie O'Connor, who lived on the next corner of the street from my house, and who attended a convent. One day she told me, if I would promise not to tell her father, she would give me some lessons. On my promise not to do so, and getting her mother's consent, she gave me lessons about four months, every evening. At the end of this time she was put into the convent permanently, and I have never seen her since.

I had been reading so much about the "Yankees" I was very anxious to see them. The whites would tell their colored people not to go to the Yankees, for they would harness them to carts and make them pull the carts around, in place of horses. I asked grandmother if this was true. She replied, "Certainly not!" that the white people did not want slaves to go over to the Yankees, and told them these things to frighten them.... I wanted to see these wonderful "Yankees" [who were] going to set all the slaves free. On April 11, 1862, when Union soldiers took Fort Pulaski....we landed under the protection of the Union fleet, and at last....I saw the "Yankee."

Captain Whitmore, commanding the boat, asked me where I was from. I told him Savannah, Ga. He asked if I could read; I said,"Yes!" "Can you write?" he next asked. "Yes, I can do that also," I replied. He handed me a book and a pencil and told me to write my name and where I was from.... He was surprised at my accomplishments.... You seem so different from the other colored people who came from the same place you did." "No!" I replied, "the only difference is, they were reared in the country and I in the city." Next morning we arrived at St. Simon's [where] Commodore Goldsborough came to see me.... Captain Whitmore had spoken to him of me, and he was pleased to hear of my being so capable, etc., and wished me to take charge of a school for the children on the island. I told him I would gladly do so, if I could have some books. In a week I received two large boxes of books from the North. I had children to teach, beside a number of adults.... all of them so eager to learn to read, to read above anything else.

Source: Susie King Taylor, Reminiscences of My Life in Camp with the 33rd United States Colored Troops...(Boston, 1902), pp. 1-15, 67-68.

THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION

The Emancipation Proclamation, issued by President Abraham Lincoln on September 22, 1862, had a profound effect on the Union, the Confederacy, and of course, black Americans. Part of the document appears below.

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
A PROCLAMATION

Whereas, the twenty-second day of September, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty two, a proclamation was signed by the President of the United States, containing, among other things, the following, to wit:

That on the first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, all persons held as slaves within any state or designated part of a state, the persons whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, henceforward, and forever free; and the Executive Government of the United States, including the military and naval authority thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of such persons, and will do no act or acts to suppress such person, or any of them, in any efforts they may make for their actual freedom...

And by virtue of the power and for the purpose aforesaid, I do order and declare that all persons held as slaves within said designated States and parts of States are and hence-forward shall be free, and that the executive government of the United States, including the military and naval authorities thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of said persons.

And I hereby enjoin upon the people so declared to be free to abstain from all violence, unless in necessary self-defense; and I recommend to them that in all cases when allowed they labor faithfully for reasonable wages.

And I further declare and make known, that such persons of suitable condition, will be received into the armed services of the United States to garrison forts, position, stations, and other places and to man vessels of all sorts in said service.

And upon this act, sincerely believed to be an act of justice, warranted by the Constitution upon military necessity, I invoke the considerate judgment and mankind and the gracious favor of Almighty God....

Source: John Hope Franklin and Alfred A. Moss, Jr. From Slavery to Freedom: A History of Negro Americans, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1988), pp. 532-533.

A CHRONOLOGY OF EMANCIPATION, 1772-1888

1772 Lord Chief Mansfield Rules Slavery is Not Supported by English Law, thus laying the legal basis for the freeing of England's 15,000 slaves.

1774 The English Society of Friends votes the expulsion of any member engaged in the slave trade.

1775 Slavery abolished in Madeira.

1776 The Society of Friends in England and Pennsylvania require members to free slaves or face expulsion.

1777 The Vermont Constitution prohibits slavery.

1780 The Massachusetts Constitution prohibits slavery. Pennsylvania adopts a policy of gradual emancipation, freeing the children of all slaves born after November 1, 1780, on their 28th birthday.

1784 Rhode Island and Connecticut pass gradual emancipation laws.

1787 Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade is formed in England. First abolitionist organization.

1794 The French Government abolishes slavery. This law is repealed by Napoleon in 1802.

1799 New York passes a gradual emancipation law.

1800 U.S. Citizens barred from exporting slaves.

1804 Slavery abolished in Haiti. New Jersey adopts a policy of gradual emancipation.

1807 England and the United States prohibit engagement in the international slave trade. U.S. Constitutional ban on importing slaves begins.

1813 Gradual emancipation adopted in Argentina.

1814 Gradual emancipation begins in Columbia.

1820 England begins using Naval Power to suppress the slave trade.

1823 Slavery abolished in Chile

1822 Slavery abolished in Mexico

1824 Slavery abolished in Central America.

1831 Slavery abolished in Bolivia.

1838 Slavery abolished in all British Colonies.

1841 England, France, Russia, Prussia and Austria agree to mutual search of vessels on the High Seas to suppress the slave trade.

1842 Slavery abolished in Uruguay.

1848 Slavery abolished in all French and Danish Colonies.

1851 Slavery abolished in Ecuador.

1854 Slavery abolished in Peru and Venezuela.

1863 Slavery abolished in all Dutch Colonies.

1865 Slavery abolished in the United States as a result of the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution.

1871 Gradual emancipation initiated in Brazil

1873 Slavery abolished in Puerto Rico.

1886 Slavery abolished in Cuba.

1888 Slavery abolished in Brazil.

Source: Robert Fogel and Stanley Engerman, Time on the Cross, (Boston, 1974), pp. 33-34.

FREDERICK DOUGLASS CALLS ON BLACKS TO FIGHT

In 1863 after President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, Frederick Douglass in an editorial titled "Men Of Color, to Arms!" called on black Americans to take up arms to defend the Union and free the slaves. That editorial is reprinted below.

When first the rebel cannon shattered the walls of Sumter and drove away its starving garrison, I predicted that the war....would not be fought out entirely by white men. Every month's experience during these dreary years has confirmed that opinion. A war undertaken and brazenly carried on for the perpetual enslavement of colored men, calls logically and loudly for colored men to help suppress it. Only a moderate share of sagacity was need to see that the arm of the slave was the best defense against the arm of the slaveholder. There is no time to delay....Liberty won by white men would lose half its luster. "Who would be free themselves must strike the blow." "Better even die free, than to live slaves." This is the sentiment of every brave colored man amongst us.

There are weak and cowardly men in all nations. We have them amongst us. They tell you this is the `white man's war'; that you `will be no better off after than before the war'; that the getting of you into the army is to `sacrifice you on the first opportunity.' Believe them not; cowards themselves, they do not wish to have their cowardice shamed by your brave example. Leave them to their timidity, or to whatever motive may hold them back. By every consideration which binds you to your enslaved fellow countrymen and to the welfare of your country; by every aspiration which you cherish for the freedom and equality of yourselves and your children; by all the ties of blood and identity which make us one with the brave black men now fighting our battles in Louisiana and in South Carolina, I urge you to fly to arms, and smite with death the power that would bury the Government and your liberty in the same hopeless grave.

I wish I could tell you that the State of New York calls you to this high honor. For the moment her constituted authorities are silent on the subject. They will speak by and by, and doubtless on the right side; but we are not compelled to wait for her. We can get at the throat of treason and slavery through the State of Massachusetts. She was first in the War of Independence; first to break the chains of her slaves; first to make the black man equal before the law; first to admit colored children to her common schools, and she was first to answer with her blood and alarm-cry of the nation, when its capital was menaced by rebels. You know her patriotic governor, and you know Charles Sumner. I need no add more.

This is our golden opportunity. Let us accept it, and forever wipe out the dark reproaches unsparingly hurled against us by our enemies. Let us win for ourselves the gratitude of our country, and the best blessings of our posterity through all time. The nucleus of this first regiment is now in camp at Readville, a short distance from Boston. I will undertake to forward to Boston all persons adjudged fit to be mustered into the regiment who shall apply to me at any time within the next two weeks.

Source: The North Star, March 2, 1863.

THE NEW YORK CITY DRAFT RIOT, 1863

The following is an account of the bloodiest urban riot in America's history.

Angry, jeering protestors filled the room on July 13, 1863, when New York City draft commissioners met to draw the names of New York's first conscripts. More protestors--perhaps 500--waited menacingly outside the building clutching bricks, clubs, and iron bars. As a draft official reached into a large selection machine, a brick crashed through a window. A shower of bricks followed, and the mob charged into the room. Selection machines toppled, official papers and records flew through broken windows and doors, chairs and desks crashed, draft officials and policemen slumped to the floor, bruised and bloody. Within minutes, the draft headquarters was ransacked and set ablaze. When a policeman attempted to organize fire fighters, protestors clubbed him and left him dying in the street.

Surging through the streets, the mob grew in size and fury. Perhaps 4000 men, women, and children--mostly working-class Irish immigrants--gathered outside the Twenty-first Street Armory, which they showered with bricks and paving stones. A hundred men rushed the front door. Soldiers inside greeted them with a blast of bullets that felled half a dozen leaders. The mob shoved ahead through the doors and into the building, which they looted and burned. The guards escaped--barely--through a back door. Fire wagons called to extinguish the blaze were overturned, firemen were beaten, horses were maimed and killed. Soldiers hurriedly sent to disperse the crowd with blank cartridges were attacked and sent scurrying for safety, leaving canteens, rifles, and bayonets scattered behind. Victorious, the rioters focused their hatred on a new object--the black population of New York. Breaking into small squads and raiding parties, rioters raced through black residential areas, cursing, clubbing, stoning, stabbing, and shooting as they ran. Before them, black men, women, and children fled in panic. Dozens fell or were caught and beaten; some where clubbed to death; a few were hanged and burned. Early in the evening hundreds of rioters gathered outside New York's Orphan Asylum for Colored Children where about 600 black children lived on charity. While rioters cheered, women and children flowed through the building, stripping it of furniture, clothing, food--anything that could be carried away. A small force of police managed to extinguish torches tossed into the buildings as the orphans escaped. The next day, the crowds of working-class rioters grew still larger and more destructive. Rioters even stormed a police station where black women and children had taken refuge. They were turned back only after long, fierce fighting.

Looting, beating, murder, and arson continued for two more days before the army and the police restored order. When the dust and smoke finally began to clear, hundreds of New York's black citizens huddled together in improvised shelters, reflecting on the hatred New York's white working class felt for them. Rioters had murdered at least a dozen black men, women, and children, beaten scores more, and left thousands homeless and destitute--all for the crime of being black.

Source: Larry Kincaid, "Two Steps Forward, One Step Back: Racial Attitudes During the Civil War and Reconstruction," Gary B. Nash and Richard Weiss, eds., The Great Fear: Race in the Mind of America, (New York: Holt, 1970), pp. 45-46.

THE NEW YORK DRAFT RIOT, AN EYEWITNESS ACCOUNT

In 1863 a predominately Irish mob rioted against the newly enacted federal draft and vented their fury particularly on New York City blacks. Dr. John Torrey in the following account describes the riot.

New York, July 13th, 1863

Dear Doctor--

We have had great riots in New York to-day & they are still in progress. They were reported to us at the Assay office about noon, but I thought they were exaggerated....In 49 st. they [the rioters] were numerous, & made, as I was passing near the College, an attack upon one of a row of new houses in our street. The rioters were induced to go away by one or two Catholic priests, who made pacific speeches to them. I found Jane & Maggie [his black servants] a little alarmed, but not frightened. The mob had been in the College Grounds, & came to our house--wishing to know if a republican lived there, & what the College building was used for. They were going to burn Pres. King's house, as he was rich, & a decided republican. They barely desisted when addressed by the Catholic priest. The furious bareheaded & coatless men assembled under our windows & shouted aloud for Jeff Davis!

....Toward the evening the mod, furious as demons, went yelling over to the Colored-Orphan Asylum in 5th Avenue a little below where we live--& rolling a barrel of kerosine in lit, the whole structure was soon in a blaze, & is now a smoking ruin. What has become of the 300 poor innocent orphans I could not learn. They must have had some warning of what the rioters intended; & I trust the children were removed in time to escape a cruel death. Before this fire was extinguished, or rather burned out, for the wicked wretches who caused it would not permit the engines to be used, the northern sky was brilliantly illuminated, probably by the burning of the Aged Colored-woman's Home in 65th St.--or the Harlem R. Road Bridge--both of which places were threatened by the rioters....

A friend who rode with me had seen a poor Negro hung an hour or two before. The man had, in a frenzy, shoot an Irish fireman, and they immediately strung up the unhappy African....The worst mobs are on the 1st & 2nd and 7th Avenues.. Many have been killed. They are very hostile to the Negroes, & and scarcely one of them is to be seen. A person who called at our house this afternoon saw three of them hanging together....

Thieves are going about in gangs, calling at houses, & demanding money--threatening the torch if denied.... A friend (Mr. Gibbons) who visits us almost every week, & is known to be an abolitionist, had his house smashed up yesterday.....

Ever yours,
John Torrey

Source: John Bracey and others, The Afro-Americans: Selected Documents, (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1972), pp. 230-233.

RELUCTANT LIBERATORS: NORTHERN TROOPS IN THE SOUTH

As the preceding vignettes on the New York Draft Riot indicates, not all Northerners embraced the idea that they were fighting to liberate the slaves. The following account by historian Leon Litwack describes the attitudes of some Northern soldiers toward the blacks they encountered in the South.

The typical Yankee was at best a reluctant liberator, and the attitudes and behavior he evinced did not always encourage the slaves to think of themselves as free men and women. Although Union propagandists and abolitionists might exult in how a war for the Union had been transformed into a crusade for freedom, many northern soldiers donned the crusader's armor with strong misgivings or outright disgust. "I don't think enough of the Nigger to go and fight for them," an Ohio private wrote. "I would rather fight them." Few Northerners, after all, had chosen to wage this kind of war. "Our government has broken faith with us," a Union deserter told his captors. "We enlisted to fight for the Union, and not to liberate the G-d d-d niggers." Rather than view emancipation as a way to end the war, some Yankee soldiers thought it would only prolong the conflict. Now that the very survival of the southern labor system was at stake, not to mention the proper subordination of black people, the prospect of a negotiated peace seemed even more remote, and southern whites could be expected to fight with even greater intensity and conviction.

That most Union soldiers should have failed to share the abolitionist commitment is hardly surprising. What mattered was how they manifested their feelings when they came into direct contact with the slaves. The evidence suggests one of the more tragic chapters in the history of this generally brutalizing and demoralizing war. The normal frustrations of military life and the usually sordid record of invading armies, when combined with long-held and deeply felt attitudes toward black people, were more than sufficient to turn some Union soldiers into the very "debils" the slaves had been warned by their masters to expect. Not only did the invaders tend to view the Negro as a primary cause of the war but even more importantly as an inferior being with few if any legitimate human emotions-at least none that had to be considered with any degree of sensitivity. Here, then, was a logical and convenient object on which disgruntled and war-weary Yankees could vent their frustrations and hatreds. "As I was going along this afternoon," a young Massachusetts officer wrote from New Orleans, "a little black baby that could just walk got under my feet and it look so much like a big worm that I wanted to step on it and crush it, the nasty, greasy little vermin was the best that could be said of it." And if anything, additional exposure to blacks appeared to strengthen rather than allay racial antipathies. "My repugnance to them increases with the acquaintance," a New England officer remarked. "Republican as I am, keep me clear of the darkey in any relation."

To debauch black women, some Yankees apparently concluded, was to partake of a widely practiced and well-accepted southern pastime. The evidence was to be seen everywhere. Besides, Yankees tended to share the popular racist notion of black women as naturally promiscuous and dissolute. "Singular, but true," a Massachusetts soldier and amateur phrenologist observed, "the heads of the women indicate great animal passions." Although some Union officers made no secret of their slave concubines, sharing their quarters with them, a black soldier noted that they usually mingled with "deluded freedwomen" only under the cover of darkness, while they openly consorted with white women during the day. The frequency with which common soldiers mixed with black women prompted some regimental commanders to

order the ejection of such women from the camp because their presence had become "demoralizing." "I won't be unfaithful to you with a Negro wench," a Pennsylvania soldier assured his wife, "though it is the case with many soldiers. Yes, men who have wives at home get entangled with these black things." Marriages between Yankees and blacks were rare, but when they did occur southern whites made the most of them.

> Two of the Brownfields' former negroes have married Yankees--one, a light colored mustee, and property left her by some white men whose mistress she had been-she says she passed herself off for a Spaniard and Mercier Green violated the sanctity of Grace Church by performing the ceremony--the other, a man, went north and married a Jewess--the idea is too revolting.

Not surprisingly, Union soldiers often shared the outrage of local whites at such liaisons. In November 1865, a black newspaper in Charleston reported that an Illinois soldier had been tarred and feathered by his own comrades for having married a black woman. "He was probably a Southern man by birth and education," the newspaper said of the victim, "and Hoosiers and Suckers don't take readily to Southern habits."

Whatever the reputation of black women for promiscuity, sexual submissions frequently had to be obtained by force. "While on picket guard I witnessed misdeeds that made me ashamed of America," a soldier wrote from South Carolina; he had recently observed a group of his comrades rape a nine-year-old black girl. Not only did some Union soldiers sexually assault any woman they found in a slave cabin but they had no compunctions about committing the act in the presence of her family. "The father and grandfather dared offer no resistance," two witnesses reported from Virginia. In some such instances, the husband or children of the intended victim had to be forcibly restrained from coming to her assistance. Beyond the exploitation of sexual assault, black women could be subjected to further brutality and sadism, as was most graphically illustrated in an incident involving some Connecticut soldiers stationed in Virginia. After seizing two "niger wenches," they "turned them upon their heads, & put tobacco, chips, stocks, lighted cigars & and sand into their behinds." Without explanation, some Union soldiers in Hanover County Virginia, stopped five young black women and cut their arms, legs, and backs with razors. "Dis was new to us," one of the victims recalled, "cause Mr. Tinsley [her master] didn' ever beat or hurt us." Most Union soldiers would have found these practices reprehensible. But they occurred with sufficient frequency to induce a northern journalist in South Carolina to write that Union troops had engaged in "some of the vilest and meanest exhibitions of human depravity" he had ever witnessed. If such incidents were rare, moreover, the racial ideology that encouraged them had widespread acceptance, even among those who deplored the excesses.

Source: Leon Litwack, Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery, (New York, 1979) pp. 127-128, 129-130.

A BLACK SOLDIER WRITES HOME, 1863

Lewis Douglass, the son of Frederick Douglass, joined the 54th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment, the first officially recognized black unit in the Union Army. Following the assault on Fort Wagner, a Confederate fortification near Charleston, South Carolina, where the regiment lost over one third of its six hundred men, Douglass wrote his finance, Amelia, describing the battle. Fort Wagner was never captured.

Morris Island, S.C.
July 20, 1863

My Dear Amelia:

I have been in two fights, and am unhurt. I am about to go in another I believe to-night. Our men fought well on both occasions... I escaped unhurt from amidst that perfect hail of shot and shell. It was terrible. I need not particularize, the papers will give a better [account] than I have time to give. My thoughts are with you often, you are as dear as ever, be good to remember it as I no doubt you will. As I said before we are on the eve of another fight and I am very busy and have just snatched a moment to write you. I must necessarily be brief. Should I fall in the next fight killed or wounded I hope I fall with my face to the foe...

This regiment has established its reputation as a fighting regiment, not a man flinched, though it was a trying time. Men fell all around me. A shell would explode and clear a space of twenty feet, our men would close up again, but it was no use we had to retreat, which was a very hazardous undertaking. How I got out of that fight alive I cannot tell, but I am here. My Dear girl I hope again to see you. I must bid you farewell should I be killed. Remember if I die I die in a good cause. I wish we had a hundred thousand colored troops we would put an end to this war.

Good bye to all. Your own loving--Write soon--

Lewis

Source: Herbert Aptheker, A Documentary History of the Negro People of the United States, (New York, 1969), pp. 440-441.

THE FORT PILLOW MASSACRE, 1864

The aftermath of the Battle of Fort Pillow ranks as the single largest incidence of civilian death inflicted by a military force during the Civil War. After Union forces occupying the earthen fortress which guarded the Mississippi River surrendered to a Confederate Army led by General Nathan Bedford Forrest, approximately 400 mostly African American men, women and children who had taken shelter in the structure were killed by their captors. The animosity between the Union and Confederate forces was heightened because soldiers on both sides of the battle were Tennessean. The Union force was comprised of ex-slaves recruited from West Tennessee as well as white Unionists from both West and East Tennessee, while the men in Forrest's command were from West Tennessee. The account below, a partial description of the massacre, focuses on Captain John L. Poston who organized a group of sixty three white men from Brownsville, Tennessee, to fight for the Union. After the Civil War Poston became one of a small group of native Southerners who organized the Republican Party in West Tennessee and who assisted the ex-slaves as an agent for the Freedman's Bureau. I take special interest in the vignette because it suggests that not all white Southerners supported the Confederacy and because Poston hailed from Brownsville, my hometown.

The sixty three men whom John L. Poston had organized into Company E of the Union's 13th Tennessee Cavalry bivouacked at Fort Pillow as they moved to Memphis to join up with Union forces. These men were among the six hundred Union troops attacked at Fort Pillow by six thousand of Forrest's Confederate troops on 12 April 1864. No battle could better illustrate the Civil War as a fight of neighbor against neighbor. The largest part of the Confederate militia organized in Haywood County served under Forrest's command. Inside Fort Pillow, the Union forces combined African American troops from Alabama, Tennessee, and Mississippi with white troops from West Tennessee, including Poston's Company E. White Haywood County men attacked Fort Pillow, and white and black Haywood County men defended it.

In a war noted for its carnage, the battle became infamous for the cruelty of its aftermath. Two hundred and sixty-two of the troops in Fort Pillow were African Americans. After the surrender of the fort, most of them were systematically executed. A soldier from Poston's company testified that after the surrender, he "saw them make lots of niggers stand up, and then they shot them down like hogs... The next morning I was lying [with the wounded].... The secesh [secessionists] would be prying around there, and would come to a nigger and say, 'You ain't dead, are you?'... Then they would make them get up on their knees, when they would shoot them down like hogs... I reckon as many as 200 were killed after the surrender, out of about 300 that was there."

An African American soldier from West Tennessee testified, "I heard one of the [Confederate] officers say: 'Kill all the niggers,'... They shot at me after that, but did not hit me; a rebel officer shot me. He took aim at my side; at the crack of his pistol I fell. He went on and said, 'There's another dead nigger.'"

Poston and other soldiers, one hundred white and forty black men, were taken prisoner at the fort and, on the day after the battle, marched from Fort Pillow to Covington. From there they marched to Brownsville. The African American prisoners were shot or hung along the march, so that by the time the detail arrived in Brownsville only the one hundred white troops were still alive. Five miles beyond Brownsville, on the road to Jackson at the Hatchie River bottom, the

Confederate captors halted the column of prisoners at dusk. Major William F. Bradford, Poston's commander and the ranking survivor at Fort Pillow, was taken fifty yards from the column and shot by five of the guards. Witnesses testified that a week later his body had not been removed. Poston, like Bradford, was regarded as a "home-grown Yankee," but the rules of war were applied to him. He was sent to Andersonville, the notorious prisoner-of-war death camp. He escaped from there and subsequently assumed command of Company A of the 14th Tennessee Cavalry Regiment around Nashville.

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Source: Richard A. Couto, Lifting the Veil: A Political History of Struggles from Emancipation (Knoxville, 1993), pp. 32-33.

SOJOURNER TRUTH MEETS PRESIDENT LINCOLN

In 1864 Sojourner Truth, now an internationally famous abolitionist speaker, met with President Abraham Lincoln. Here is her account of the meeting.

It was about 8 o'clock A.M. when I called on the president. Upon entering his reception room we found about a dozen persons in waiting among them two colored women.... He showed as much kindness and consideration to the colored persons as to the whites--if there was any difference, more.

"The president was seated at his desk. Mrs. C. said to him, `This is Sojourner Truth, who has come all the way from Michigan to see you.' He then arose, gave me his hand, made a bow, and said, 'I am pleased to see you.'

"I said to him, Mr. President, when you first took your seat I feared you would be torn to pieces, for I likened you unto Daniel, who was thrown into the lion's den; and if the lions did not tear you into pieces, I knew that it would be God that had saved you; and I said if he spared me I would see you before the four years expired, and he has done so, and now I am here to see you for myself.

"He then congratulated me on my having been spared. Then I said, I appreciate you, for you are the best president who has ever taken the seat. He replied: `I expect you have reference to my having emancipated the slaves in my proclamation. But,' said he, mentioning the names of several of his predecessors (and among them emphatically that of Washington), `they were all just as good, and would have done just as I have done if the time had come. If the people over the river [pointing across the Potomac] had behaved themselves, I could not have done what I have; but they did not, which gave me the opportunity to do these things.' I then said, I thank God that you were the instrument selected by him and the people to do it. I told him that I had never heard of him before he was talked of for president. He smilingly replied, `I had heard of you many times before that.'

"He then showed me the Bible presented to him by the colored people of Baltimore, of which you have no doubt seen a description. I have seen it for myself, and it is beautiful beyond description. After I had looked it over, I said to him, This is beautiful indeed; the colored people have given this to the head of the government, and that government once sanctioned laws that would not permit its people to learn enough to enable them to read this book. And for what? Let them answer who can.

"I must say, and I am proud to say, that I never was treated by any one with more kindness and cordiality than were shown to me by that great and good man, Abraham Lincoln, by the grace of God president of the United States for four years more. He took my little book, and with the same hand that signed the death-warrant of slavery, he wrote as follows:

"`For Aunty Sojourner Truth," `Oct. 29, 1864. A. LINCOLN.'

"As I was taking my leave, he arose and took my hand, and said he would be please to have me call again. I felt that I was in the presence of a friend, and now thank God from the bottom of my heart that I always have advocated his cause...."

Source: Olive Gilbert, Narrative of Sojourner Truth, with a History of Her Labors and Correspondence, Drawn from her "Book of Life," (Battle Creek, Mich: 1884), pp. 176-180.

A PROPOSAL TO ENLIST BLACKS IN THE CONFEDERATE ARMY

In 1864, with the ranks of the Confederate Army growing thinner, the Confederate Congress debated a proposal to arm black slaves. Final approval came in March 1865, far too late to be effective. The controversial proposal was approved only after General Robert E. Lee voiced his support in a letter to the Congress.

Headquarters Confederate States Armies
February 18th, 1865

HON. E. BARKSDALE, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, RICHMOND.

Sir: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of 12 inst., with reference to the employment of negroes as soldiers. I think the measure not only expedient, but necessary. The enemy will certainly use them against us if he can get possession of them; and as his present numerical superiority will enable him to penetrate many parts of the country, I cannot see the wisdom of the policy of holding them to await his arrival, when we may by timely action and judicious management, use them to arrest his progress....

In answer to your second question, I can only say that....negroes, under proper circumstances, will make efficient soldiers. I think we could at least do as well with them as the enemy, and he attaches great importance to their assistance. Under good officers, and good instructions, I do not see why they should not become soldiers. They possess all the physical qualifications, and their habits of obedience constitute a good foundation for discipline. They furnish a more promising material than many armies of which we read in history, which owed their efficiency to discipline alone. I think those who are employed should be freed. It would be neither just nor wise to require them to serve as slaves. The best course to pursue...would be to call for such as are willing to come with the consent of their owners. An impressment or draft would not bring out the best class, and the use of coercion would make the measure distasteful to them and to their owners.

I have no doubt that if Congress would authorize their reception into service, and empower the President to call upon individuals or States for such as they are willing to contribute, with the condition of emancipation to all enrolled, a sufficient number would be forthcoming to enable us to try the experiment. If it proved successful, most of the objections to the measure would disappear, and if individuals still remained unwilling to send their negroes to the army, the force of public opinion in the States would soon bring about such legislation as would remove all obstacles. I think the matter should be left....to the people and the States, which alone can legislate as the necessities of this particular service may require. As to the mode of organizing them, it should be left as free from restraint as possible. Experience will suggest the best course, and it would be inexpedient to trammel the subject with provisions that might....prevent the adoption of reforms suggested by actual trial.

With great respect.

Your obedient servant,
R. E. Lee, *General*

Source: Leslie H. Fishel, Jr. and Benjamin Quarles, The Negro American: A Documentary History, (Glenview, Ill., 1967) pp. 247-248.

A BLACK SOLDIER DESCRIBES THE FALL OF RICHMOND, 1865

J. J. Hill, orderly for Col. W. B. Wooster, commander of the 29th Connecticut Colored Infantry Regiment, describes the capture of the Confederate capital in April 1865, and the brief visit there by President Abraham Lincoln in his book A Sketch of the 29th Regiment of Connecticut Colored Troops. Part of the description is reprinted below.

All was quiet here until the 1st of April, when all was in readiness, and the order was given to strike tents and move on to Richmond. During Sunday night the brigade was out in line of battle, and at three o'clock in the morning the rebels blew up three gun boats and commenced vacating their works in our front. At 5 A.M the troops commenced to advance on the rebel works--the 29th taking the advance, the 9th U.S.C.[olored] troops next. Soon refugees from the rebels came in by hundreds. Col. W. B. Wooster passed them about, and made them go before the regiment and dig up the torpedoes that were left in the ground to prevent the progress of the Union Army. They were very numerous, but to the surprise of officers and men, none of the army were injured by them.

On our march to Richmond, we captured 500 pieces of artillery, some of the largest kind, 6,000 small arms, and the prisoners I was not able to number. The road was strewed with all kinds of obstacles, and men were lying all along the distance of seven miles. The main body of the army went up the New Market road. The 29th skirmished all the way, and arrived in the city at 7 A.M., and were the first infantry that entered the city; they went at double quick most of the way. When Col. Wooster came to Main St. he pointed his sword at the capitol, and said "Double quick, march," and the company charged through the main street to the capitol and halted in the square until the rest of the regiment came up.

Very soon after the arrival of the white troops the colored troops were moved on the outskirts of the city, and as fast as the white troops came in the colored troops were ordered out, until we occupied the advance. The white troops remained in the city as guards. We remained on the outpost.

[On April] 3d President Lincoln visited the city. No triumphal march of a conqueror could have equalled in moral sublimity the humble manner in which he entered Richmond. I was standing on the bank of the James river viewing the scene of desolation when a boat, pulled by twelve sailors, came up the stream. It contained President Lincoln and his son... In some way the colored people on the bank of the river ascertained that the tall man wearing the black hat was President Lincoln. There was a sudden shout and clapping of hands. I was very much amused at the plight of one officer who had in charge fifty colored men to put to work on the ruined buildings; he found himself alone, for they left work and crowded to see the President. As he approached I said to a woman, "Madam, there is the man that made you free." She exclaimed, "Is that President Lincoln?" My reply was in the affirmative.

She gazed at him with clasped hands and said, "Glory to God. Give Him praise for his goodness," and she shouted till her voice failed her.

Source: J. J. Hill, A Sketch of the 29th Regiment of Connecticut Colored Troops, (Baltimore, 1867), pp. 25-27.

A DAY "WORTH LIVING FOR"

The following vignette is taken from a Massachusetts Historical Society newsletter announcing its 1993 Spring Exhibition, "We Fright for Freedom: Massachusetts, African Americans and the Civil War.

The recent film, *Glory*, which focused on the famous 54th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment and Col. Robert Gould Shaw, has stirred an unprecedented level of popular and scholarly interest in the 54th and the larger African-American role in the Civil War. But the fascination with Shaw and his regiment has not extended to the state's other two black regiments, the 55th Massachusetts Infantry and the nearly forgotten 5th Massachusetts Cavalry.

Organized in January 1864, the 5th Cavalry was commanded by Henry S. Russell and Charles Francis Adams, Jr. Northern blacks like Charles R. Douglass, son of the great abolitionist Frederick Douglass, joined the unit to destroy slavery and racial prejudice. The 5th served in the Petersburg and Bermuda Hundred campaigns in Virginia, guarded thousands of Confederate prisoners at Point Lookout, Maryland, and after the close of the war served on the Texas border to help check the adventurism of Mexico's Emperor Maximilian....

The 5th Cavalry had the honor of being among the first Union regiments to enter Richmond, the Confederate capitol, after its evacuation. The following extract from a letter of April 3, 1865....catches the high drama of the moment.

> Our entry into the city I can not describe. It is impossible but I never saw so much enthusiasm in my life. We marched up Main St. at the head of the column--a division of colored troops....were the first into the city... In the rear of our battalion was a brigade of colored troops who marched up the street platoon front, with their drums & fife. It was a grand....march. We were greeted on all sides by the colored people who were frantic with joy. Even the whites seemed to enjoy the sight. We marched through all the principle streets. The lower and business part of the city was in flames--the wharf & shipping. This was done by the [Confederate] army before they left. The arsenal was burnt & all the public government buildings. Many of them were filled with powder & ammunition which exploded as the fire reached them.... Libby [prison] is burnt--as it [was in] the lower part of the city. All the bridges are blown up. I never in my life passed such a day. It is worth living for.

Source: Massachusetts Historical Society, M.H.S. Miscellany Number 55 (Summer 1993), pp. 1-2.

AN EX-SLAVE AT THE WHITE HOUSE

Elizabeth Keckley born a Virginia slave in 1818, worked her way to freedom. Arriving in Washington, D.C. in 1860 she became a dressmaker and soon established an elite clientele including Mrs. Jefferson Davis. In 1862 Keckley became a public figure when she helped start the Contraband Relief Association and served as it s first president. Soon she and Mary Todd Lincoln became friends. In the passage below from her autobiography, Keckley describes the aftermath of Lincoln's assassination.

At 11 o'clock at night I was awakened....with the startling intelligence that the entire Cabinet had been assassinated, and Mr. Lincoln shot, but not mortally wounded.... When I heard the words....Mr. Lincoln shot! the Cabinet assassinated! What could it mean? The streets were alive with wondering, awe-stricken people. Rumors flew thick and fast, and the wildest reports came with every new arrival. We walked rapidly towards the White House, and on our way passed the residence of Secretary Seward, which was surrounded by armed soldiers, keeping back all intruders with the point of the bayonet.... As we approached the White House, saw that it too was surrounded with soldiers.... We learned that the President was mortally wounded_that he had been shot down in his box at the theatre, and that he was not expected to live till morning.... I could not sleep. I wanted to go to Mrs. Lincoln, as I pictured her wild with grief; but then I did not know where to find her, and I must wait till morning.

Morning came at last, and a sad morning was it.... The President was dead, and a nation was mourning for him. Every house was draped in black, and every face wore a solemn look. About eleven o'clock on Saturday morning a carriage drove up to the door, and a messenger asked for "Elizabeth Keckley."

"Who wants her?" I asked.

"I come from Mrs. Lincoln. If you are Mrs. Keckley, come with me immediately to the White House."

I hastily put on my shawl and bonnet, and was driven....to the White House. I was quickly shown to Mrs. Lincoln's room, and on entering, saw Mrs. L. tossing uneasily about upon a bed. The room was darkened, and the only person in it besides the widow of the President was Mrs. Secretary Welles, who had spent the night with her. Bowing to Mrs. Welles, I went to the bedside.

"Why did you not come to me last night, Elizabeth_I sent for you?" Mrs. Lincoln asked in a low whisper. "I did try to come to you, but I could not find you," I answered, as I laid my hand upon her hot brow. I afterwards learned, that when she had partially recovered from the first shock of the terrible tragedy in the theatre, Mrs. Welles asked:

"Is there no one, Mrs. Lincoln, that you desire to have with you in this terrible affliction?" "Yes, send for Elizabeth Keckley. I want her just as soon as she can be brought here." Three messengers were successively despatched for me, but all of them mistook the number and failed to find me. Shortly after entering the room on Saturday morning....I was left alone with Mrs. Lincoln..... She denied admittance to almost every one, and I was her only companion, except her children, in the days of her great sorrow.

Source: Elizabeth Keckley, Behind the Scenes: or, Thirty Years a Slave and Four Years in the White House, (New York, 1868), pp. 43-55, 182-193.

CHAPTER EIGHT:

Reconstruction: Economic Transformation?

CHAPTER EIGHT: Reconstruction: Economic Transformation?

For the ex-slaves the period immediately following the end of the Civil War brought both jubilation and anxiety. Jubilation naturally sprang from the end of three centuries of enforced bondage. The anxiety stemmed from the uncertain status of these newly freed women and men. Thus African Americans took in 1865 the first halting steps to test their newly won status when few Americans, white or black, Northerner or Southerner, could say with certainty the course of that freedom.

The vignettes in this chapter reflect that uncertainty. The first three, ***Freedom: The Day of "Jubilo"****,* ***Felix Haywood Remembers the Day of Jubilo****, and* ***The First Year of Freedom*** *describe the heady days for the ex-slaves immediately after the Civil War while the vignette,* ***Helena Citizens Celebrate Their New Rights*** *indicates the euphoria of post-war emancipation and granting of civil rights was hardly confined to the South. In* ***Juneteenth: Birth of an African American Holiday*** *I describe the origin of the emancipation celebration in Texas and the West. The attempt to reunite broken families is described in* ***Send Me Some of the Children's Hair****.* ***Sojourner Truth on Equal Rights*** *attempts to link the quest for civil and political rights by black males with the campaign for women's suffrage while the vignette* ***Biddy Mason in Slavery and Freedom****, looks at the transition from the vantage point of a western African American woman who was not directly freed by the Union Army but who nevertheless moved to adjust to the new social order. The impact of the war on other black women is suggested in* ***Mary Ann Shadd: 19th Century Black Feminist*** *and* ***Anna Cooper and St. Augustine's College****. In* ***Clothing and Freedom*** *and* ***"Impudent" Freedwomen*** *we see the importance of the symbols of freedom.* ***Marriage and Post-Bellum Black Women****,* ***The Rise of Independent Black Churches****,* ***The Evolving Post-Civil War Black Church****, and* ***Post Civil War Courtship Among the Freedpeople*** *all describe the evolving society of African American free people. The vignettes* ***The Labor Contract: The Roots of Black Poverty****,* ***Tenantry or Sharecropping: The Roots of Black Poverty*** *and* ***A North Carolina Sharecropping Agreement*** *suggest that other forms of bondage in the postbellum period were slowly replacing slavery which had been destroyed by four years of civil war.* ***The Memphis Riot, 1866*** *and* ***The Black Codes in Louisiana*** *illustrate the adamant opposition to black rights during the earliest years of the post-Civil War period.* ***Hampton Institute: The Founding of a Black College*** *describes the attempt to provide education for the freedpeople. Finally in* ***Frederick Douglass Describes the "Composite Nation"*** *the civil rights leader calls for unrestricted Asian immigration to the U.S.*

Terms for Week Eight:

"day of jubilo"

"juneteenth"

"forty acres and a mule"

Civil Rights Act, 1866

Sojourner Truth

Biddy Mason

Mary Ann Shadd

Freedman's Bureau

labor contract

sharecropping

FREEDOM: THE DAY OF "JUBILO"

The end of the Civil War rather than the Emancipation Proclamation ushered in freedom for the vast majority of black slaves. Here is a sampling of their reaction.

Environment played a role in slaves' reactions to the Day of Jubilo. When those cities were liberated, organized celebrations occurred quickly. In Charleston 4,000 black men and women paraded before some 10,000 spectators.

Knowledge of their freedom came in many forms to the slaves. Many heard of the Emancipation Proclamation through the slave grapevine or from Union soldiers long before its words became reality for them. Masters sometimes took advantage of the isolation of their plantations to keep their slaves in ignorance or to make freedom seem vague and frightening. Their ploys usually failed, but learned patterns of deference made some freedmen unwilling to challenge their masters. Months after emancipation one North Carolina slave continued to work without compensation, explaining to a northern correspondent,

"No, sir; my mistress never said anything to me that I was to have wages, nor yet that I was free, nor I never said anything to her. Ye see I left it to her honor to talk to me about it, because I was afraid she'd say I was insultin' to her and presumin' so I wouldn't speak first. She hadn't spoke yet." There were, however, limits to his patience; he intended to ask her for wages at Christmas. Numerous freedmen described the exuberance they felt. One elderly Virginia black went to the barn, jumped from one stack of straw to another and "screamed and screamed!" A Texas man remembered, "We all felt like horses" and "everybody went wild." Other blacks recalled how slave songs and spirituals were updated, and "purty soon ev'ybody fo' miles around was singin' freedom songs.

Quite a few slaves learned of freedom when a Union officer or Freedmen's Bureau agent read them the Emancipation Proclamation) often over the objections of the master. A Louisiana planter's wife announced immediately after the Union officer departed, "Ten years from today I'll have you all back'gain. Freedmen quickly learned that one could not eat or wear freedom. "Dis livin' on liberty," one declared, "is lak young folks livin'on love after they gits married. It just don't work." They searched for the real meaning of liberty in numerous ways. Some followed the advice of a black Florida preacher, "You ain't none'o you, gwinter feel rale free till you shakes de dus ob de Ole Plantashun offen you feet," and moved. Other declared their independence by legalizing their marriages and taking new names or publicly using surnames they had secretly adopted while in slavery. "We had a real sho-nuff weddin' wid a preacher," one recalled. "Dat cost a dollar."

Education was the key for others. "If I nebber does do nothing more while I live," a Mississippi freedman vowed, "I shall give my children a chance to go to school, for I consider education next best thing to liberty.

Source: James Kirby Martin and others, America and Its People, Vol. 1, (Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman, 1989), pp. 486-487.

FELIX HAYWOOD REMEMBERS THE DAY OF JUBLIO

Felix Haywood, born a slave in Raleigh, North Carolina, gained his freedom in San Antonio, Texas, in the summer of 1865 when word finally reached Texas. In this interview Haywood recalls the day of emancipation.

Soldiers, all of a sudden, was everywhere--coming in bunches, crossing and walking and riding. Everyone was a-singing. We was all walking on golden clouds. Hallelujah!

Union forever
Hurrah, boys, hurrah!
Although I may be poor,
I'll never be a slave--
Shouting the battle cry of freedom.

Everybody went wild. We felt like heroes, and nobody had made us that way but ourselves. We was free. Just like that, we was free. It didn't seem to make the whites mad, either. They went right on giving us food just the same. Nobody took our homes away, but right off colored folks started on the move. They seemed to want to get closer to freedom, so they'd know what it was--like it was a place or a city. Me and my father stuck, close as a lean tick to a sick kitten. The Gudlows started us out on a ranch. My father, he'd round up cattle--unbranded cattle--for the whites. They was cattle that they belonged to, all right; they had gone to find water 'long the San Antonio River and the Guadalupe. Then the whites gave me and my father some cattle for our own. My father had his own brand - 7 B)--and we had a herd to start out with of seventy.

We knowed freedom was on us, but we didn't know what was to come with it. We thought we was going to get rich like the white folks. We thought we was going to be richer than the white folks, 'cause we was stronger and knowed how to work, and the whites didn't, and they didn't have us to work for them any more. But it didn't turn out that way. We soon found out that freedom could make folks proud, but it didn't make 'em rich.

Did you ever stop to think that thinking don't do any good when you do it too late? Well, that's how it was with us. If every mother's son of a black had thrown 'way his hoe and took up a gun to fight for his own freedom along with the Yankees, the war'd been over before it began. But we didn't do it. We couldn't help stick to our masters. We couldn't no more shot 'em than we could fly. My father and me used to talk 'bout it. We decided we was too soft and freedom wasn't going to be much to our good even if we had a education.

Source: Robert D. Marcus and David Burner, <u>America Firsthand: From Reconstruction to the Present</u> (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989), p. 11.

JUNETEENTH: BIRTH OF AN AFRICAN AMERICAN HOLIDAY

In a brief article for the Eugene Register Guard I described the origins of the Juneteenth holiday. Part of that article is reprinted below.

Freedom came in many guises to the four million African Americans who had been enslaved at the beginning of the Civil War. Some fortunate black women and men were emancipated as early as 1861 onward when Union forces captured outlying areas of the Confederacy such as the Sea Islands of South Carolina, the Tidewater area of Virginia (Hampton and Norfolk) or New Orleans all before January 1863. Other black slaves emancipated themselves by exploiting the disruption of war to run away to freedom, which in some instances was as close as the nearest Union Army camp. President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation liberated all blacks residing in territory captured from the Confederates after January 1, 1863. These slaves did not have to run for their freedom, they merely had to wait for Federal troops to arrive.

Emancipation for the majority of African Americans, however, came only in 1865 when Confederate commander Robert E. Lee surrendered his army to Federal forces....at Appomattox Court House in Virginia. With that surrender the....rebellion was over. News of Lee's surrender spread quickly through the former slave states east of the Mississippi River. Texas, however was another matter. Isolated from both Union and Confederate forces, Texas during the Civil War, had become a place of refuge for slaveholders seeking to insure that their "property" would not hear of freedom. Through April, May, and part of June, 1865, they did not. Finally on June 19, 1865, freedom officially arrived when Federal troops landed at Galveston, Texas. Word of emancipation gradually spread over the state despite the efforts of some slaveholders to maintain slavery.

But African Americans would not be denied the liberty that had eluded them so long. When the news came entire plantations were deserted. Many blacks brought from Arkansas, Louisiana and Missouri during the War, returned home while Texas freedpersons headed for Galveston, Houston and other cities where Federal troops were stationed. Although news of emancipation came at different times during that Texas summer of 1865, local blacks gradually settled on June 19 (Juneteenth) as their day of celebration. Beginning in 1866 they held parades, picnics, barbecues, and gave speeches in remembrance of their liberation. By 1900 the festivities had grown to include baseball games, horse races, railroad excursions, and formal balls. By that time Juneteenth had officially become Texas Emancipation Day and was sponsored by black churches and civic organizations. Indeed, Juneteenth had become so respectable that white politicians including various Texas governors addressed the largest gatherings (which sometimes included upwards of 5,000 people) in Houston and Dallas. Juneteenth had surpassed the Fourth of July as the biggest holiday of the year for Texas African Americans.

With the migration of African Americans from Texas to the West Coast particularly during World War II, Juneteenth simultaneously declined in Texas and grew in the emerging black communities of Los Angeles, Oakland, Portland, Seattle, and San Diego. And some communities east of Texas such as Washington, D.C., and Birmingham, Alabama, began celebrations as well. But by the 1970s many blacks, including those in Texas, had forgotten the holiday's origins and its significance in African American history....

Source: Quintard Taylor, "The Juneteenth Celebration, 1865-1992," Eugene Register-Guard, June 8, 1992, pp. 1D, 4D.

THE FIRST YEAR OF FREEDOM

In the account below historian Paula Giddings describes the first year of freedom.

The first year of freedom held incredible pathos for Afro-Americans. For black women especially, the postbellum period was one for critical decisions--concerning their children, their men, their role in the feminist and racial struggles that unfolded so dramatically in these years. Those decisions--and the convictions behind them often revealed a profound understanding of the relationship between their personal and political strivings.

Among the first and perhaps most important decisions that freedmen and women made was the reestablishment of family ties, as historian Herbert Gutman points out. Even in a world where slavery no longer existed, blacks faced a variety of obstacles. Postbellum apprenticeship laws, for example, allowed former owners to seize black children if the courts found that it would be "better for the habits and comfort of the child that it should be bound as an apprentice for some white person.'" In Maryland alone, an estimated ten thousand children were apprenticed, despite the objections of parents. "Not a day passes," said an officer of the Annapolis Freedmen's Bureau, "but my office is visited by some poor woman who has walked perhaps ten or twenty miles to . . . try to procure the release of her children taken forcibly away from her and held to all intents and purposes in slavery."

The dislocations of war required determined efforts to find spouses efforts freed blacks were willing to make, as a Union commander in Mississippi observed. Blacks "whose wives and husbands the rebels had driven off," he said, "firmly refused to form new connections and declared their purpose to keep faith to absent ones." Men and women who found each other, or who were fortunate enough not to have been separated by war and slavery, married or remarried under the official auspices of the Freedmen's Bureau--as in the case of Ida Wells's parents. Observers documented the vivid scene of masses of blacks coming to the Bureau offices, sometimes seventy couples at a time, to reaffirm their commitment to each other.

To secure their families, freed couples were making every attempt to stabilize their lives. When the abolitionist Frances Ellen Harper toured the South after the War, she reported that the former slaves "were beginning to get homes for themselves . . . and depositing money in the bank.... They have hundreds of homes in Kentucky." The Freedmen's Bureau was redistributing land and providing low-interest loans for former slaves. It was overseeing labor contracts between blacks and white employers. For a moment--and it was just a moment--it seemed that former slaves would be able to lead their lives like other Americans. But in the end such a life would not be possible.

Source: Paula Giddings, <u>When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America</u> (New York, 1984), pp. 57-58.

"SEND ME SOME OF THE CHILDREN'S HAIR"

Sometime before the Civil War Laura Spicer and her children were sold from their husband and father. They wanted to reunite after emancipation but her husband had remarried. The husband, who remains anonymous except to Laura, wrote a letter describing the pain of their separation and yet wishing Laura would find another husband to care for the family. The letter is reprinted below.

I would much rather you would get married to some good man, for every time I gits a letter from you it tears me all to pieces. The reason why I have not written you before, in a long time, is because your letters disturbed me so very much. You know I love my children. I treats them good as a Father can treat his children; and I do a good deal of it for you. I am sorry to hear that Lewellyn, my poor little son, have had such bad health. I would come and see you but I know you could not bear it. I want to see and I don't want to see you. I love you just as well as I did the last day I saw you, and it will not do for you and I to meet. I am married, and my wife have two children, and if you and I meets it would make a very dissatisfied family.

Send me some of the children's hair in a separate paper with their names on the paper. Will you please git married, as long as I am married. My dear, you know the Lord knows both of our hearts. You know it never was our wishes to be separated from each other, and it never was our fault. Oh, I can see you so plain, at any-time, I had rather anything to had happened to me most than ever to have been parted from you and the children. As I am, I do not know which I love best, you or Anna. If I was to die, today or tomorrow, I do not think I would die satisfied till you tell me you will try and marry some good, smart man that will take care of you and the children; and do it because you love me; and not because I think more of the wife I have got then I do of you.

The woman is not born that feels as near to me as you do. You feel this day like myself. Tell them they must remember they have a good father and one that cares for them and one that thinks about them every day-My very heart did ache when reading your very kind and interesting letter. Laura I do not think I have change any at all since I saw you last.-I think of you and my children every day of my life.

Laura I do love you the same. My love to you never have failed. Laura, truly, I have got another wife, and I am very sorry, that I am. You feels and seems to me as much like my dear loving wife, as you ever did Laura. You know my treatment to a wife and you know how I am about my children. You know I am one man that do love my children....

Source: Herbert Gutman, The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom 1750-1925 (New York, 1926) pp. 6-7.

HELENA CITIZENS CELEBRATE THEIR NEW RIGHTS

Helena Montana's African Americans, like their counterparts throughout the United States acclaimed the passage of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution. In 1870 they wrote the local newspaper, the Helena Daily Herald, announcing their celebration. Given the subsequent events of the remainder of the Nineteenth Century in the South and in Montana, their celebration of the removal of the "stigmatizing qualifications" on their citizenship would prove premature.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

We, the colored citizens of Helena, feeling desirous of showing our high appreciation of those God-like gifts granted to us by and through the passage of the 15th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, and knowing, as we do, that those rights which have been withheld from us, are now submerged and numbered with the things of the past, now thank God, is written and heralded to the wide world that we are free men and citizens of the United States--shorn of all those stigmatizing qualifications which have made us beasts. To-day, thank God, and the Congress of the United States, that we, the colored people of the United States, possess all those rights which God, in His infinite wisdom, conveyed and gave unto us.

Now, we, the citizens of Helena, in the Territory of Montana, in mass assembled, on the 14th of April, A.D. 1870, do, by these presents, declare our intentions of celebrating the ratification of the 15th Amendment, on this 15th day of April, by the firing of thirty-two guns, from the hill and to the south of the city.

Signed,

BENJAMIN STONE, President
J.R. JOHNSON, Secretary

Source: Helena Daily Herald, April 15, 1870.

THE RISE OF INDEPENDENT BLACK CHURCHES

Emancipation freed blacks from their mandatory attendance of the churches of their former masters. As to symbolize that freedom a number of black parishioners literally succeeded from predominately white churches and struck out to create their own churches. Hundreds of these small black churches soon dotted the Southern countryside, allowing African Americans to completely control, for the first time, what for many would be the most important institution in their lives. The following is an account of the creation of one black church in Virginia in 1867.

On July 7, 1867, the thirty-eight black members of the predominantly white Fairfield Baptist Church in Northumberland County, Virginia, petitioned to create their own church. On August 10, 1867, the white members of the church in their regular meeting unanimously and cordially acceded to the petitioners' request for separation. Shortly thereafter, the black secessionists formed the Shiloh Baptist Church and began worship services under the leadership of Hiram Kenner and James Robinson, two illiterate former slave exhorters. Soon, however, the member, with an eye to their practical as well as spiritual needs, chose the Reverend Pyramus Nutt, a carpenter as well as a preacher, as their minister. Upon Reverend Nutt's direction, the congregation built its first sanctuary. Again, with remarkable foresight, the congregation designated aa young member of the church, Levi Reese Ball, to become its future pastor. To prepare himself for his future role, Ball, at the urging of the church and with the assistance of some white citizens of the community, entered Howard University in the early 1870s. In 1880, upon completing his college training, Ball assumed the pastorship and served Shiloh in that capacity for the next thirty-seven years....

The early history of Shiloh is representative of developments that occurred throughout the South following the Civil War. Fulfilling a long standing desire for a status of freedom and dignity, a status denied them in the churches of their former masters, the freedom quickly severed their connections with the white churches after was and established or joined independent black congregations. Some took this step sooner than the Shiloh group; others made the break much later. But by the end of the Reconstruction period virtually all black Southerners of all denominations were organized into separate black congregations....

The whites' desire to maintain control over the black population did not disappear with emancipation. Many white church leaders were initially opposed to the withdrawal of the black members from their churches, feeling that it was in the self-interest of blacks to remain and hoping to continue to keep blacks under surveillance and supervision. The specter of blacks in groups plotting rebellion died hard, if at all. Yet, although they wanted to retain their black members, white churches were unwilling to abolish segregated seating arrangements and permit blacks a role in administering the institutions. Consequently, the black members withdrew. In many cases, out of a sincere desire to help or a conscious or unconscious desire to still have some influence over black affairs, white churchmen assisted their former black brethren in setting up the new black churches, often donating money, land, buildings, and organizational assistance. Shiloh Baptist Church, for example, was built on land donated by a white member of the Fairfield Baptist Church.

Most white churches did not agonize over the withdrawal of black membership. Indeed, after some initial misgivings, they either welcomed or encouraged it. This was especially true for the Southern Baptists and Methodists as early as 1866, and for other denominations by the end of Reconstruction. Thus for different and opposite reasons, both black and white Southerners early agreed on the desirability of racially separate churches.

Source: Arnold H. Taylor, Travail and Triumph: Black Life and Culture in the South Since the Civil War (Westport, Conn.: 1976) pp. 142-145.

THE EVOLVING POST-CIVIL WAR BLACK CHURCH

Historian Arnold H. Taylor describes the rapidly growing black church denominations after the Civil War and in the process outlines the evolving differentiation black churchgoers made along class and religious lines.

Because of its decentralized and democratic structure and the fervor of its religious worship services, the Baptist denomination attracted the greatest number of freedmen and spawned the greatest number of churches. By the end of the nineteenth century the Baptists claimed more black members than all the other denominations combined. The black Baptist churches arose either as a result of the withdrawal of black members from white churches or the assumption by former praise groups of a more formal structure. Once established, the churches proliferated rapidly. Because of their loose structure Baptist congregations frequently divided into smaller congregations as factions developed and seceded from the parent church. By 1898 , for example, seven black churches in a region of Mississippi could trace their origin to the parent Pine Grove Baptist Church in Aberdeen. Other churches arose through the missionary activities of ambitious ministers. The Reverend Monroe Boykin, the first pastor of the Mount Moriah Baptist Church, founded in 1866 in Camden, South Carolina, eventually organized five additional churches which he served as minister. Another minister in South Carolina, the Reverend Alexander Bettis, who like Boykin was a former slave, organized over forty Baptist churches between 1865 and his death in 1895. Throughout most of this period he served as pastor of four churches, and for a brief period he pastored ten concurrently.

Although each Baptist church existed as an independent entity in the social and spiritual firmament, the black Baptists early evinced an interest in cooperation. Churches in a given community or county or region of a state came together in conventions or associations. These local and regional associations then eventually combined into state conventions, and as time passed the state bodies merged into national conventions. Black Baptists in North Carolina came together in a state convention as early as 1866, followed by Baptists in Virginia and Alabama in 1867. by 1870 such conventions existed in all the Southern states. In 1867 the Consolidated American Baptist Convention, the first national black convention, was organized. It was superseded in 1880 by the National Baptist Convention formed in that year at Montgomery, Alabama. This organization united with other groups in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1895 as the National Baptist Convention of the United States, claiming at that time some 3 million members, most of whom were in the South.

The second strongest religious denomination among blacks was the Methodist. Making the greatest appeal to blacks in the lower South was the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME), organized in 1816 as a result of the secession of a group of blacks led by Richard Allen from a white Methodist church in Philadelphia in 1787. After the Civil War it made its greatest strides in South Carolina, resuming the work it had abandoned when Morris Brown was forced from the state in 1822. After it was reorganized in the state by Bishop Daniel Payne in 1865, it expanded rapidly under his leadership and that of Richard Harvey Cain and other energetic ministers, claiming a membership of 44,000 by 1877. Reverend T.W. Stringer came to Mississippi in 1865 as the AME's chief emissary. Within five years the denomination had thirty-five churches with about 5,000 members in the state. In 1880 the denomination claimed a national membership of 400,000, then concentrated mostly in the South.

The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, also a result of the black withdrawal from the white Methodist church in Philadelphia in 1787, grew rapidly after the Civil War as a result of its proselytizing work among the freedmen. It increased its membership from 26,746 in 1860 to 200,000 in 1870.

Other black Methodist congregations grew out of white churches after the Civil War. At the close of the war the predominantly white Methodist Episcopal Church, South, claimed over 250,000 black members. Like the white Baptists, the white Methodists initially wanted to retain their black members; but like their Baptist counterparts, the black Methodists were unwilling to tolerate their inferior status in the church any longer. Many, therefore, withdrew joining other Methodist bodies in the South (particularly the African Methodist churches) or the Baptists. In 1866 less than 78,000 blacks remained as members; and these appealed to the General Conference for separate status. Separate status was granted in 1870 when the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church was organized in a general conference held at Jackson, Tennessee. Henry Miles of Kentucky and Richard H. Vanderhost of Georgia were ordained as bishops. The Colored Methodist Episcopal Church, because of its close ties with the white Southern Methodists, was initially suspect among many blacks who referred to it variously as "the Old Slavery Church" or the "Rebel Church." By 1890, however, much of the suspicion had dissipated, and the denomination grew steadily thereafter. But it still remained the smallest of the black Methodist churches in membership.

The Northern Methodist Episcopal Church also proselytized heavily among the freedmen after the Civil War, and most of its members in the South were black. In South Carolina in 1881, for example, it had 36,000 black members and only sixty-nine white. Though generally desiring to be an integrated church, and attempting to assure black equality of status, the Northern Methodists also succumbed to the temper of the times, and with the succession of black bishops and lower clergy to church offices, it became essentially a black denomination in the South.

Other denominations to which blacks belonged in the South were the Presbyterians and the Episcopalians. At the close of the Civil War black members of these churches either withdrew entirely and joined other denominations or established separate churches for themselves. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the white and black members of these denominations in the South were in separate church bodies.

Source: Arnold H. Taylor, Travail and Triumph: Black Life and Culture in the South Since the Civil War (Westport, Conn.: 1976) pp. 145-147.

HAMPTON INSTITUTE: THE FOUNDING OF A BLACK COLLEGE

In the following vignette Robert Engs discusses the 1868 founding of Hampton Institute, one of the oldest black colleges in the United States, and the vision of its first president, Samuel Chapman Armstrong. Hampton's most famous 19th Century graduate was Booker T. Washington.

The American Missionary Association's experience with the freedmen and its changing view of the nature of their problems led inevitably to the solution upon which it finally settled. The freedmen had to be prepared to educate themselves.... To this end, the AMA sought to provide the major black population centers with teacher training schools. During 1867 and 1868, it founded eight such schools in the South. Normal schools were opened in Macon, Savannah, and Atlanta, Georgia; in Charleston, South Carolina; Louisville, Kentucky; Nashville, Tennessee; Talledaga, Alabama; and Hampton, Virginia. At most of these schools, the missionary teachers worked enthusiastically to make them first-rate institutions of higher learning, even though they all began with students and curriculums at the grammar school level. The course of the normal School at Hampton, however, proved to be rather different largely because of its principal, Samuel Chapman Armstrong....

As Armstrong had grown more disillusioned with the prospects of the Freedman's Bureau, he had turned to education as the most likely means of black advancement. What was needed was "a tender, judicious and patient, yet vigorous educational system" for blacks.... When Armstrong heard of the AMA's plans to build a college in his district, he wrote....promising his full support and cooperation: "only colored men can do the work of penetrating and permeating the country with schools; we must have colored teachers as soon as possible--and a Normal school wherein to prepare them...a sort of manual labor institution. There is now nothing of the sort"....

Armstrong's vision for Hampton Institute was very grand indeed. Unlike other AMA-founded schools, it would not cater merely to the local black population. Armstrong intended, quite literally to educate the whole black race by creating the people who would be its teachers and leaders.... To achieve these goals Armstrong proposed the creation of a school which taught agricultural and mechanical skills as well as academic subjects. In this way students could earn money to finance their education, supplement their low teacher's pay in later life, and, most importantly, learn and teach the dignity of labor. Armstrong also insisted upon coeducation. He believed immorality to be a major weakness of the black race; by learning together under the careful supervision of white teachers, the students would learn proper moral conduct and develop mutual respect. "Those on whom equally depends the future of their people," Armstrong stated in defense of the idea of coeducation, "must be given an equal chance." Most important of all would be the "home" aspect of the Institute. Hampton Institute was to be a "little world" in which all the proper attitudes of morality, diligence, thrift and responsibility were to be assiduously cultivated. At Hampton Institute the classical curriculum of the traditional college would be omitted. Armstrong did not want to educate his students out of sympathy with the people they must teach.

Robert Francis Engs, Freedom's First Generation: Black Hampton, Virginia, 1861-1890 (1979), pp. 142-145.

ANNA COOPER AND ST. AUGUSTINE'S COLLEGE

Anna Haywood [Cooper] was one of a number of pupils who entered the growing number of post-Civil War black schools established in the South which would evolve into colleges. Cooper, who had the benefit of some prior training, was soon pressed into service teaching usually older pupils who were far less prepared for academic work. By 1873 this 15 year-old "student" became one of the first two female faculty at St. Augustine's College, the institution from which I graduated ninety-six years later.

Annie Haywood [Cooper] was about nine and a half years of age when St. Augustine's opened and was among the first group of pupils enrolled by Dr. [J Brinton] Smith, the school's principal.... As a "scholarship" pupil, Annie Haywood receive an annual stipend of $100 for board and tuition. Some writers have used the term "teacher" in describing her duties at the school while still a young girl. Annie, however, was a "coach," or tutor, who assisted other students. For while the first students who entered St. Augustine's were admitted on "satisfactory examination," it is unclear at what level of preparedness the school began its classes. Annie [however] benefited from some schooling before she entered St. Augustine's. The Episcopal Church had operated a parochial school, and Annie....received encouragement and support from her mother....

The Howard Schoolhouse, where St. Augustine's first classes were held, had served as an army barracks known as Camp Russell during the Civil War, and then was used as the Confederate Soldier's Home. On the first day, four pupils were enrolled in the school, which was located nearly one mile from the home of Rev. Smith. The building, which was in a field with one of two barrackslike structures, was not visible from the street, and was unfinished inside, with no plaster to cover the walls to protect the young pupils from the elements.... But according to Cecil D. Halliburton, who in 1937 published *A History of St. Augustine's College: 1867-1937*, the room was furnished with comfortable chairs and desks, and maps and blackboards covered the walls... The trustees wished to purchase a more suitable tract upon which a permanent school plant might be built. The selected land, with nearly 110 acres....was known as Seven Springs.... Contributions and gifts from the Freedmen's Bureau, and the estate of Charles Avery of Pittsburgh, made the purchase of the property and the erection of a two-story building possible. The bureau contributed $6,243; the gift from the Avery Fund was $25,000.... The articles of incorporation were signed by the governor of North Carolina, Jonathan Worth, and dated July 19, 1867.

The school opened amidst a climate of racial tension. The day after the opening, the Constitutional Convention (required under the Reconstruction Act) convened in Raleigh. At the same time, the Convention of the Colored Citizens of North Carolina was holding a mass meeting and rally, to urge self-assertion, and to petition the state government for full citizenship rights. Moderation and patience had not won for black North Carolinians the rewards hoped for. Now their convention leaders were planning new strategies and developing a petition of demands to achieve those long-awaited manhood rights. Annie Haywood and Jane Thomas....became in 1873 the first female students regularly employed as teachers at St. Augustine's College. By that date, the school had received more than $30,000 from the Freedmen's Bureau. Nineteen other schools also benefitted from the work and contributions of the bureau, Oberlin College [the Ohio college from which Annie would graduate in 1884] which received $5,000, was among them.

Source: Louise Daniel Hutchinson, Anna J. Cooper: A Voice From the South (Washington, D.C., 1982), pp. 22-24, 26-27.

SOJOURNER TRUTH ON EQUAL RIGHTS

If the word was not part of the vocabulary in the 1860s, Sojourner Truth nevertheless proved herself a committed feminist, dedicated to the granting of rights to all women at the very moment the political leaders of the nation were debating extending rights to black men.

There is a great stir about colored men getting their rights, but not a word about the colored women; and if colored men get their rights, and not colored women theirs, you see the colored men will be masters over the women, and it will be just as bad as it was before. So I am for keeping the thing going while things are stirring; because if we wait till it is still, it will take a great while to get it going again. White women are a great deal smarter, and know more than colored women, while colored women do not know scarcely anything. They go out washing, which is about as high as a colored woman gets, and their men go about idle, strutting up and down; and when the women come home, they ask for their money and take it all, and then scold because there is no food. I want you to consider on that, chil'n. I call you chil'n; you are somebody's chil'n, and I am old enough to be mother of all that is here. I want women to have their rights. In the courts women have no right, no voice; nobody speaks for them. I wish woman to have her voice there among the pettifoggers. If it is not a fit place for women, it is unfit for men to be there.

I am above eighty years old; it is about time for me to be going. I have been forty years a slave and forty years free, and would be here forty years more to have equal rights for all. I suppose I am kept here because something remains for me to do; I suppose I am yet to help to break the chain. I have done a great deal of work; as much as a man, but did not get so much pay. I used to work in the field and bind grain, keeping up with the cradler; but men doing no more, got twice as much pay; so with the German women. They work in the field and do as much work, but do not get the pay. We do as much, we eat as much, we want as much. I suppose I am about the only colored woman that goes about to speak for the rights of the colored women. I want to keep the thing stirring, now that the ice is cracked. What we want is a little money. You men know that you get as much again as women when you write, or for what you do. When we get our rights we shall not have to come to you for money, for then we shall have money enough in our own pockets; and may be you will ask us for money. But help us now until we get it. It is a good consolation to know that when we have got this battle once fought we shall not be coming to you any more. You have been having our rights so long, that you think, like a slaveholder, that you own us. I know that it is hard for one who has held the reins for so long to give up; it cuts like a knife. It will feel all the better when it closes up again. I have been in Washington about three years, seeing about these colored people. Now colored men have the right to vote. There ought to be equal rights now more than ever, since colored people have got their freedom.

Source: Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Matilda Joslyn Gage, eds. History of Woman Suffrage, (Rochester, N.Y., 1881), Vol. II, pp. 193-194.

MARY ANN SHADD: 19th CENTURY BLACK FEMINIST

If Sojourner Truth was the most recognized spokesperson for gender as well as racial equality among post-Civil War black activists, she was hardly the only one. Mary Ann Shadd, a former Canadian abolitionist and the first black female newspaper editor in North America, moved to Washington, D.C. where she became the first black female student at Howard University Law School. Shadd, as the vignette below indicates, spoke and acted for gender equality.

Long recognized as a spokesperson for racial equality, [Mary Ann] Shadd increasingly turned her attention to gender equality. A fervent supporter of equal rights and equal opportunity for black women as well as men, she wrote often to Frederick Douglass's *New National Era*. In a series of articles in the spring of 1872, she chided black women for maintaining a frightened silence and by that silence condoning petty criminality and vagrancy in the black community.... Shadd felt that black women should establish a voice in those matters most directly affecting them.

Supporting rights for women, both black and white, Shadd actively participated in most women's rights conventions in and around Washington, D.C. Testifying before the House Judiciary Committee on behalf of women's suffrage, she praised the passage of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth amendments but declared that women all over the country still felt discriminated against by the retention of the word "male" in the amendments. After all, she reasoned, millions of women shared with men the responsibilities of freedom. She encouraged legislators to expunge any sexist references from the amendments as expeditiously as possible and provide women with the franchise. Arguing that women were taxed and governed in other respects without consent, Shadd simply requested that the principles of the founding fathers be applied to women as well as to men.

On March 19, 1874, Shadd put her theories about equal rights into practice. Along with sixty-three other women in the District of Columbia, she attempted to register to vote in an approaching election. Anticipating the refusal, the women, both black and white alike, demanded that the clerks provide sworn, notarized affidavits stipulating they had been denied the right to vote. Armed with what any attorney would consider incriminating documents, Shadd penned a series of condemnatory exposes for the local press.

Recognized by Susan B. Anthony and Lucretia Mott as a valuable member of the movement, Shadd, upon invitation, addressed the National Woman's Suffrage Association convention in 1878. Caught up in the zeal to obtain the franchise for women, she temporarily forsook her long-held preference for integration in favor of what appeared to be separatism. Shortly after addressing the National Women's Suffrage Association, and with its support, Shadd founded the short-lived auxiliary organization called the Colored Women's Progressive Franchise Association. The fledgling organization attracted many to its first few meetings by advocating that black men and women in the District of Columbia create labor bureaus, cooperative stores, banking institutions, printing establishments, and lecture bureaus for their mutual benefit. The organization declared that while it would tolerate no gender discrimination, women would nevertheless have the controlling power since they had the most to gain.

Source: Jason H. Silverman, "Mary Ann Shadd and the Search for Equality," in Darlene Clark Hine, ed., Black Women in United States History (Brooklyn, NY, 1990), Volume 4, pp. 1272-1273.

BIDDY MASON IN SLAVERY AND FREEDOM

Biddy Mason, born a slave in Georgia, became one of the first settlers of Los Angeles when the city had less than 1,000 inhabitants. Here is a partial account of the freedom she found in the Far West.

Nothing is left of the original homestead of Biddy Mason, the first black woman to own property in Los Angeles. In its place, at 331 South Spring Street, is the new Broadway-Spring Center, primarily a parking structure. But this is no ordinary parking garage. Ten stories tall, the Broadway-Spring Center is a rather graceful pink-and-green building with a Tony Sheets bas-relief on the front facade. The ground floor will be divided into shops with access to the small, tranquil park that has been named after Mason and which provides a green, well-planted walkway between Broadway and Spring Street. Two public art pieces_one by Sheila Levrant de Bretteville, the other by Betye Saar_have recently been installed here, and, as part of the same project, a fine art book has been printed by artist Susan E. King, all to honor Mason and the site where her home once stood.

More than a mile away, close to the USC campus, an old church that Mason founded still exists. The First African Methodist Episcopal Church of Los Angeles, one hundred and eighteen years old, is a testament to the complexity of Mason's life, work, and impact on the city. Many black leaders in the community worship there. The dynamic Reverend Cecil L. "Chip" Murray offers up sermons with titles such as "You Can't Beat the House," while a conga drum, an electric guitar, and clapping hands set a background beat for gospel-rocking songs that bring people to their feet and infuse the room with sudden, irresistible energy, the energy of hope and belief and love.

There's a very large mural at the front of the church, lit with a golden light that also bathes the pulpit. A history is pictured there: pyramids, Africa, slavery, migration, rows of crops and workers. Presiding over everything is the great motherly figure of Biddy Mason_Grandma Mason. She's tending a flock of sheep, and she appears dignified and strong.

Biddy Mason bought her land and built her house in 1866 in a town then so raw and new that the streets were troughs of mud or dust. Gas lamps were individually lit, one by one, every night, by a rider on horseback, illuminating a scant few blocks of humble houses in the bottom of a dark, sloping basin, now the valley of a billion lights.

Mason was born in 1818 in the state of Georgia and sold into slavery at eighteen. She walked across America in 1848 with the family who owned her and her sister_a Mississippi family who'd converted to Mormonism and were trekking west in caravans of wagons. They were a homeless people slouching toward Zion, traveling with their slaves and stock and children in oxcarts loaded with everything they owned. Biddy thus became a western pioneer, a black slave caught up in a white religious pilgrimage. She had three children at the time, including the baby she carried in her arms.

They walked from Mississippi to Paducah, Kentucky, to Council Bluffs, Iowa, and Lincoln, Nebraska, and points less charted to the west, seven continuous months of walking, until eventually Biddy's party passed the valley of the Great Salt Lake in Utah_where others settled permanently_and went on to San Bernardino, arriving in 1851.

But this Mormon family, named Smith, who owned Biddy and her sister and their children, didn't realize that California was a free slave state: If you brought your slaves here, and they wanted to leave you, they could. That's exactly what Biddy wanted, but Smith was hoping to depart for Texas, taking his slaves along before anyone could stop him.

Biddy, however, had made friends with free blacks here, including Elizabeth Flake Rowan, Charles Owens, and his father, Robert Owens, who ran a flourishing stable on San Pedro Street. Owens got up a posse of *vaqueros* to rescue Biddy and her kin, swooping down on the Mormon camp in the Santa Monica mountains in the middle of the night. Biddy sued for freedom in court, won her papers in 1856, and moved her family in with the Owens. She was, at this time, thirty-eight years old.

Mason possessed great skills in medicine and became a midwife. Like many Afro-American women, she knew the lore of remedies and rituals. (For childbirth, keep the patient walking as "long as she can drag"; for a new baby, "string small pieces of poke root around a baby's neck to ease teething"; to celebrate a birth, "make a blue flame in the hearthfire by throwing a handful of salt"...)

Ten years after winning her freedom she had saved enough money to buy the Spring Street lot; she eventually built her own house there_the house in which the First African Methodist Church was born. In time she bought more land.

Her grandsons were prosperous, in part because she gave them land to start a stable, and later she erected a two-story building. She became known for her good works. Before her death in 1891, she also became rich enough to know the joys of opening her hand and giving her wealth away.

Source: Judith Freeman, "Commemorating An L.A. Pioneer," Los Angeles Magazine, April, 1990, pp. 58-60.

"IMPUDENT" FREEDWOMEN

In the account below historian Jacqueline Jones describes the attitudes of both Northerners and Southerners to what they described as the particular insolence of black women.

Defenders of the notion of early Victorian (white) womanhood could not help but be struck by black women who openly challenged conventional standards of female submissiveness. Freedwomen were described as "growling," "impertinent," "impudent," "vulgar" persons who "spoke up bold as brass" and. with their "loud and boisterous talking," demanded fair treatment for "we people [left] way back." In the process of ridiculing these women, northerners often indirectly revealed their ambivalent attitudes toward black men. Apparently an aggressive woman existed outside the realm of "natural," male-female relationships; her own truculence must be counterbalanced by the weakness of her husband, brother, or father. But ironically in such cases, male relatives were often perceived to be much more "reasonable" (that is, prone to accept the white man's point of view) than their vehement womenfolk.

For example, John De Forest [Freedman's Bureau officer] later recounted the respective reactions of an elderly couple who had used up in supplies any profit they might have earned from a full year's labor. The man remained "puzzled, incredulous, stubborn," and insisted there must be some mistake. His wife was not about to accept the situation so politely: "trembling with indignant suspicion [she] looked on grimly or broke out in fits of passion... 'Don' you give down to it, Peter,' she exhorted. 'It ain't no how ris'ible that we should 'a' worked all the year and git nothing' to go upon.'" De Forest, who elsewhere complained of black "female loaferism" prevalent in the area, showed a curious lack of sympathy for this hardworking woman. In other cases, Yankee planters, professed abolitionists, responded to the demands put forth by delegations of female field hands with contempt for their brashness.

Source: Jacqueline Jones, Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family from Slavery to the Present, (New York, 1985), pp. 70-71.

POST CIVIL WAR COURTSHIP AMONG THE FREEDPEOPLE

Historian Arnold Taylor describes the evolving ritual of courtship and marriage among the ex-slaves immediately after the Civil War.

Shortly before the Civil War ended Smart and Mary Washington of Beaufort, South Carolina, had already lived together as man and wife for more than forty years during which time they had become the parents of nineteen children. Nevertheless, in January 1865 the couple took their first formal wedding vows and received a certificate of marriage. At the conclusion of the ceremony Smart happily acknowledged the congratulations of friends and well-wishers with the comment: "Him's [she's] my wife for sartin, now. Ef the old hen run away, I shall cotch him [her] for sure."

Although spoken in jest, Smart's observation reflected a tragic reality of black life in the antebellum South. An intrinsic attribute of slave status in America was the absence of the right to a secure family life. While numerous slave families (perhaps a majority) remained intact, all lived under the omnipresent threat of forced separation and many families were broken up through the sale of parents or offspring. It is not surprising, then, that at the close of the Civil War freedmen like the Washington's included a stable and independently family life among their highest aspirations.

For several months after the war freedmen throughout the South sought to reestablish family ties that had been severed during slavery. Many wandered about from place to place searching for their wives, husbands, parents, and children. As time passed some who could not travel advertised in newspapers, while other secured the services of schoolteachers and literate friends in writing letters to distant places, where they thought their relatives had been taken. Others, discouraged by the unlikely prospect of finding former spouses, or failing in the attempt, established new relationships. Those who had never been married, but who had formed affectional unions during slavery, or had wish to do so, consummated and legitimized their relationships. Most were anxious to receive legal sanction for the marriages and unions they entered during slavery or contracted shortly afterwards. Indeed, during the first year of the Civil War, and before the Emancipation Proclamation was issued, slave couples in the contraband camps of the Union army insisted on the formality of a marriage ceremony in order to legalize and sanctify the unions they had established when they were under the authority of their former masters.

For young people, freedom made it possible to consummate contemplated marriages with persons of their choice without the alien intrusion of members of the master class. Not all restraints were removed, however. During the post-Civil War period many parents continued to keep a watchful eye over the courting practices, romantic attachments, and marital choices of their children, especially their daughters. A former Arkansas slave, who married in 1870, recalled that in order to win the hand of his future wife he promised her father that he would "go to the mourners bench," a pledge which he kept "just a month after I got her." Similarly, Lucy Dunn, a former North Carolina slave, recalled that during the whole year of her courtship with her future husband, they were seldom alone. Her mother not only accompanied them when they walked home from church, but she also forbade Lucy to walk her suitor to the gate at the end of his Sunday visits to her home. However, after he proposed, Lucy finally won permission to walk him to the gate provided he mother "was settin' dere on de porch lookin'." Thereafter, the romance progressed to its inexorable but still chaperoned climax....

While the marriage rites of most freedmen were relatively simple, usually involving no more than the taking of an oath before a justice of the peace, a Freedmen's Bureau official, or a clergyman, they often evoked complex emotions. A Northern white teacher on Port Royal Island, South Carolina, recalled that when one unmarried couple and their daughter and her fiance spoke the marriage vows in a double ceremony before the same minister, "It was touching to see the eager, expectant look on the faces of the old couples. They were aiming for something higher and better of which they had as yet but a dawning conception...."

Yet behind many of the marriage ceremonies lay much confusion and pain. Slaves who had taken new partners after being forcibly separated from former mates through sale, sometimes faced difficult choices when freedom came. Four years after his wife and his two children were sold, James McCullum of North Carolina married again. He and his second wife also had two children. When the war ended McCullum's first wife and children return to him. To resolve his dilemma, McCullum sought a ruling form the Freedmen's Bureau court in Lumberton, although he personally believed that only his first marriage was legal.

Many ex-slaves facing a similar dilemma chose to return to their first spouses, indicating that many of their initial marriages were based on genuine affection or a strong respect for family obligations. Jane Ferguson of Port Royal, South Carolina, whose first husband, Martin Barnwell, had been sold away from her and her infant son, had no doubts about where her first loyalty lay. Before marrying Ferguson, her second husband, she had extracted from him a promise that if Martin ever returned, Ferguson would give her up. After the fall of Charleston in February 1865, Jane received word that Martin was still alive and wanted to rejoin her. Despite the protests of Ferguson, who was now a Union soldier, and the intercession of his chaplain, Jane unhesitatingly decided to return to her first husband, emphatically declaring: "Martin Barnwell is my husband....I am got no husband but he."

Other ex-slaves, faced with the problem (or opportunity) of choosing between spouses, were less decisive. After Tina's first husband, Sam, was sold away from her, she married Kit. When Sam returned to Port Royal early in 1865 Tina attempted to solve her dilemma by spending alternate months with each of them. Kit was sorely distraught over this state of affairs for, as he confessed to Elizabeth Botume, a Yankee schoolteacher, "I married her for love, an' I lub her now more an' better than I lub myself." Kit's love finally prevailed, for Tina, concerned that "poor brother Kit is all alone...[and] ain't got nobody but me," decided to give Sam and to reside permanently with Kit. When she died many years later, Kit refused to allow any other woman to live with him, explaining that "'I don't want Tina to think I would bring shame upon she.'"

Kit's devotion to Tina was not uncommon, especially among ex-slave couples who had shared the slavery experience together. Concern for the welfare of her surviving husband inspired one woman to attempt in a deathbed ceremony to marry her husband to her friend and neighbor. She explained that "'I is going shortly, an I can't lef' poor Billy all alone. So I axes sister Hagar to come here and tuck my place, an' min' Billy, an' the house, an' the dumb creetures for me.'" Unfortunately, after she died, the elders of Billy's church refused to recognize the marriage because Hagar did not have a divorce from her first husband, from whom she had been separated for several years. Nevertheless, Billy and Hagar lived together as man and wife, but Billy always regretted that their marriage did not have the sanction of the church....

Source: Arnold H. Taylor, Travail and Triumph: Black Life and Culture in the South Since the Civil War (Westport, Conn.: 1976) pp.161-164.

MARRIAGE AND POST-BELLUM BLACK WOMEN

In the following account Paula Giddings describes the role of marriage for middle class black women in the post-Civil War era, and more generally, the concern black women expressed about the paucity of respect for their virtue.

Marrying men of achievement was. . .an integral part of their determination to fulfill themselves as women. "The question," said Anna Julia Cooper, who married a minister but was widowed two years later, "is not now with the woman 'How shall I so cramp, stunt, and simplify and nullify myself as to make me eligible to the honor of being swallowed up into some little man?' but the problem . . . rests with the man as to how he can so develop . . . to reach the ideal of a generation of women who demand the noblest, grandest and best achievements of which he is capable."

That demand went beyond men's material achievements to male perceptions about black women themselves. Many men, they felt, left something to be desired when it came to seeing their women in the proper light and to protecting their virtue literally as well as figuratively. "It is absurd," said Anna Julia Cooper, "to quote statistics showing the Negro's bank account and rent rolls, to point to the hundreds of newspapers edited by colored men, and lists of lawyers, doctors, professors, D.D.'s, L.L.D's, etc. etc. etc. while the source from which the life-blood of the race is to flow is subject to the taint and corruption of the enemy's camp." For "a stream," she exhorted, "cannot rise higher than its source."

At the turn of the century, black women still had "no fixed public opinion to which they could appeal," as Fannie Barrier Williams pointed out, "no protection against the libelous attacks on their characters, and no chivalry generous enough to guarantee their safety against man's inhumanity to women." Since she included black men in this group, Williams challenged: "Is the Colored man brave enough to stand out and say to all the world, 'This far and no farther in your attempt to insult or degrade our women'?" The question was important. Nannie Helen Burroughs asserted: "Whenever the men of any race defiantly stand up for the protection of their women, . . . the women will . . . be saved from the hands of the most vile." That men had not so stood up made the sharp-tongued Burroughs protest: "White men offer more protection to their prostitutes than many black men offer to their best women." Apart from their concern about protection from the "vileness" of white men, black women criticized the attitudes of black men toward them. In the opinion of the activists, the times demanded that men not treat women as mere quarry. "We need men," Cooper said, "who can let their interest and gallantry extend outside the circle of their aesthetic appreciation; men who can be father, brother, a friend to every weak, struggling, unshielded girl." What black women craved, above all things, continued Williams, was to "be respected and believed in. This is more important than position and opportunities."

Source: Paula Giddings, <u>When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America</u> (New York, 1984), pp. 113-114.

CLOTHING AND FREEDOM

One immediate indication of freedom was ability of former slaves to choose their own clothing. In the following account historian Jacqueline Jones describes the importance of dress to the newly freed slaves.

In the fall of 1865 a Freedmen's Bureau officer stationed in Wilmington, North Carolina, remarked to a northern journalist that "the wearing of black veils by the young negro women had given great offense to the young white women," who consequently gave up this form of apparel altogether. In recounting the story, Sidney Andrews asked his readers a rhetorical question: "Does this matter of veils and parasols and handkerchiefs seem a small one?" and then he proceeded to answer it himself: "... it is one of serious import to the bitter, spiteful women whose passionate hearts nursed the Rebellion." Andrews comments suggest the social significance of clothing in an era when race relations were temporarily in a state of flux.

Rossa Cooley, a New England white woman who taught on the Sea Islands in the early 20th Century, offered a most perceptive statement on the role of women's clothes during the transition from slavery to freedom:

> Slavery to our Islanders meant field work, with no opportunity for the women and girls to dress as they chose and when they chose. Field workers were given their clothes as they were given their rations, only the clothes were given usually as a part of the Christmas celebration, "two clothes a year," explained one of them as she remembered the old days. With the hunger for books very naturally came the hunger for clothes, pretty clothes, and more of them! And so with school and freedom best clothes came out and ragged clothes were kept for the fields. Work and old "raggedy" clothes were ... closely associated in the minds of the large group of middle-aged Island folk....

Even for the women who never attended school, the old forms of dress--plain, drab, and heavy, serving only a practical and not an expressive function--were scorned in favor of more colorful, elaborate garments.

If clothes served to announce a woman's awareness of her new status, they also revealed the change in male-female relationships from slave unions to legal marriages. Black husbands took pride in buying fashionable dresses and many-colored ribbons, pretty hats and delicate parasols for their womenfolk. When a freedman walked alongside his well-dressed wife, both partners dramatized the legitimacy of their relationship and his role as family provider. A white landowner in Louisiana reproached one of his tenants for spending all the proceeds of his cotton crop on clothing, "the greatest lot of trash you ever saw," but the black man assured his employer that "he and his wife and children were satisfied and happy," and added, "What's the use of living if a man can't have the good of his labor?"

Source: Jacqueline Jones, Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family from Slavery to the Present, (New York, 1985), pp. 68-69.

TENANTRY OR SHARECROPPING: THE ROOTS OF BLACK POVERTY

In the account below labor historian William Harris briefly describes the rise of tenantry and sharecropping in the post-bellum South.

The dominant type of southern agricultural labor was a form of tenantry or sharecropping in which all members of the black family worked in the fields and on other farm tasks to provide the highest possible yield. Payment for their labor, usually at the end of the harvest season, came in the form of a share of the crop. The crop-sharing system developed because the war had left the South largely devoid of liquid capital. Hence the South existed as a noncash economy. Circumstances required the creation of labor system through which essential tasks could be performed while payment of wages was deferred until the crops were marketed. Though land use arrangements varied widely, they usually took one of the two main forms. In one system, landowners and laborers agreed that each would own specific shares of the crops at harvest time. The second type of agreement gave the croppers use of the land for a fixed sum, payable in goods at the end of the year. To distinguish between the two systems, we here define the former as sharecropping and the latter as tenantry.

Landowners preferred sharecropping to tenantry for several reasons, including their belief that black farmers were incapable of working without supervision. Moreover, sharecropping left the major decisions on which crops to plant, how much fertilizer to use, and when the cropper and his family would work largely to the landowner. Under normal circumstances, the two parties agreed that for shares of the harvest-usually one-third for the cropper and two-thirds for the landowner-the landowner would provide seeds, fertilizer, draft animals, and food and clothing for the cropper's family for the year of the contract. The cost for such items would be charged to the cropper's account. In return, the cropper agreed to provide all the labor required to product the most bountiful crop, usually cotton. In addition, the cropper and his family were to maintain the farm and its properties in proper condition. Clearly, such a system provided little incentive for the workers. If they worked hard and produced an above-average crop, in the end they simply paid more for use of the land. The more they produced the more they got, but the landowner got more as well.

If the sharecropping system provided little incentive for the workers, tenantry, system by which they rented land for a fixed sum, usually an established number of bales of cotton, was far more desirable. Though the basic arrangement was much like that for sharecroppers, tenant farmers could look forward to increasing their incomes without paying more for use of the land. Workers obviously favored that system. Tenantry also provided a means by which black farmers could accumulate a little capital and thus eventually escape the system. Accordingly, it found little favor among the land owners. As late as 1880, renting to blacks accounted for only 9.6 percent of all southern farms and only 3.4 percent of land planted in cotton. In order to control the land and workers, southern landowners stifled black incentive and delayed for decades the economic development of the South.

Source: William H. Harris, The Harder We Run: Black Workers Since the Civil War. (New York, 1982) pp. 10-12.

THE LABOR CONTRACT: THE ROOTS OF BLACK POVERTY

In the late 1860s the labor contract system, a forerunner of sharecropping, rapidly spread across the South as an alternative to the recently ended slavery system. Under this system recently freed slaves traded their labor for wages, food, shelter and fuel provided by white landowners. In the following chart we see the record of the first annual contract between Presley George, a North Carolina planter and his former slaves, Polly and Puss in 1867. As indicated below, the former slaves often worked the entire year and discovered upon "totaling up" that the expenses they incurred usually equalled what wages they earned.

Due Presley George by Polly:

For 4¾cuts wool @ 75¢/cut		
22 yds. cloth @ 50¢/yd.		11.00
5 yds. thread @ 50¢/yd.		2.50
Boarding one child (who didn't work) for 5 months		12.00
10 bushels corn @ $1.00/bushel		10.00
30 bushels corn @ $1.00/bushel		30.00
	Total	$69.00

Due Polly by Presley George:

For 3 months' work "by self" @ $4.00/month		
For 4 months' work by son Peter @ $8.00/month		
For 4 months' work by son Burrel @ $4.00/month		
For 4 months' work by daughter Siller @ $2.25/month		
	Total	$69.00

Due Presley George by Puss:

For 6 yds. striped cloth @ 50¢/yd.		
1¾cuts wool @ 75¢/cut		1.25
10 bushels corn @ $1.00/bushel		10.00
	Total	$14.25

Due Puss by Presley George:

For 4 months' work @ $3.50/month	$14.00

Source: Jacqueline Jones, Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family from Slavery to the Present, (New York, 1985), p. 54.

A NORTH CAROLINA SHARECROPPING AGREEMENT, 1880

The following is part of an 1880 North Carolina sharecropping agreement provided by a landowner for his "croppers."

To every one applying to rent land upon shares, the following conditions must be read, and agreed to.

To every 30 or 35 acres, I agree to furnish the team, plow, and farming implements, except cotton planters, and I do not agree to furnish a cart to every cropper. The croppers are to have half of the cotton, corn and fodder if the following conditions are complied with, but--if not--they are to have only two fifths...

All must work under my direction. All plantation work to be done by the croppers. My part of the crop to be housed by them, and the fodder and oats to be hauled and put in the house. All the cotton must be topped about 1st August. If any cropper fails from any cause to save all the fodder from his crop, I am to have enough fodder to make it equal to one half of the whole if the whole amount had been saved.

For every mule or horse furnished by me there must be 1000 good sized rails... hauled, and the fence repaired as far as they will go, the fence to be torn down and put up from the bottom if I so direct. All croppers to haul rails and work on fence wherever I may order. Rails to be split when I may say...

Each cropper must keep in good repair all bridges in his crop or over ditches that he has to clean out and when a bridge needs repairing that is outside of all their crops, then any one that I call on must repair it.

If any cotton is planted on the land outside of the plantation fence, I am to have three fourths of all the cotton made in those patches, that is to say, no cotton must be planted by croppers in their home patches.

No cropper to work off the plantation when there is any work to be done on the land he has rented, or when his work is needed by me or other croppers. Trees to be cut down on Orchard, House field & Evanson fences, leaving such as I may designate.

Road field to be planted from the very edge of the ditch to the fence, and all the land to be planted close up to the ditches and fences. No stock of any kind belonging to croppers to run in the plantation after crops are gathered.

Croppers must sow & plow in oats and haul them to the crib, but must have no part of them. Nothing to be sold from their crops, nor fodder, nor corn to be carried out of the fields until my rent is all paid, and all amounts they owe me and for which I am responsible are paid in full.

The sale of every cropper's part of the cotton to be made by me when and where I choose to sell, and after deducting all they may owe me and all sums that I may be responsible for on their accounts, to pay them their half of the net proceeds.

Source: Robert D. Marcus and David Burner, <u>America Firsthand: From Reconstruction to the Present</u> (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989), pp. 29-31.

THE MEMPHIS RIOT, 1866

The ex-slaves soon learned their freedom was precarious. In May 1866, ex-Confederates attacked blacks in Memphis, particularly Union war veterans and before the 3-day riot ended forty-six blacks and two whites were killed. Here is testimony from the Congressional Investigation of the riot.

Mrs. Lucy Tibbs questioned by the Chairman, Congressman Elihu B. Washburne of Illinois:

I understand you to say, then, you saw four men killed.
Yes, sir; and my brother got killed on Tuesday afternoon; who killed him I do not know.
What was his name?
His name was Bob Taylor. He had been a member of the 59th Regiment, but was out of the service. On Tuesday afternoon when they were firing and going from house to house, I told him to try to get away if he could. He started to run away, but was found dead the next morning by the bayou just back of my house.
Did they come into your house?
Yes; a crowd of men came in that night. I do not know who they were. They just broke the door open and asked me where was my husband; I replied he was gone; they said I was a liar; I said, "Please do not do anything to me; I am just here with two little children."
Did they ravish you? Yes, sir.
How many of them? There was but one that did it. [The others] went to my trunk, burst it open, and took this money that belonged to my brother....
I had just to give up to them. They said they would kill me if I did not. They put me on the bed, and the other men were plundering the while this man was carrying on.

* * *

Mrs. Sarah Song questioned by the Chairman:

What did you see of the rioting?
I saw them kill my husband; he was shot in the head.
Who shot him?
I do not know; there were between twenty and thirty men who came to the house, when they first came, my husband was sick in bed and could not get up; he had the jaundice; They broke the outside doors open and came into the room and asked if we had any pistols or shot guns in the house; my husband said he had one, but it was only a rusty pistol, that his little boy had found; then they told my husband to get up; he got up and gave it to them. They told my husband to get up and come out, that they were going to shoot him; they made him get up and go out of doors and told him if he had anything to say to say it quick, for they were going to kill him. He stood outside, perhaps, a quarter of an hour; they asked him if he had been a soldier; he said he never had been. One of them said, "You are a damned liar; you have been in the government service for the last twelve or fourteen months." "Yes," said he, "I have been in the government service, but not as a soldier." Then another said, "Why did you not tell us that at first?" Then one

stepped back and shot him as quick as he said that; he was not a yard from him; he put the pistol to his head and shot three times.

Source: "The Memphis Riots and Massacres," Report No. 101, House of Representatives, 39th Cong., 1st Sess., pp. 160-61, 222-23.

THE BLACK CODES IN LOUISIANA

Immediately after the Civil War ex-slaveholders generated a series of laws to regulate the behavior of the newly freed slaves. While these codes recognized the end of slavery, most of these laws nevertheless created repressive conditions that were strikingly similar to slavery. Reprinted below are some of the 1866 black codes for a Louisiana parish.

Sec. 1. Be it ordained by the police jury of the parish of St. Landry, That no negro shall be allowed to pass within the limits of said parish without special permit in writing from his employer. Whoever shall violate this provision shall pay a fine of two dollars and fifty cents, or in default thereof shall be forced to work four days on the public road, or suffer corporal punishment as provided hereinafter.

Sec. 2. ...Every negro who shall be found absent from the residence of his employer after ten o'clock at night, without a written permit from his employer, shall pay a fine...

Sec. 3. ...No negro shall be permitted to rent or keep a house within said parish. Any negro violating this provision shall be immediately ejected and compelled to find an employer...

Sec. 4. ...Every negro is required to be in the regular service of some white person, or former owner, who shall be held responsible for the conduct of said negro.

Sec. 5. ...No public meetings or congregations of negroes shall be allowed within said parish after sunset, but such public meetings and congregations may be held between the hours of sunrise and sunset, by special permission in writing of the captain of patrol, within whose beat such meetings shall take place. This prohibition, however, is not to prevent negroes from attending the usual church services, conducted by white ministers and priests...

Sec. 6. ...No negro shall be permitted to preach, exhort, or otherwise declaim to congregations of colored people, without a special permission in writing from the president of the police jury...

Sec. 7. ...No negro who is not in the military service shall be allowed to carry firearms, or any kind of weapons, within the parish without special written permission of his employers, approved and indorsed by the nearest and most convenient chief of patrol.

Sec. 8. ...No negro shall sell, barter, or exchange any articles of merchandise or traffic within said parish without the special written permission of his employer, specifying the article of sale, barter or traffic.

Sec. 9. ...Any negro found drunk, within the said parish shall pay a fine of five dollars, or in default thereof work five days on the public road, or suffer corporal punishment as hereinafter provided.

Source: Howard H. Quint, Milton Cantor and Dean Albertson, Main Problems in American History, (Chicago, 1987) pp. 9-10.

FREDERICK DOUGLAS DESCRIBES THE "COMPOSITE NATION"

In an 1869 speech in Boston, Frederick Douglass challenged most social observers and politicians (including most African Americans) by advocating the acceptance of Chinese immigration. Part of his argument is presented below.

I have said that the Chinese will come... Do you ask, if I favor such immigration, I answer *I would*. Would you have them naturalized, and have them invested with all the rights of American citizenship? *I would*. Would you allow them to vote? *I would*. Would you allow them to hold office? *I would.*

But are there not reasons against all this? Is there not such a law or principle as that of self-preservation? Does not every race owe something to itself..? Should not a superior race protect itself from contact with inferior ones? Are not the white people the owners of this continent...? Is it best to take on board more passengers than the ship will carry?

To all of this and more I have one among many answers, together satisfactory to me, though I cannot promise that it will be so to you.

I submit that this question of Chinese immigration should be settled upon higher principles than those of a cold and selfish expediency. There are such things in the world as human rights. They rest upon no conventional foundation, but are external, universal, and indestructible. Among these, is the right of...migration; the right which belongs to no particular race, but belongs alike to all and to all alike. It is the right you assert by staying here, and your fathers asserted by coming here. It is this great right that I assert for the Chinese and Japanese, and for all other varieties of men equally with yourselves, now and forever. I know of no rights of race superior to the rights of humanity, and when there is a conflict between human and national rights, it is safe to go to the side of humanity... I reject the arrogant and scornful theory by which they would limit migratory rights, or any other essential human rights to themselves, and which would make them the owners of this great continent to the exclusion of all other races of men.

I want a home here not only for the negro, the mulatto and the Latin races; but I want the Asiatic to find a home here in the United States, and feel at home here, both for his sake and for ours... If respect is had to majorities, the fact that only one fifth of the population of the globe is white, the other four fifths are colored, ought to have some weight and influence in disposing of this and similar questions... If the white race may exclude all other races from this continent, it may rightfully do the same in respect to all other lands...and thus have all the world to itself...

The apprehension that we shall be swamped or swallowed up by Mongolian civilization...does not seem entitled to much respect. Thought they come as the waves come, we shall be stronger if we receive them as friends and give them a reason for loving our country and our institutions. They will find here a deeply rooted, indigenous, growing civilization, augmented by an ever-increasing stream of immigration from Europe.... They will come as strangers. We are at home. They will come to us, not we to them. They will come in their weakness, we shall meet them in our strength...and with all the advantages of organization. Chinese children are in American schools in San Francisco. None of our children are in Chinese schools, and probably never will be... Contact with these yellow children...would convince us that the points of human difference, great as they, upon first sight, seem, are as nothing compared with the points of human agreement. Such contact would remove mountains of prejudice.

The voice of civilization speaks an unmistakable language against the isolation of families, nations and races, and pleads for composite nationality as essential to her triumphs. Those races of men which have... had the least intercourse with other races of men, are a standing confirmation of the folly of isolation. The very soil of the national mind becomes in such cases barren, and can only be resuscitated by assistance from without.

Source: Philip S. Foner and Daniel Rosenberg, eds., Racism, Dissent, and Asian Americans form 1850 to the Present: A Documentary History (Westport, Conn., 1993), pp. 223-226.

CHAPTER NINE:

Reconstruction: The Politics of History

CHAPTER NINE: Reconstruction, The Politics of History

Reconstruction for African-America was more than the reuniting of the ex-Confederate states with the Union--it was an opportunity to establish political democracy and equal rights in the South. The vignettes in this chapter reflect both the anticipation of blacks of change in their political status the reality that such change would be short-lived.

The Reconstruction Amendments *provide the legal foundation for black rights, and which contribute to the euphoria are also listed while That euphoria is supported at least in the 1860s and 1870s by vigorous enforcement of the newly won civil and political gains as seen in the vignette,* ***Mary Coger Defends Her Civil Rights****. In* ***President Johnson and Black Leaders*** *we see the first post-war meeting between African Americans and an American President with the topic of discussion, not surprisingly, the protection of black civil rights. The views of Frederick Douglass on the role of African Americans in the post-war South are advanced in* ***Frederick Douglass: What the Black Man Wants****. And in* ***Thaddeus Stevens Demands Black Suffrage*** *we are provided the view of the most fervent proponent of political rights for the ex-slaves. The varying attitudes of Pacific Northwesterners are profiled in* ***Black Voting Rights: The View from the Far West****,* Black Voting Rights: A Hawaiian Newspaper's View*, and* ***The Reconstruction Amendments: Oregon's Response****.*

The tables, ***Black Reconstruction Politicians*** *and* ***The First Reconstruction Legislatures****, illustrate the extent of black participation in the various "radical" regimes which governed the ex-Confederate South in the late 1860s and 1870s.* ***A Debate over Public Schools*** *details the role of such politicians in the governance of the South. Yet there was growing opposition to black political participation in post-war southern governments as reflected in the vignette* ***South Carolina Under Black Government*** *which seeks to establish the incompetence of black politicians while* ***Reconstruction: The Politics of History*** *suggests the extent to which our historical view of the era has been clouded by such incomplete and inaccurate interpretations. Finally* ***Reconstruction in Macon County, Alabama****, and* ***The End of Reconstruction in Mississippi*** *reveal the everpresent backdrop of political violence during the Reconstruction experiment in multi-racial government.*

Terms for Week Nine:

Reconstruction Amendments: 13th Amendment
14th Amendment
15th Amendment

Black Codes

Mississippi Vagrancy Act

Hirim Revels

Blanche K. Bruce

Beverly Nash

P.B.S. Pinchback

"Horrors of Reconstruction"

"Birth of A Nation"

Ku Klux Klan

Sunday School League

The Memphis Riot

RECONSTRUCTION AMENDMENTS, 1865-1870

ARTICLE 13 - *Slavery Abolished*

1) Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime, whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.

2) Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

This amendment was proposed to the State Legislatures by the 37th Congress on February 1, 1865, and was ratified December 18, 1865. It was rejected by Delaware and Kentucky; was conditionally ratified by Alabama and Mississippi; and Texas took no action.

ARTICLE 14 - *Citizenship Rights Not To Be Abridged*

1) All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside.

No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property without due process of law, nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

This amendment was proposed to the State Legislatures by the 39th Congress on June 16, 1866, and was ratified July 23, 1868. The amendment was supported by 23 Northern states. It was rejected by Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland and 10 ex-Confederate states. California took no action. It was later ratified by the 10 ex-Confederate states.

ARTICLE 15 - *Equal Voting Rights*

1) The right of the citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

2) The Congress shall have power to enforce the provisions of this Article by appropriate legislation.

This amendment was proposed to the State Legislatures by the 40th Congress on February 27, 1869, and was ratified on March 30, 1870. It was supported by 30 states; it was rejected by California, Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland and Oregon. It was not acted on by Tennessee. New York rescinded its ratification on January 5, 1870. New Jersey rejected the amendment in 1870, but ratified it in 1871.

RECONSTRUCTION: THE POLITICS OF HISTORY

E. Merton Coulter was, for his generation, one of the most renowned historians of the American South. But Coulter also shared with that generation certain stereotypes about the "horrors of Reconstruction" which, no doubt, affected the manner in which he interpreted the history of the region. In the account below we see an example of the image of blacks as depicted by Coulter in his writings on Reconstruction in 1948.

Slavery had not been an unmixed evil for the Negroes; it had brought them from barbarism and slavery in Africa to America and subjected them to the white man's civilization.... It was often remarked by disinterested observers that the lot of the slaves in America was better than that of the Negroes left behind in Africa.... Yet slavery left the Negro illiterate and untrained for the responsibilities of freedom, with such human weaknesses as lying and thieving exaggerated. He loved idleness, he had no keen conception of right and wrong and he was "improvident to the last degree of childishness....." As a race they were spendthrift and gullible.... Easily influenced by peddlers and storekeepers, Jewish and Gentile, they bought brass finger rings worth fifty cents apiece for $5.00 or $6.00, and earrings, breast pins, and gaudy cotton handkerchiefs at correspondingly high prices. They also had a great liking for tobacco, whiskey, and mackerel.

The cheapest deady weapon was the razor, which was called into use more frequently by whiskey and women than for the purpose for which it was made. Negroes progressed rapidly in lawlessness, made easy by owning deady weapons. As the Negroes failed to receive as freely as they expected, the inherent human weakness to steal asserted itself. Armed with the lingering feeling of slave days that what belonged to their masters belonged to them also, they became a menace to anything which could not be locked up or nailed down.... Their favorite objects of theft were hogs, chickens, cattle, horses and mules, cotton, and all sorts of vegetables and fruits.

....The women retired from the cotton fields, for no lady worked in the fields, if, indeed, anywhere. Their first great ambition was to wear a veil and carry a parasol.... Though there was some evidence among Negroes....that the female of their species is more deadly than the male, Negro women generally liked their husbands strong, even to the extent of wife-beating. One of the effects of freedom on Negro women seems to have been a diminution.... of their maternal instincts. A Briton passing through the South a year after the war declared he did not see a Negro women who did not want to be relieved of the care of her children; and another Briton....said the children were "looked upon by most of them [their mothers] as a burden and if the mothers did not intentionally kill, their habitual neglect produces the same effect."

The festive spirit was native with the Negroes.... First in his affection for the Fourth of July, which he and his Radical Republican mentors siezed from the Southern whites and made almost an exclusive possession.... Only little less important....was Emancipation Day, which he celebrated a various times from January 1 to June "teenth" (nineteenth), reinforced by watermelons.

Source: E. Merton Coulter, <u>The South During Reconstruction, 1867-1877</u> (New York, 1948), pp. 47-55.

MARY COGER DEFENDS HER CIVIL RIGHTS

In the account below historian Donald Nieman describes the successful suit by Mary Coger against a steamboat company which tried to segregate her, and the implications of her suit for national civil rights policy in post Civil War America.

On August 21, 1872, seven years after the Civil War had ended, Mary Coger, a teacher from Quincy, Illinois, prepared to return home after visiting friends in Keokuk, Iowa. Although her complexion was fair, Coger had one black grandparent, making her a Negro in the eyes of race-conscious nineteenth-century American whites. When she went to the office of the North West Union Packet Company to purchase a ticket for passage aboard the Mississippi River steamer, *S.S. Merrill*, the agent detected her African ancestry and refused to sell her a first-class ticket. Following company policy, he offered her passage without a private sleeping berth or access to the dining room. Coger demanded first-class passage and initially refused to purchase a ticket.... She finally relented, accepting a ticket entitling her to separate and unequal accommodations.

Aboard the steamer, Coger continued to encounter demeaning treatment. When she sent the ship's chambermaid to purchase a dinner ticket for her, she received a pass marked "colored girl," not "lady," the term of respect universally applied to middle-class white women, and was informed that she would be served in the pantry. Refusing to accept such treatment, she persuaded a white traveler to purchase a first-class dining ticket for her. When dinner was announced, she entered the cabin, took a seat at a table reserved for ladies traveling without male escort, and refused to move when a waiter ordered her to the pantry.... The Captain appeared, demanded that Coger leave the ladies' table, and attempted to remove her. Coger resisted "so that considerable violence was necessary to drag her out of the cabin, and, in the struggle, the covering of the table was torn off and dishes broken, and the officer received a slight injury."

Determined to challenge such degrading treatment, Mary Coger filed suit in state district court, seeking damages from the company for the assault on her by its employees. She alleged that the Iowa Constitution, which declared that "All men are, by nature, free and equal," entitled her to colorblind service on the *Merrill*.... She also claimed that the changes in federal law and the United States Constitution growing out of the abolition of slavery and the post war effort to protect the rights of the former slaves reinforced this right.... The Fourteenth Amendment, ratified in 1868, not only conferred national and state citizenship on blacks, but prohibited discrimination.... Moreover, Coger pointed out that Congress's Civil Rights Act of 1866 provided that all citizens were entitled to "the same right....to make and enforce contracts....as is enjoyed by white persons." Because a steamboat ticket was a contract, she contended, the company was obligated to offer her the same ticket and service that it offered white women.

The state courts sustained Coger's position.... When the jury returned a verdict for Coger, the company appealed to the Iowa Supreme Court, which upheld the lower court. Chief Justice Joseph M. Beck's opinion indicated that he was not free of racial stereotypes, noting that Coger's "spirited resistance....exhibited evidence of the Anglo-Saxon blood that flows in her veins." He nevertheless rejected the company's claim that it was free to practice racial segregation. Dismissing as irrelevant arguments concerning Coger's race, Beck paid tribute to the radical transformation brought about by emancipation and postwar constitutional change. "However pertinent to such a case the discussion may have been, not many years ago....the doctrines.... involved in the argument are obsolete, and have no longer existence or authority, anywhere

within the jurisdiction of the federal constitution, and most certainly not in Iowa.... If the negro must submit to different treatment, to accommodations inferior to those given to the white man, when transported by public carriers," Beck concluded, "he is deprived of the benefits of this very principle of equality."

Although it had authority only within Iowa, Beck's opinion suggested how far the revolutionary upheaval of the Civil War and Reconstruction had moved the nation. Only a dozen years before, the United States Supreme Court's holding that blacks were not citizens had stood as the supreme law of the land.... Under the pressure of the Civil War, however, Lincoln and the Republican leadership in Congress embraced emancipation as a war goal and recruited 180,000 black troops to help subdue the Confederacy. In the war's aftermath Republican leaders....not only removed the incubus of *Dred Scott* and admitted blacks to citizenship, but expanded federal responsibility for protecting individual rights from violation by states and individuals. Furthermore, they moved beyond antebellum distinctions between civil (or legal) rights and political rights, extending to blacks the full rights of citizenship, including the right to vote. Well might Daniel Corbin, a South Carolina Republican, remark in 1871, "we have lived over a century in the last ten years."

Source: Donald G. Nieman, Promises to Keep: African-Americans and the Constitutional Order, 1776 to the Present (New York, 1991), pp. 50-52.

FREDERICK DOUGLASS: WHAT THE BLACK MAN WANTS

In a speech before the Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society in Boston in April, 1865, Frederick Douglass outlines the policies which he believes will result in the rapid advance of African Americans from slavery to freedom. Part of his speech is reprinted below.

I have had but one idea for the last three years, to present to the American people, and the phraseology in which I clothe it is the old abolition phraseology. I am for the "immediate, unconditional, and universal" enfranchisement of the black man, in every State in the Union. Without this, his liberty is a mockery; without this, you might as well almost retain the old name of slavery for his condition; for, in fact, if he is no the slave of the individual master, he is the slave of society, and holds his liberty as a privilege, not as a right. He is at the mercy of the mob, and has no means of protecting himself.

It may be objected, however, that this pressing of the negro's right to suffrage is premature. Let us have slavery abolished, it may be said, let us have labor organized, and then, in the natural course of events, the right of suffrage will be extended to the negro. I do not agree with this. The constitution of the human mind is such, that if it once disregards the conviction forced upon it by a revelation of truth, it requires the exercise of a higher power to produce the same conviction afterwards.

This is the hour. Our streets are in mourning, tears are falling at every fireside, and under the chastisement of this Rebellion we have almost come up to the point of conceding this great, this all-important right of suffrage. I fear that if we fail to do it now, if abolitionists fail to press it now, we may not see, for centuries to come, the same disposition that exists at this moment. Hence, I say, now is the time to press this right.

It may be asked, "Why do you want it? Some men have got along very well without it. Women have not this right." Shall we justify one wrong with another? That is a sufficient answer. Shall we at this moment justify the deprivation of the negro of the right to vote, because some one else is deprived of that privilege? I hold that women, as well as men, have the right to vote, and my heart and my voice go with the movement to extend suffrage to woman; but that question rests upon another basis than that on which our right rests. We may be asked, I say, why we want it. I will tell you why we want it. We want it because it is our right, first of all. No class of men can, without insulting their own nature, be content with any deprivation of their rights. We want it, again, as a means for educating our race. Men are so constituted that they deprive their conviction of their own possibilities largely from the estimate from estimate formed of them by others. If nothing is expected of a people, that people will find if difficult to contradict that expectation. By depriving us of suffrage, you affirm our incapacity to form an intelligent judgment respecting public men and public measures; you declare before the world that we are unfit to exercise the elective franchise, and by this means lead us to undervalue ourselves, to put a low estimate upon ourselves, and to feel that we have no possibilities like other men. Again, I want the elective franchise, for one, as a colored man, because ours is a peculiar government, based upon a peculiar idea, and that idea is universal suffrage...here, where universal suffrage is the rule, where that is the fundamental idea of the Government, to rule us out is to make us an exception, to brand us with the stigma of inferiority, and to invite to our heads the missiles of those about us; therefore, I want the franchise for the black man.

I know that we are inferior to you in some things--virtually inferior. We walk among you like dwarfs among giants. Our heads are scarcely seen above the great sea of humanity. The German are superior to us; the Irish are superior to us; the Yankees are superior to us; they can do what

we cannot, that is, what we have not hitherto been allowed to do. But while I make this admission, I utterly deny that we are originally, or naturally, or practically, or in any way, or in any important sense, inferior to anybody on this globe. This charge of inferiority is an old dodge. It had been made available for oppression on many occasions. It is only about six centuries since the blue-eyed and fair-haired Anglo-Saxon were considered inferior by the haughty Normans, who once trampled upon them. If you read the history of the Norman Conquest, you will find that this proud Anglo-Saxon was once looked upon as of coarser clay than his Norman master, and might be found in the highways and byways of old England laboring with a brass collar on his neck, and the name of his master marked upon it. You were down then! You are up now. I am glad you are up, and I want you to be glad to help us up also.

The story of our inferiority is an old dodge, as I have said, for wherever men oppress their fellows, wherever they enslave them, they will endeavor to find the needed apology for such enslavement and oppression in the character of the people oppressed and enslaved. When we wanted, a few years ago, a slice of Mexico, it was hinted that the Mexican were an inferior race, that the old Castilian blood had become so weak that it would scarcely run down hill, and that Mexico needed the long, strong and beneficent arm of the Anglo-Saxon care extended over it. We said that it was necessary to its salvation, and a part of the "manifest destiny" of this Republic, to extend our arm over that dilapidated government. So, too, when Russia wanted to take possession of a part of the Ottoman Empire, the Turks were "and inferior race." So too, when England wants to set the heel of her power more firmly in the quivering heart of Ireland, the Celts are an "inferior race." So, too, the negro, when he is to be robbed of any right which is justly his, is an "inferior man." It is said that we are ignorant; I admit it. But if we know enough to be hung, we know enough to vote. If the negro knows enough to pay taxes to support the government, he knows enough to vote; taxation and representation should go together. If he knows enough to shoulder a musket and fight for the flag, fight for the government, he knows enough to vote. If he knows as much when he is sober as an Irishman knows when drunk, he knows enough to vote, on good American principles.

What have you asked the black men of the South, the black men of the whole country, to do? Why, you have asked them to incur the deadly enmity of their masters, in order to befriend you and to befriend this Government. You have asked us to call down, not only upon ourselves, but upon our children's children, the deadly hate of the entire Southern people. You have called upon us to turn our backs upon our masters, to abandon their cause and espouse yours; to turn against the South and in favor of the North; to shoot down the Confederacy and uphold the flag-the American flag. You have called upon us to expose ourselves to all the subtle machinations of their malignity for all time. And now, what do you propose to do when you come to make peace? To reward your enemies, and trample in the dust your friends? Do you intend to sacrifice the very men who have come to the rescue of your banner in the South, and incurred the lasting displeasure of their masters thereby? Do you intend to sacrifice them and reward your enemies? Do you mean to give your enemies the right to vote, and take it away from your friends?...When this nation was in trouble, in its early struggles, it looked upon the negro as a citizen. In 1776 he was a citizen. At the time of the formation of the Constitution the negro had the right to vote in eleven States out of the old thirteen. In your trouble you have made us citizens. In 1812 Gen. Jackson addressed us as citizens--"fellow citizens." He wanted us to fight. We were citizens then! And now, when you come to frame a conscription bill, the negro is a citizen again. He has been a citizen just three times in the history of this government, and it has always been in time of trouble. In time of trouble we are citizens. Shall we be citizens in war, and aliens in peace? Would that be just?...

When I ask for the negro is not benevolence, not pity, not sympathy, but simply justice. The American people have always been anxious to know what they shall do with us. I have but one answer from the beginning. Do nothing with us! Your doing with us has already played the mischief with us. Do nothing with us! Let him live or die by that. If you will only untie his hands, and give him a chance, I think he will live...

Source: The Equality of All Men Before the Law Claimed and Defended; in Speech by Honor. William D. Kelley, Wendell Phillips, and Frederick Douglass (Boston, 1865), pp. 36-39.

PRESIDENT JOHNSON AND BLACK LEADERS

On February 7, 1866, Frederick Douglass, George Downing and other black leaders met with President Andrew Johnson at the White House. This, the first meeting between an American president and black political spokesmen, showed the wide disparity between the President's views on voting rights for the ex-slaves and those of the assembled black activists. Part of the exchange is reprinted below.

Mr. Fred. Douglass advanced and addressed the President, saying:

Mr. President, we are not here to enlighten you, sir, as to your duties as the Chief Magistrate of this Republic, but to show our respect, and to present in brief the claims of our race to your favorable consideration. In the order of Divine Providence you are placed in a position where you have the power to save or destroy us, to bless or blast us--I mean our whole race. Your noble and humane predecessor placed in our hands the sword to assist in saving the nation, and we do hope that you, his able successor, will favorably regard the placing in our hands the ballot with which to save ourselves.

We shall submit no argument on that point. The fact that we are the subjects of Government, and subject to taxation, subject to volunteer in the service of the country, subject to being drafted, subject to bear the burdens of the State, makes it not improper that we should ask to share in the privileges of this condition.

I have no speech to make on this occasion. I simply submit these observations as a limited expression of the views and feelings of the delegation with which I have come.

Response of the President:

In reply to some of your inquiries, not to make a speech about this thing, for it is always best to talk plainly and distinctly about such matters, I will say that if I have not given evidence in my course that I am a friend of humanity, and to that portion of it which constitutes the colored population, I can give no evidence here..... All that I possessed, life, liberty, and property, have been put up in connection with that question, when I had every inducement held out to take the other course.... If I know myself, and the feelings of my own heart, they have been for the colored man. I have owned slaves and bought slaves, but I never sold one. So far as my connection with slaves has gone, I have been their slave instead of their being mine. Some have even followed me here, while others are occupying and enjoying my property with my consent.

I am free to say to you that I do not like to be arraigned by someone who can get up handsomely-rounded periods and deal in rhetoric, and talk about abstract ideas of liberty, who never periled life, liberty, or property. This kind of theoretical, hollow, unpractical friendship amounts to but very little. While I say that I am a friend of the colored man, I do not want to adopt a policy that I believe will end in a contest between the races, which if persisted in will result in the extermination of one or the other. God forbid that I should be engaged in such a work!

Source: Leslie H. Fishel and Benjamin Quarles, The Negro American: A Documentary History, (Glenview, Ill., 1967), p. 135.

THADDEUS STEVENS DEMANDS BLACK SUFFRAGE

Pennsylvania Representative Thaddeus Stevens was one of the leaders of the Radical Republicans in the Post Civil War Congress. In 1867 Stevens makes an impassioned plea for black suffrage before the House of Representatives.

There are several good reasons for the passage of this bill [for reconstructing the South]. In the first place, it is just. I am now confining my argument to Negro suffrage in the rebel states. Have not loyal blacks quite as good a right to choose rulers and make laws as rebel whites?

In the second place, it is a necessity in order to protect the loyal white men in the seceded states. The white Union men are in a great minority in each of those states. With them the blacks would act in a body; and it is believed that in each of said states, except one, the two united would form a majority, control the states and protect themselves. Now they are the victims of daily murder. They must suffer constant persecution, or be exiled....

Another good reason is, it would insure the ascendancy of the Union [Republican] Party. "Do you avow the party purpose?" exclaims some horror- stricken demagogue. I do. For I believe, on my conscience, that on the continued ascendancy of that party depends the safety of this great nation.

If impartial suffrage is excluded in the rebel states, then every one of them is sure to send a solid rebel representative delegation to Congress, and cast a solid rebel electoral vote. They, with their kindred Copperheads of the North, would always elect the President and control Congress. Whole Slavery sat upon her defiant throne, and insulted and intimidated the trembling North.... Now, you must divide them between loyalists, without regard to color, and disloyalists, or you will be the perpetual vassals of the free-trade, irritated, revengeful South.

For these, among other reasons, I am for Negro suffrage in every rebel state. If it be just, it should not be denied; if it be necessary, it should be adopted; if it be a punishment to traitors, they deserve it.

Source: Thomas A. Bailey & David M. Kennedy, The American Spirit, Vol. II, (Lexington, Mass: D. C. Heath and Company, 1984), pp. 457-458.

A DEBATE OVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Until the 1960s most historians of Reconstruction assumed that black politicians made virtually no contribution to the post Civil War debates surrounding land redistribution and the public school system. The historical record clearly shows otherwise. In the following account from the Proceedings of the Constitutional Convention of South Carolina in 1868, we see the spirited discussion among black politicians over compulsory education. Here is part of the debate.

MR. R. C. DE LARGE: I am not well acquainted with all the clauses in the constitution of Massachusetts, and speak only from my historic knowledge of that people. This section proposes to open these schools to all persons, irrespective of color, to open every seminary of learning to all. Heartily do I endorse the object, but the manner in which it is to be enforced meets my most earnest disapproval. I do not propose to enact in this report a section that may be used by our enemies to appeal to the worst passions of a class of people in this State. The schools may be opened to all, under proper provisions in the Constitution, but to declare that parents "shall" send their children to them whether they are willing or not is, in my judgment, going to a step beyond the bounds of prudence. Is there any logic or reason in inserting in the Constitution a provision which cannot be enforced? What do we intend to give the legislature power to do? In one breath you propose to protect minor children, and in the next to punish their parents by fine and imprisonment if they do not send their children to school. For these reasons I am opposed to the section, and urge that the word "compulsory" shall be stricken out.

MR. A. J. RANSIER: I am sorry to differ with my colleague from Charleston on this question. I contend that in proportion to the education of the people so is their progress in civilization. Believing this, I believe that the Committee have properly provided for the compulsory education of all the children in this State between the ages named in the section.

I recognize the importance of this measure. there is a seeming objection to the word "compulsory," but I do not think it of grave importance. My friend does not like it, because he says it is contrary to the spirit of republicanism. To be free, however, is not to enjoy unlimited license, or my friend himself might desire to enslave again his fellow men.

Now I propose to support this section fully, and believe that the more it is considered in all its bearings upon the welfare of our people, the greater will be the desire that every parent shall, by some means, be compelled to educate his children and fit them for the responsibilities of life. As to the particular mode of enforcing attendance at school, we leave that an open question. At present we are only asserting the general principle, and the Legislature will provide for its application.

Upon the success of republicanism depends the progress which our people are destined to make. If parents are disposed to clog this progress by neglecting the education of their children, for one, I will not aid and abet them. Hence, this, in my opinion, is an exceedingly wise provision, and I am content to trust to the Legislature to carry out the measures to which it necessarily leads.

Vice and degradation go hand in hand with ignorance. Civilization and enlightenment follow fast upon the footsteps of the schoolmaster; and if education must be enforced to secure these grand results, I say let the compulsory process go on.

MR. R. C. DE LARGE: Can the gentleman demonstrate how the Legislature is to enforce the education of children without punishment of their parents by fine or imprisonment.

MR. A. J. RANSIER: When that question arises in the Legislature, I hope we shall answer that question. If there is any one thing to which we may attribute the sufferings endured by this people, it is the gross ignorance of the masses. While we propose to avoid all difficulties which may be fraught with evil to the community, we shall, nevertheless, insist upon our right to provide for the exercise of the great moral agencies which education always brings to bear upon public opinion. had there been such a provision as this in the Constitution of South Carolina heretofore, there is no doubt that many of the evils which at present exist would have been avoided, and the people would have been advanced to a higher stage of civilization and morals, and we would not have been called upon to mourn the loss of the flower of the youth of our country. In conclusion, I favor this section as it stands. I do not think it will militate against the cause of republicanism, but, on the contrary, be of benefit both to it and to the people whom we represent. Feeling that everything depends on the education of the rising generation, I shall give this measure my vote, and use all my exertions to secure its adoption into this Constitution.

MR. B. F. RANDOLPH: In favoring, as I do, compulsory attendance at school, I cannot for the life of me see in what manner republicanism is at stake. It seems to have been the fashion on this floor to question a man's republicanism because he chooses to differ with others on general principles. Now this is a question which does not concern republicanism at all. It is simply a matter of justice which is due to a people, and it might be just as consistently urged that it is contrary to republican principles to organize the militia, as to urge that this provision is anti-republican because it compels parents to see to the education of their children.

MR. B. O. DUNCAN: Does the gentleman propose to educate children at the point of the bayonet, through the militia?

MR. B. F. RANDOLPH: If necessary, we may call out the militia to enforce the law. Now, the gentlemen on the other side have given no reasons why the word "compulsory" should be stricken out.

MR. R. C. DE LARGE: Can you name any State where the provisions exists in its Constitution?

MR. B. F. RANDOLPH: It exists in Massachusetts.

MR. R. C. DE LARGE: That is not so.

MR. F. L. CARDOZO: This system has been tested in Germany, and I defy the gentlemen from Charleston to deny the fact. It has also been tested in several States of the Union, and I defy the gentleman to show that is has not been a success. It becomes the duty of the opposition if they want this section stricken from the report, to show that where it has been applied it has failed to produce the result desired.

MR. J. J. WRIGHT: Will you inform us what State in the Union compels parents to send their children to school?

MR. B. F. RANDOLPH: The State of New Hampshire is one. It may be asked what is the object of law? It is not only for the purpose of restraining men from doing wrong, but for the protection of all citizens of a State, and the promotion of the general welfare. Blackstone lays it down as one of the objects, the furthering, as far as it can consistently be done of the general welfare of the people. It is one of the objects of law, as far as practicable, not to restrain wrong by punishing man for violating the right, but also one of its grand objects to build up civilization, and this is the grand object of this provision in the report of the Committee on Education. It proposes to further civilization and I look upon it as one of the most important results which will follow the defeat of the rebel armies, the establishment among the people who have long been deprived of the privilege of education, a law which will compel parents to send their children to school.

Source: Proceedings of the Constitutional Convention of South Carolina (Charleston, 1868), pp. 686-94, 705-08. Reprinted in Thomas R. Frazier, Afro-American History: Primary Sources. (Chicago, 1988) pp. 138-142.

BLACK VOTING RIGHTS: THE VIEW FROM THE FAR WEST

In an 1870 editorial the Olympia (Washington Territory) Commercial Age outlined its position on black voting by publishing a long letter on the subject from one of its local readers. The paper's position is reprinted below.

Although the Fifteenth Amendment does not particularly affect us in this Territory, as the colored folks have been voters among us for sometime already, yet it will be a matter of much importance in both Oregon and California. The following from an exchange contains much truth and will prove of interest to many of our readers:

"The number of colored men whose right to vote will be established by the Fifteenth Amendment is estimated at 850,000. Of these 790,000 are in the South, 41,000 in the states of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Indiana; 7,500 in New England, and 8,500 in the remaining Western States. These statistics we find in the [Baltimore] Sun, and assume that they are approximately accurate.

These 850,000 black men may perhaps hold the balance of power between the two political parties in the next presidential election and for a long time to come. If the Democratic party persists in its long-time inveterate hostility to the negro, some of the closely-divided states will in all probability be insured to the Republicans by the negro vote. Among these states we may mention Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Ohio. But will the Democratic party be so stupid as to drive these new voters en masse into the Republican fold? We doubt it. On the contrary, we expect to see that party making special efforts to win these voters--enough of them, at least, to divide their strength. But, if the Republicans are true to themselves and their principles, they will have a decided advantage over their opponents in this struggle--at least, so far as the more intelligent of the negroes are concerned.

The negroes know, of course, that they owe their enfranchisement to the Republican party, while they have every reason for regarding the other party with aversion and distrust. But they cannot all be expected to take the highest view of their obligations as citizens; and many of them, will, no doubt, be ready to fall into the snares which unscrupulous Democrats will be sure to lay in their path. The Republicans, moreover, are by no means all saints, nor all entirely exempt from the spirit of estate. Mean men in this party, as in the other, will, no doubt, continue to behave shabbily toward the new-made voters, thus helping the Democrats to "divide that they may conquer." It will be a happy day for the country when the people shall no more care to inquire whether a voter or a candidate for office is white or black than whether he is tall or short."

Source: The (Olympia, Washington Territory) Commercial Age, March 26, 1870.

BLACK VOTING RIGHTS: A HAWAIIAN NEWSPAPER'S VIEW

The debate over black voting rights occasionally extended beyond the boundaries of the United States as when the Honolulu Friend, an English-language Hawaiian newspaper urged in 1865 that suffrage be extended to the newly freed slaves. Its editorial, reprinted in the San Francisco Elevator, appears below.

In glancing over the files of the American papers, the most prominent question of discussion appears to be the status of the negro. Shall he, or shall he not be admitted to all the civil and political rights of the white inhabitants? This is the question. Of course there is a great difference of opinion upon the subject. Such men as Chief Justice Chase, Senator Sumner, and a host of leading men of the Republican party, take the ground that the negro should now be permitted to vote and enjoy all the privileges of the white population.

In our opinion these men occupy the only consistent and correct ground. The negro has nobly fought for the country, and now not to allow him all the rights and privileges enjoyed by his fellow soldiers would be wrong. A loyal negro, true to his country and the flag, is surely as good a citizen as a *rebel*, although he [the rebel] may have recently take the oath of allegiance.

We hope Americans will start aright this time. Give the colored man a fair start, and let him try for himself. We believe most fully in the doctrine that all men should enjoy equal civil and political rights. The tendency is towards that point in all lands. Revolutions go not backward.

Source: The Honolulu Friend, reprinted in the San Francisco Elevator, October 13, 1865, p. 1.

THE RECONSTRUCTION AMENDMENTS: OREGON'S RESPONSE

In the following vignette historian Elizabeth McLagan describes the Oregon legislature's response to the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the U. S. Constitution.

During the Civil War the [Oregon] legislature passed the last anti-black state laws, with the exception of the ban on intermarriage passed in 1866. Between 1866 and 1872, the legislature was required to consider ratification of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, which gave citizenship to black people and the right to vote to black men. I twa clear, however, that these amendments were unpopular with most Oregonians.... The *Oregon Statesman*, in an editorial published [in 1865], predicted that giving the vote to blacks would have a revolutionary influence on society.... Full suffrage would result in a "war of the races," the editorial concluded.

> If we make the African a citizen, we cannot deny the same right to the Indian or the Mongolian (the Chinese, Japanese and other Asians). Then how long would we have peace and prosperity when four races separate, distinct and antagonistic should be at the polls and contend for the control of government?

The 1866 legislature, still controlled by the [Republicans] but with a strong minority of Democrats, considered and ratified the Fourteenth Amendment, although the vote was close.... The Democrats made two attempts to withdraw ratification but....these attempts failed.

This legislature also passed another law prohibiting intermarriage. It was directed not only against white/black marriages, but against anyone with "one-fourth or more Negro, Chinese or [Hawaiian] blood, or any person having more than one half Indian blood. It passed with little debate the combined vote was 47 in favor, 8 opposed and 3 absent. The penalty for disobeying the law was a prison sentence of not less than three months, or up to one year in jail. Any person authorized to conduct marriages who broke the law by marrying two people illegally was subject to the same penalty, with an additional $1,000 fine. This law was not repealed until 1951.

The legislator's reluctance to endorse the Fourteenth Amendment was the subject of debate in the local press as well. In 1867, the Eugene *Weekly Democratic Review* printed a vicious attack on black people.

> ....gaping, bullet pated, thick lipped, wooly headed, animal-jawed crowd of niggers, the dregs of broken up plantations, idle and vicious blacks, released from wholesome restraints of task masters and overseers.... Greasy, dirty, lousy, they drowsily look down upon the assembled wisdom of a dissevered Union. Sleepily listen to legislators who have given them their freedom and now propose to invest them with the highest privileges of American citizenship.

Because of its rabid pro-South rhetoric, this paper had been suppressed during the Civil War.

In 1868, another attempt was made to repeal ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment, declared to be ratified nationally only six weeks previously. This time the repeal passed in both chambers by a combined vote of 39 to 27. This session also recalled Oregon Senators George H. Williams and Henry W. Corbett, criticized for their support of Reconstruction. Williams was also active in the campaign to impeach President Andrew Johnson, who had become the hero of

the Democratic Party for his opposition to Reconstruction. The legislature was not deluded into thinking that its actions would make any difference; the *Oregonian* predicted that if copies of the resolutions ever reached Congress they would probably be used to light someone's cigar....

The Fifteenth Amendment was proposed, ratified and declared in force by Congress between Oregon's 1868 and 1870 legislative sessions.... The legislative session of 1870....declared the Fifteenth Amendment was "an infringement on popular rights and a direct falsification of the pledges made to the state of Oregon by the federal government." The Fifteenth Amendment was finally ratified by the centennial legislature of 1959.

Although Oregon refused to ratify the Fifteenth Amendment, a state Supreme Court decision rendered in 1870 affirmed the right of black men to vote. The case involved the election of a county commissioner in Wasco County, and C.H. Yates and W.S. Ford, two black men who had voted.... That same year the *Oregonian*, which five years earlier had opposed the Fifteen Amendment, ran an editorial which admitted:

> There are but a few colored men in Oregon, and their political influence cannot be great. But these here are, as a rule, quiet, industrious and intelligent citizens. We cannot doubt they will exercise intelligently the franchise with which they are newly invested.

Resistance to accepting the black vote....was overcome not by a change in attitude, but because Oregonians realized that federal civil rights legislation had to be acknowledged, if not endorsed. By 1870, change was inevitable, so Oregonians acquiesced. Blacks were granted civil rights under the terms imposed by the federal government, without the endorsement of the state legislature. Oregon's black population was small and posed little threat to the established order. The period of enacting racist legislation had ended, but it would be many years before the legislature would begin to take an interest in passing laws that would allow black people to enjoy equal rights as citizens of the state.

Source: Elizabeth McLagan, A Peculiar Paradise: A History of Blacks in Oregon, 1788-1940 (Portland, 1980), pp. 68-74.

BLACK RECONSTRUCTION POLITICIANS

Name	*State*	*Term in Office*
	U.S. Senate	
Hirim Revels	Mississippi	1870-1871
Blanche K. Bruce	Mississippi	1875-1881
	U.S. House of Representatives	
John W. Menard	Louisiana	1868*
Joseph H. Rainey	South Carolina	1869-1879
Robert B. Elliot	South Carolina	1871-1874
Robert Carlos DeLarge	South Carolina	1871-1873
Alonzo J. Ransier	South Carolina	1873-1875
Richard H. Cain	South Carolina	1873-1875; 1877-1879
Robert Smalls	South Carolina	1875-1879; 1881-1887
Thomas E. Miller	South Carolina	1889-1891
George W. Murray	South Carolina	1893-1897
John A. Hyman	North Carolina	1875-1877
John E. O'Hara	North Carolina	1883-1887
Henry P. Cheatham	North Carolina	1889-1893
George H. White	North Carolina	1897-1901
Benjamin S. Turner	Alabama	1871-1873
John T. Rapier	Alabama	1873-1875
Jeremiah Horalson	Alabama	1875-1877
John R. Lynch	Mississippi	1873-1877; 1881-1883
Charles E. Nash	Louisiana	1875-1877
Josiah T. Walls	Florida	1871-1877
Jefferson F. Long	Georgia	1869-1871
John M. Langston	Virginia	1889-1891
	Governor	
Pickney B. S. Pinchback	Louisiana	45 days in 1877
	Lieutenant Governors	
Oscar J. Dunn	Louisiana	1869-1873
Caesar C. Antoine	Louisiana	1873-1875
Pickney B. S. Pinchback	Louisiana	1875-1877
Alexander K. Davis	Mississippi	1873-1875
Alonzo J. Ransier	South Carolina	1870-1872
Richard H. Gleaves	South Carolina	1874-1876
	Speakers of the House of Representatives	
Samuel J. Lee	South Carolina	1872-1874
Robert B. Elliott	South Carolina	1874-1876
John R. Lynch	Mississippi	1871-1873

I. D. Shadd	Mississippi	1873-1875

*Menard was not seated by the U.S. House of Representatives

Name	*State*	*Term in Office*
	Secretaries of State	
Jonathan C. Gibbs	Florida	1868-1872
Francis L. Cardozo	South Carolina	1868-1872
James Lynch	Mississippi	1871-1872**
Pierre G. Deslonde	Louisiana	1872-1874
James Hill	Mississippi	1873-1875
John R. Lynch	Mississippi	1883-1896
	State Treasurers	
Francis L. Cardozo	South Carolina	1872-1876
Antoine Dubuclet	Louisiana	1872-1876
	State Supreme Court Justice	
Jonathan J. Wright	South Carolina	1868-1876

**Died in office

FIRST RECONSTRUCTION LEGISLATURES

State	*Black % of Pop. (1870)*	*Black Legislators*	*White Legislators*	*Black % of Legislators*
South Carolina	*59*	84	73	*53*
Mississippi	*56*	40	75	*34*
Louisiana	*51*	49	88	*36*
Florida	*49*	19	57	*25*
Alabama	*48*	26	58	*30*
Georgia	*46*	32	214	*13*
Virginia	*42*	27	154	*15*
North Carolina	*37*	19	135	*12*
Texas	*31*	11	156	*6*
Tennessee	*26*	1	94	*1*
Arkansas	*25*	0	87	*0*

SOUTH CAROLINA UNDER BLACK GOVERNMENT

James S. Pike, a Maine Republican and former abolitionist, toured South Carolina in 1873 and wrote a highly critical account of Reconstruction in that state. Here is part of his description of the state legislature that became the basis for the myth of black incompetence during reconstruction.

Yesterday, about 4 p.m., the assembled wisdom of the State....issued forth from the State House. About three-quarters of the crowd belonged to the African race. They were of every hue, from the light octoroon to the deep black. They were such a body of men as might pour our of a market- house at random in any Southern state....

"My God, look at this!" was the unbidden ejaculation of a low-country planter, clad in homespun, as he leaned over the rail inside the House, gazing excitedly upon the body in session. "This is the first time I have been here. I thought I knew what we were doing when we consented to emancipation. I knew the negro....but I never though it would come to this. Let me go."

In the place of this old aristocratic society stands the rude form of the most ignorant democracy that mankind ever saw, invested with the functions of government.... It is barbarism overwhelming civilization by physical force. It is the slave rioting in the halls of his master, and putting that master under his feet.

....The body is almost literally a Black Parliament, and it is the only one on the face of the earth which is representative of a white constituency and the professed exponent of an advanced type of modern civilization....The Speaker is black, the Clerk is black....the chairman of the Ways and Means is black, and the chaplain is coal-black.

One of the things that first strike a casual observer in this negro assembly is the fluency of debate....When an appropriation bill is up to raise money to catch and punish the Ku-klux, they know exactly what it means. So, too, with educational measures. The free school comes right home to them.... Sambo can talk on these topics and their endless ramifications, day in and day out.

The negro is imitative in the extreme. He can copy like a parrot or a monkey...He believes he can do any thing, and never loses a chance to try.... He is more vivacious than the white, and , being more volatile and good-natured, he is correspondingly more irrepressible.... He answers completely to the description of a stupid speaker in Parliament, given by Lord Derby on one occasion. It was said of him that he did not know what he was going to say when he got up; he did not know what he was saying while he was speaking, and he did not know what he had said when he sat down.

Will South Carolina be Africanized? That depends. The pickaninnies die off from want of care. Some blacks are coming in from North Carolina and Virginia, but others are going off farther South. The white young men who were growing into manhood did not seem inclined to leave their homes and migrate to foreign parts....The old slave-holders still hold their lands. The negroes were poor and unable to buy, even if the land-owners would sell. The whites seem likely to hold their own while the blacks fall off.

Source: Richard N. Current and John A. Garraty, ed., Words that Made American History Since The Civil War, (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1965), pp. 57-61.

RECONSTRUCTION IN MACON COUNTY, ALABAMA

The history of Reconstruction in local areas of the South both confirms and contradicts the often sweeping generalizations applied the to region as a whole. In the account below of politics in Macon County, Alabama, (the future home of Tuskegee Institute) in 1870 we see the anti-black violence which underlay the political rivalry between conservative Democrats and "radical" Republicans.

James Alston returned to his home in Tuskegee, Alabama, alone on a Saturday night in early June 1870 from a meeting of the Republican party at the Zion Negro Church. The leader of the local black Republicans, Alston represented Macon County in the Alabama state legislature. Just as he and his wife were going to bed, a hail of gunfire blasted the house, part of it striking him in the back and hip. Mrs. Alston, who was pregnant, was hit in the foot. Alston counted more than three hundred buckshot holes in his house. Remarkably, neither he nor his wife was seriously injured. He had not seen his assailants but he had a good idea of who they were. The next morning he sent word to his fellow Macon County freedmen to come to Tuskegee. Several hundred armed blacks arrived to offer protection against Alston's enemies, the local white Democrats.

Greatly alarmed by the black response, Tuskegee whites quickly met to organize a party of forty armed men to patrol the town. General Cullen Battle, a local lawyer and planter who nine years before had raised the Tuskegee Light Infantry for the Confederacy, was appointed by the county sheriff, a white Republican currying Democratic favor, to lead the patrol. Beyond his command experience in the Confederate Army, Battle's qualifications for the task included his special relationship with James Alston: Alston had once been his slave.... Battle promised Alston there would be no further attacks on him, whereupon the hundreds of freedmen dispersed, leaving only a small protective force.

Alston's problems had hardly ended. Later that morning Thomas Dryer, a prominent white merchant and Democrat who lived next door, sent Alston a message threatening his life. That night Alston's home was fired on again. The following morning a conciliatory General Battle appeared once more.... Battle said, "Jim, I have found that blacks will fight. I come now to you to make a compromise.... The county is big enough for all of us to live, and if you will quiet your men, I will quiet mine." Alston replied that the "colored men in Macon" were already "law-abiding and quiet."

Shortly after Battle left, eight local Democrats came to tell Alston that if he wished to live he had to leave Macon County. Among those in the group were his neighbor Dryer; Robert Johnson, whom he believe to be the father of his mulatto wife....George Washington Campbell, a prominent merchant; and Colonel Robert Abercrombie, a leading lawyer and planter. Alston was persuaded, but found even leaving dangerous. He spent ten days in nearby swamps avoiding would-be assassins--hired by Abercrombie, he believed--before he made his way to Montgomery, forty miles to the west.

Source: Robert J. Norrell, Reaping the Whirlwind: The Civil Rights Movement in Tuskegee, (New York, 1985), pp. 3-4.

THE END OF RECONSTRUCTION IN MISSISSIPPI

During the 1875 Mississippi gubernatorial campaign white supremacist elements vowed to "take back the government" of the state by violence if necessary from the black and white Republicans who had been in control for the past six years. In the account below historian Vernon Lane Wharton describes examples of the tactics employed in the central Mississippi town of Meridian in 1871 which provided a model for the 1875 election.

In the political, economic, and social subjugation of the freedmen, the most effective weapon ever developed was the "riot." Because this fact was discovered in the Meridian riot of 1871, that incident deserves some attention. In the spring of 1871, Meridian, a rapidly growing railroad town in the eastern part of the state, was under the control of white Republicans appointed to office by Governor Alcorn, and of negro leaders including J. Aaron Moore, William Clopton, and Warren Tyler. The population of this new town could best be described as "tough," and relations between the races were bad. For the purpose of discussing the situation, the Negroes were brought together in a mass meeting early in March, and were addressed by the three negro leaders and William Sturgis, the white Republican mayor. While the meeting was going on, a fire alarm was heard, and it was discovered that a store owned by Sturgis was on fire. In the resultant excitement, there was further unpleasantness between the whites and the blacks. On the following morning, white citizens persuaded a lawyer who had not been present at the Republican meeting to prepare an affidavit to the effect that the speeches of Warren Tyler, Bill Dennis [Clopton], and Aaron Moore had been of an incendiary character. The trial of these men was held the following Sunday afternoon before Judge Bramlette, a native white Republican, in a crowded court room. According to the prosecutor, one of the Negroes, Warren Tyler, interrupted James Brantley, a white witness, to say, "I want three colored men summoned to impeach your testimony." Brantley then seized the city's marshal's stick and started toward the Negro. Tyler, moving toward a side door, reached back as though to draw a pistol, and general firing immediately began in the rear of the court room. Although it seems that no one actually saw Tyler fire, and although negroes stoutly denied that he did so, the available evidence indicates that he probably shot at the advancing Brantley and, missing him, killed Judge Bramlette. W.H. hardy, a local Democratic leader, later wrote a description of the affair in which he attributed the shot that killed Bramlette to the negro Bill Dennis. In this he was probably incorrect, but to the rest of his story there is general agreement.

As quick as a flash the white men sitting in the rear drew their pistols and fired upon Dennis. [Tyler had run through the side door and leaped to the ground from a second-floor veranda.] By the time the smoke cleared away the courtroom had but few people left in it. Judge Bramlette was found dead and Bill Dennis mortally wounded. The riot [sic] was on and white men and negroes were seen running in every direction; the white men to get their arms and the negroes in mortal terror to seek a place of hiding. Every man that could do so got a gun or a pistol and went on the hunt for negroes... The two men left to guard the wounded Bill Dennis in the sheriff's office grew tired of their job and threw him from the balcony into the middle of the street.... Warren Tyler was found concealed in a shack and shot to death. Aaron Moore had escaped from the courthouse in the confusion and lay out in the woods that night, and the next day made his way to Jackson .... It was not known how many negroes were killed by the enraged whites, but the number has been estimated at from twenty-five to thirty... The mayor, Bill Sturgis, was thoroughly overcome with terror at the vengeance of the people and concealed himself in the garret of his boarding house. Being a member of the Odd Fellow's order he opened

communication with a member of the lodge, and it resulted in a cartel by which Sturgis was to resign the office of mayor and was to leave the state in twenty hours....

The affair marked the end of Republican control in the area surrounding Meridian.

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Source: Vernon Lane Wharton, The Negro in Mississippi, 1869-1890, (Chapel Hill, 1947), pp. 181-185.

APPENDIX

AFRICAN AMERICAN POPULATION OF THE UNITED STATES, 1790-1890

Year	*Black Population*	*% of Total Population*
1790	757,208	*19.3*
1800	1,002,037	*18.9*
1810	1,377,808	*19.0*
1820	1,771,656	*18.4*
1830	2,328,842	*18.1*
1840	2,873,648	*16.1*
1850	3,638,808	*15.7*
1860	4,441,830	*14.1*
1870	4,880,009	*12.7*
1880	6,580,793	*13.1*
1890	7,488,676	*11.9*