

Example by StudyDriver

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Slavery in America Example

Slavery has played various roles in different societies all over the world, but slavery was never as abused and manipulated as it was in America. Slavery has been a part of societies even before it came to America, but American colonization and greed for profit took priority over human rights. Slavery was different for every region of colonization in America. Though the underlying idea of it was all the same, the different governments took slavery to new levels of torture and abuse. The main countries that colonized America were Britain, French, Spanish, and Dutch. Since these are all different groups with different ways of living, the way they used slavery was different as well. With the new found abuse of slavery came all sorts of ways to manipulate and take advantage of slaves, mainly by creating laws that limited what they could do, especially limiting how they could obtain their freedom.

Every country that colonized America used slaves in some way or another. One of these countries was the Netherlands. Dutch colonization took place mainly in present day New York. The Dutch interest in slaves took place when settlers started up farms on the Hudson River. After this, slavery took off, for a little while at least. Until the mid-1600s, slaves were not expected to serve for their whole life. However, after slavery became more

popular in the region, it became acceptable for white farmer to purchase African slaves in exchange for a life time of servitude. This would all change though because Britain took over this Dutch colony around 1664. A second minor country that colonized America was France.

France had control of Louisiana, parts of Canada, and parts of Inland America. In Louisiana, settlers started tobacco and indigo farms. These farms then called for slaves to work the fields. Slaves in Louisiana included Africans and Indians. One of the many laws in place in Louisiana was that children were born into slavery if their mother was a slave. This was a very common law throughout all of colonized America. Also, French women were not very common, because they did not take to trip from France to America. Because of this it was very common for French men to mingle with African women.

Most African women were slaves and so any children conceived were also slaves. These Afro-French children were in a unique situation because their French fathers did not want them to be slaves forever, so their fathers would decide to free them from slavery. The French also had their own slave code called the Code Noir. This was very similar to that slave codes of English settlers. A couple of the laws inside the Code Noir were that interracial marriage was forbidden and that only slave owners could free their slaves. Slaves were not allowed to buy their freedom. Florida was one of the main Spanish colonies in America. Historically, Spanish cultures is tried to religion, specifically Catholicism. Because of this, slaves in Spanish Florida had an opportunity for freedom that many others did not. Any slave that converted to Catholicism would be freed and protected under the religion.

Slaves had more choices as far as what type of work they wanted to do. There were several jobs that required back-breaking work, but they could also serve as linguists, guides, and even serve in the Spanish militia. Because of the many Indians in Florida, and the fact that Africans mingled with Indians, slavery was not defined by race in Spanish Florida. Spanish settlers treated slaves better than in English colonies. Part of this was because Spanish law clarified the masters responsibility and the slaves rights. These distinctions were not made in England. Britain held the majority of the colonies in America.

These included Virginia, Maryland, South Carolina, and more. The laws concerning slavery were different in each

colony, but the main ideas were similar. One of these similarities was a law created concerning children. Any child born in these colonies was to take the title of their mother, either slave or free. This particular law made African women very important to white men. Like with the French, many English women did not travel to America. So it became very common for white men and African women to mingle. As a result, many children were conceived and since it was more than likely that the mother was an African slave, these children were also considered slaves. Another common law was punishment for slaves.

While the severity of punishment varied from colony to colony, There were laws put in place that allowed for harsh punishment of slaves for even minor offenses like theft or even being disobedient. South Carolina had some of the most sever punishments for slaves out of all of the colonies. They decided that runaway slaves would be punishable by death, and even offered rewards to individuals who captured runaway slaves. While many colonies assumed this, Virginia made a law in the 1640s stating that slaves were to serve for life. Maryland established a law stating that if a white women and an enslaved black man married, the white women would have to serve the husbands master. Englands colony South Carolina was most know for extreme slave codes. These codes severely limited slaves ability to do what they wanted when their day of work was done. Just to name some of the restrictions, when slaves traveled off of the plantations, they were required to carry a pass given by their owner that said they could be away from the plantation. Also, Runaway slaves, if captured, were brutally beaten, branded, or even bodily mutilated.

African slaves had very limited options for freedom, and as time went on, these options became less and less. In the mid 1600s, slaves would runaway to St. Augustine, Florida. If they made it, they would convert the Catholicism and doing this would keep them from having to be a slave again. This option did not last ling though, as St. Augustine was burned down and the slaves safe haven was ruined. The only other realistic way for slaves to gain their freedom was to purchase it. Of course as time went on, the colonies put laws in place such as having to have the owners approval for a slave to become free, or they owner would have to move the newly freed Africans outside of some colonies, if they were to be free.

These were some of the very few ways slaves could gain their freedom. Slavery was different in every colony, depending on what country was in control of the colony. There were overarching similarities, but nonetheless, each colony was different, and had its own way of controlling slaves. Freedom was also a difficult thing for slaves to gain, as many options for freedom were deemed illegal by the colonies laws. Overall, this was one of the toughest times for slavery, there was nothing to stop whites from brutally torturing slaves and they had yet to realize that they were abusing human beings that were exactly like them.