

Slavery in America: Cotton, Slave Trade and the Southern Response

Why did they use enslaved Africans?

- Experience - they had previous experience and knowledge working in sugar and rice production.
- Immunity from diseases - they were less likely to get sick due to prolonged contact over centuries.
- Low escape possibilities - they did not know the land, had no allies, and were highly visible because of skin color.

North

- Many Africans came to the colonies as indentured servants
- Free / some owned land but few
- No large plantations
- No real need for slave labor / not part of economy
- Abolished in New England

The Spread of Slavery

- Plantations
- Spread of cash crops to “southwest” states
- Invention of Cotton Gin made cotton the most important cash crop
- Needed to increase slaves to keep up with demand

Slave codes

Set of rules for all slaves

Slaves could not:

- leave their home without a pass
- carry a weapon
- gather in groups
- own property
- legally marry
- defend themselves against a white person
- speak in court.

Punishment

- Slaves were often brutally punished for misbehaving.
- Punishments including whipping, branding, being sold, gagged, and just about any other way to inhumanely treat a person were used.

Revolts

- There were four major slave revolts:
- The Stono Rebellion was a failed revolt in South Carolina in 1739.
- Gabriel Prosser led failed revolt in Virginia in 1800.
- Denmark Vesey led failed revolt in South Carolina in 1822.
- Nat Turner killed 60 white people in Virginia in 1831.