



# Slavery In The Americas

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# Origins of Slavery in America

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# “It’s the economy, stupid.”

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- ❖ “Nations had a vested interest in the continuation of slavery, for between 1750 and 1780, 70% of British government income came from taxes on goods from the colonies, including £1.5 million from taxes and duties from Jamaica alone in 1770, much of it the product of slave labour.” ~ Shaw, page 138





- \* In West Africa, European ships took on a cargo of slaves bound for Virginia, Carolina, and the sugar plantations of Jamaica, Haiti, Trinidad, Cuba, Brazil ...



# Triangular Trade Routes between Europe, the Caribbean, Africa and North America



# 1700s - British Slave Trade Triangle

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- ❖ British dominated the slave trade by the 1700s
- ❖ Slaves to Jamaica to harvest sugar
- ❖ Sugar to Boston to be cooked into rum
- ❖ Rum to Africa to trade for slaves

Charleston, July 24th, 1769.

TO BE SOLD,

On THURSDAY the third Day  
of AUGUST next,

A CARGO  
OF  
NINETY-FOUR  
PRIME, HEALTHY



NEGROES,

CONSISTING OF  
Thirty-nine MEN, Fifteen BOYS,  
Twenty-four WOMEN, and  
Sixteen GIRLS.

JUST ARRIVED,  
In the Brigantine DEMBIA, *Francis Bare*, Master, from SIERRA-  
LEON, by  
DAVID & JOHN DEAS.







Or, Another Version of the British Slave Trade Triangle



# Gun Control

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- ❖ Notice in the previous slides the guns going from Europe to Africa
- ❖ Used by some chiefs to equip armies and carve out sizable kingdoms for themselves
- ❖ And, by African slave traders to capture more slaves -- more slaves than Europe could carry away
- ❖ No problem, Africans could be sold to Africans, Arab slave traders, and in Eastern markets as they had been doing for 100s of years







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# *An International Market*

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# Human Cargo

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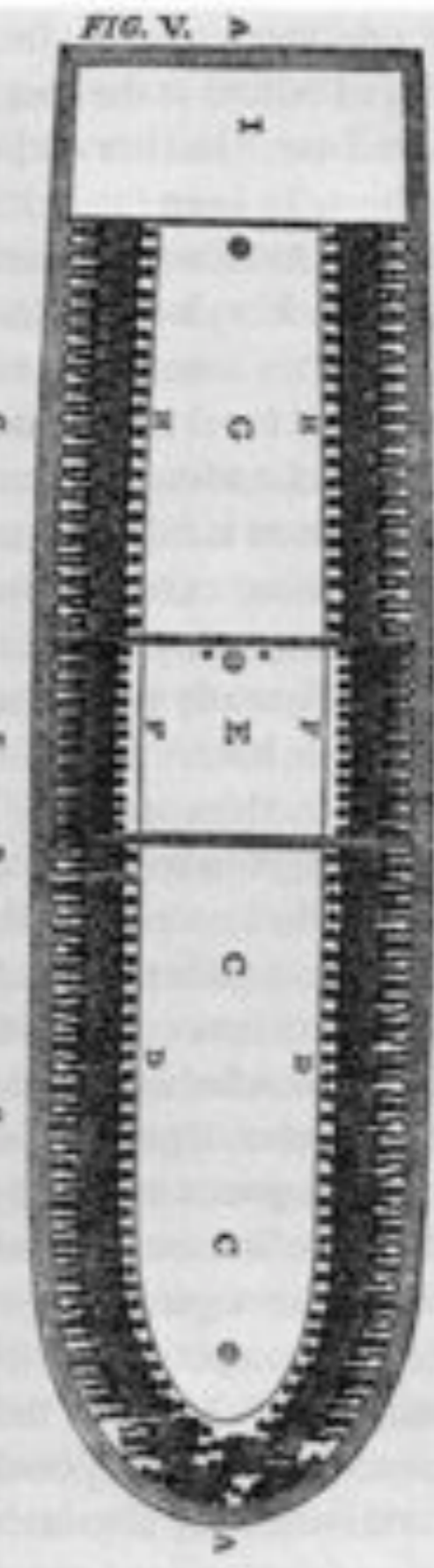
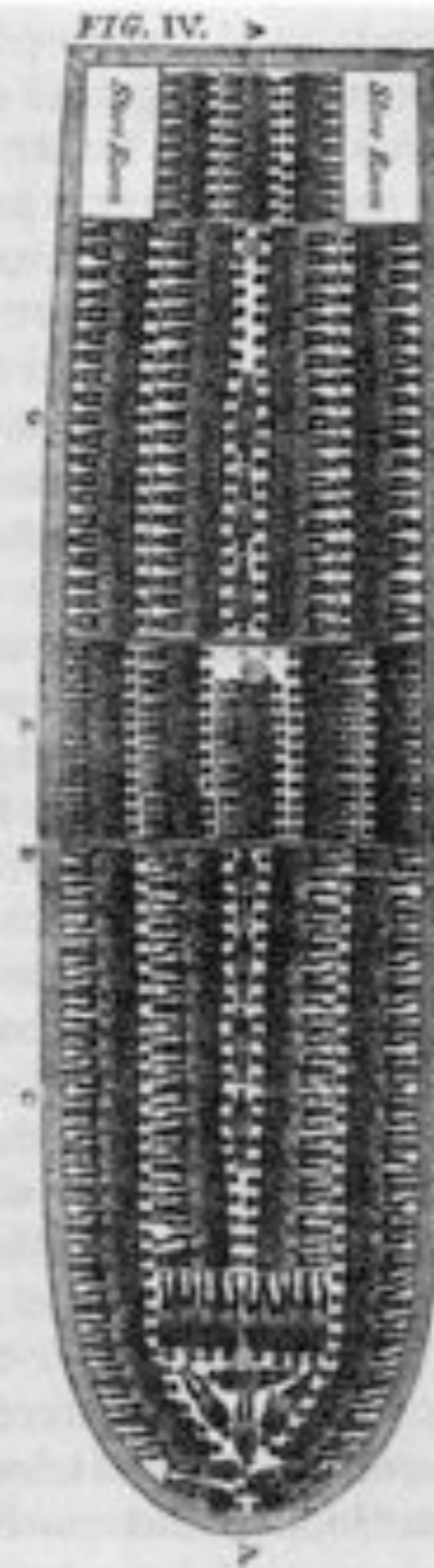
- ❖ 30% of slave deaths occurred before the slaves left Africa
- ❖ 6 - 8 weeks shackled in the dark hold with rare short breaks topside
- ❖ 5 - 7 sq. ft. per slave, about the size of a coffin
- ❖ 12% - 30% would die in transit [depending on the length of the journey]







DR. BURRILL & COMPANY



# The Zong

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- ❖ 1783 - due to losses along the way the Captain decided it would be more profitable to throw the rest of the slaves overboard and take the insurance \$ for “lost cargo”.





# Sugar Plantations

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- ❖ Slaves only lived for an average of 2 - 3 years after arriving at a Caribbean or Brazilian sugar plantations
- ❖ Some survived, gained freedom and bought their own slave plantations
- ❖ After achieving freedom some came to North America or went to Europe





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*Date*



# The Americas is Not America's

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Be careful with your numbers.

# So Let's Talk About America's

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- ❖ After the revolution several states made slavery illegal
- ❖ Georgia and S. Carolina let it be known that they would not join the union if it would intervene between them and their slaves
- ❖ The North-South tension over slavery starts immediately
- ❖ Alexis de Tocqueville said in 1831 "I could easily prove that almost all the differences which may be notice between the character of the Americans in the Southern and Northern states have originated in slavery."
- ❖ [We will talk about the abolition movement and next class period.]



# How Extensive Was Slavery in the United States?

“After Brazil, the next largest concentration was to be found in the newly formed United States, with 698,000 slaves in 1790, 94% living in the states south of Maryland. A further rapid upturn between 1801 and 1808 was fueled by the demands for labour for tobacco and especially cotton growing. By the time the slave trade into the United States was abolished in 1808, the country already possessed some 1.2 million slaves. Their numbers were also beginning to grow steadily through natural reproduction: 85% of America’s slave population was already native-born by 1820. In 1860 there were some 4 million slaves in the country.” ~ Shaw, page 133

By 1860, the South contained more slaves than all the other slave societies in the New World combined. One in every three Southerners was black.

In South Carolina 57% of population were slaves.

In Mississippi, 55%



# No Cotton Pickin Way

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- ❖ New Southern lands [Alabama, Arkansas, Texas, . . . ] were prime cotton growing land, requiring lots of labor, preferably cheap or slaves
- ❖ By 1840 cotton accounted for >60% of American exports.
- ❖ Slaves produced more than 75% of the South's export crops (tobacco, sugar, rice, cotton)
- ❖ Cotton was making people rich, so the South did not develop the mixed economy of the North and remained an agriculture economy.
- ❖ Economic interests were tied to slavery

# Protecting White Supremacy

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- ❖ Northerners believed in white supremacy, also.
- ❖ Outside attacks on slavery meant Southerners felt the need to protect it.
- ❖ State legislatures enacted “slave codes”
  - ❖ requiring total submission to all whites, not just masters.
  - ❖ forbidding teaching slaves to read and write
  - ❖ requiring punishment for runaways



# Legislating Slavery

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According to legislators ...

- ❖ Protection of “property” is the bedrock of American liberty.
- ❖ History endorses slavery - Hebrews, Greeks, and Romans
- ❖ The Bible sanctions slavery
- ❖ Giving blacks equal rights would result in miscegenation
- ❖ Slavery is less vicious than Northern labor practices
- ❖ Slavery is a civilizing and Christianizing process for savage peoples

# “Christian Guardianship”

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- ❖ Common for plantation owners to believe that they had a responsibility to care for these childlike, dependent people.
- ❖ “We should endeavor, with those whom fortune has thrown on our hands, to feed & clothe them well, protect them from ill usage, require such reasonable labor only as is performed voluntarily by freemen, nad be led by no repugnancies to abdicate them, and our duties to them.” ~ Thomas Jefferson
- ❖ “I manage them as my children.” ~S. Carolina rice planter



# Family Life of a Slave

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- ❖ No laws recognized slave marriage, so no master (or slave) was legally obligated to honor the bond.
- ❖ Abream Scriven, a S. Carolina slave to his wife on a nearby plantation -- “My dear wife, I take the pleasure of writing to you ... with much regret to inform you I am Sold to man by the name of Peterson, a Treader and Stays in New Orleans ... give my love to my father an mother and tell them good Bye for me. And if we do not meet in this world I hope to meet in heaen . . . My dear wife for you and my children my pen cannot express the griffe I feel to be parted from you all.”

# Religion

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- ❖ Baptists and Methodists had great success in converting slaves.
- ❖ By the nineteenth century about 1 / 4 slaves were church members and most of the rest would not object to being called Christians.
- ❖ Planters promoted Christianity because they believed that the slaves' salvation was part of their obligation, and ...
  - ❖ religion made slaves more obedient
- ❖ Slaves interpreted the Christian message differently -- instead of submission they emphasized justice, redemption (Moses)



# Religion (cont.)

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- ❖ Mixed Christianity with African traditions (conjurers, witches, spirit possession, etc)
- ❖ Expressions of worship (music, preaching, rituals) also influenced by Africa.

# Slave Resistance

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- ❖ Kunta Kinte - running away
- ❖ Putting rocks in cotton bags
- ❖ Feigning sickness
- ❖ Breaking tools
- ❖ Mistreating animals
- ❖ Rebellions rare (no chance of success) but did happen - Nat Turner, Denmark Vesey



# Free Blacks

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- ❖ About 6% of blacks in the South were free, but lived under the same laws as slaves
  - ❖ could not defend themselves against whites
  - ❖ prohibited from interstate travel
  - ❖ denied right to schools
  - ❖ could not participate in politics
- ❖ Some owned slaves

# More Perspective

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- ❖ Most whites in the South did not own slaves.
- ❖ In 1860, eight million whites in the South. Six million lived in slaveless households.



# How Could This Happen? And, How Do We Stop This Crazy Thing.

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“To enslave or not to enslave that is the question.”

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❖ Next class