

Rationale

[Sociology](#), [Slavery](#)



Rationale Area of Research: Slavery in the Caribbean “ What evidence is there to prove that the Africans, who arrived in the British West Indies, were ill-treated? "This project seeks to examine the nature of slavery in the British West Indies and to prove that the slaves endured harsh, inhumane conditions. Acknowledgement First of all I would like to thank the Lord for giving me the health, strength and understanding to complete this project. Secondly, I would like to pay credit to the Authors of the following books, whose work has provided me with information to complete this project: Lest We Forget, Caribbean Story Book 1 and Liberties Lost. Also, I would like to pay credit to the developers of the following Websites: www. google. com and www. ask. com. Last but certainly not least I want to thank my teacher, for guiding me through this project. I had some difficulties in doing this task but she patiently assisted me until I fully understood and got it done

Table of Contents
Pages
Rationale 1
Acknowledgement 2
Introduction 4
Aims and Objective 5
Chapter One The Atlantic Slave Trade 6-7
The British West Indies (BWI) 8
Chapter Two The Arrival of the African in the West Indies 9-10
Living and Working conditions of the slaves 10-11
Chapter Three Rules and Laws That Governed the Slaves 12-13
Punishment 13-14
Conclusion 15
Bibliography 16
Appendix 17

Introduction The horrible treatments of slaves will be forever engraved in the history books. The obvious effects have been past down to generations and have been expressed through racist evil behaviors. The hatred spread down through generations like wildfires on a hot summer day in a wild bush. The evils of slavery were so major that the half could never have been told. But how all this ill-treatment come to “ a head", was out of the want for a new labour source in the Sugar Revolution.

Planters wanted to invest in free labour and did not care as much about the black workers as they did the work they yielded. This low cost, high efficiency when finally achieved would have made them rich and could even secure their place somewhere in the European aristocracy. Taking the slaves as personal property, planters used and abused them in the most despicable ways possible. The slaves also fought back, but not ever in a British Colony, were slaves successful in a resistant action against planters. When slaves slipped up or fought back, the real wrath of the planters was unleashed. The punishments for certain simple mistakes were horrible and just furthered the already atrocious conditions under which these individuals tried to survive. Spain ruled over most of the islands until around 1655, when the British took over some. The change in power also resulted in a change in laws, and thus slave laws. The evil had just started since the "La Siete Partidas" (Spanish Laws) were more compassionate in their approach to the dealing with the slaves than the Police Laws of the British (developed between 1662 and 1705). After the takeover of the islands by the British, the Slave Trade continued until 1807. Because of the trade, planters found it easy to replace slaves and thus could treat them anyway they liked. After the trade, the hope of the abolitionists was not made any better as the planters realized that buying was not really important as long as the slaves reproduced, because the children would be property of the planters. The different methods of punishments continued and were upgraded time after time in order to keep slaves in order. Some of these included whipping, being put in the stocks and being put in the plantation's "hospital". Slave revolts and risings were ever anticipated because man simply wasn't made to live

without freedom and would generally fight anyone who tries to contravene such a right. In these slaves' cases, there were no rights such as freedom which belonged to them, because the color of bond slavery was black.

Aim and Objectives The aims and objectives of this research are to examine the horrors of British West Indian slavery. Secondly, to assess the conditions that the slaves worked under on British plantations. Thirdly, to investigate why slavery was overly detested by slaves and lastly to see how British West Indian planters abused slaves to the point where they were treated like animals.

Chapter One The Atlantic Slave Trade The Atlantic slave trade, also known as the transatlantic slave trade, refers to the trade in slaves that took place across the Atlantic Ocean from the sixteenth through to the nineteenth centuries. The vast majority of slaves involved in the Atlantic trade were Africans from the central and western parts of the continent, who were sold by African slave dealers to European traders, who transported them to the colonies in North and South America. There, the slaves were made to labor on coffee, cocoa and cotton plantations, in gold and silver mines, in rice fields, the construction industry, timber, and shipping or in houses to work as servants. The shippers were, in order of scale, the Portuguese, the British, the French, the Spanish, the Dutch, and North Americans. European- and American-owned fortresses and ships obtained enslaved people from African slave-traders, though some were captured by European slave-traders through raids and kidnapping. The other crucial event that would play a role in the development of America was the arrival of Africans to Jamestown. A Dutch slave trader exchanged his cargo of Africans for food in 1619. The Africans became indentured servants, similar in legal position to many poor

Englishmen who traded several years labor in exchange for passage to America. The popular conception of a racial-based slave system did not develop until the 1680's. The legend has been repeated endlessly that the first blacks in Virginia were " indentured servants," but there is no hint of this in the records. The legend grew up because the word slave did not appear in Virginia records until 1656, and statutes defining the status of blacks began to appear casually in the 1660s. The inference was then made that blacks called servants must have had approximately the same status as white indentured servants. Such reasoning failed to notice that Englishmen, in the early seventeenth century, used the work servant when they meant slave in our sense, and, indeed, white Southerners invariably used servant until 1865 and beyond. Although the number of African American slaves grew slowly at first, by the 1680s they had become essential to the economy of Virginia. During the 17th and 18th centuries, African American slaves lived in all of England's North American colonies. Before Great Britain prohibited its subjects from participating in the slave trade, between 600, 000 and 650, 000 Africans had been forcibly transported to North America. Most contemporary historians estimate that between 9. 4 and 12 million Africans arrived in the New World. Although, the actual number of people taken from their homes is considerably higher. The British West Indies The " British West Indies" was a term used to describe the islands in and around the Caribbean that were part of The British Empire. The term was sometimes used to include British Honduras and British Guiana, even though these territories are not geographically part of the Caribbean. As of 1912, the British West Indies were divided into eight colonies: The Bahamas, Barbados, British

Guiana, British Honduras, Jamaica (with its dependencies the Turks and Caicos Islands and the Cayman Islands), Trinidad and Tobago, the Windward Islands and the Leeward Islands. Between 1958 and 1962 all of the island territories except the British Virgin Islands, the Bahamas, British Honduras and British Guiana were organised into the West Indies Federation. It was hoped that the Federation would become independent as a single nation, but it had limited powers, many practical problems and a lack of popular support. Consequently, the West Indies Federation was dissolved. Most of the territories, including all the larger ones, are now independent as separate countries with membership to many international forums such as the Organization of American States, the Association of Caribbean States, the World Trade Organization, the United Nations, the Caribbean Community, the Commonwealth of Nations and the Caribbean Development Bank among others. The remainders are British overseas territories. All the former nations of the British West Indies, except the Commonwealth of Dominica, Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago, are Commonwealth Realms.

Chapter Two African Slaves arrival to the British West Indies (see figure1). How did the African Slaves Arrived in the British West Indies? In 1562 John Hawkins, an English navigator, seeing the want of slaves in the West Indies, determined to enter upon the piratical traffic. Several London gentlemen contributed funds liberally for the enterprise. Three ships were provided, and with these and 100 men Hawkins sailed to the coast of Guinea, where, by bribery, deception, treachery, and force, he procured at least 300 negroes and sold them to the Spaniards in Hispaniola, or Santo Domingo, and returned to England with a rich freight of pearls, sugar, and ginger. The nation was

shocked by the barbarous traffic, and the Queen (Elizabeth) declared to Hawkins that, " if any of the Africans were carried away without their own consent, it would be detestable, and call down the vengeance of Heaven upon the undertakers." He satisfied the Queen and continued the traffic, pretending that it was for the good of the souls of the Africans, as it introduced them to Christianity and civilization. Already negro slaves had been introduced by the Spaniards into the West Indies. They first enslaved the natives, but these were unequal to the required toil, and they were soon almost extinguished by hard labor and cruelty. Charles V. of Spain granted a license to a Fleming to import 4, 000 negroes annually into the West Indies. He sold his license to Genoese merchants, who began a regular trade in human beings between Africa and the West Indies. These were found to thrive where the native laborers died. The benevolent Las Casas and others favored the system as a means for saving the Indian tribes from destruction; and the trade was going on briskly when the English, under the influence of Hawkins, engaged in it in 1562. Ten years before a few negroes had been sold in England, and it is said that Queen Elizabeth's scruples were so far removed that she shared in the profits of the traffic carried on by Englishmen. The Stuart kings of England chartered companies for the trade; and Charles II and his brother James were members of one of them. Living Condition of African Slaves in the Caribbean The Slave Quarters (see figure 3) Slaves were allocated an area of the plantation for their living quarter. They were the largest group on the plantation. The area was made up of small villages organized in rows which were usually clustered. The planter provided the slaves with thatched huts. However, the slaves had to sleep on

beds that were made of straws and placed on the floor of their huts which had little or no furniture. The Living quarters were cramped as they were sometimes over-crowded. Slaves were not provided with food from their owners as such they planted their own food in order to survive. Most Plantation allowed the slaves to work for extended hours and they were given free time once per week to do their own personal business. However, let it be noted that this varies across different plantations. Slaves were divided in groups according to the task that were assigned to them. The Slaves that assigned to work in the Great House were more privileged than those who worked on the fields. This was so because they were given better meals that were left over from their master meal and sometimes they even learned how to read.

Chapter Three Rule and Laws that Governs the Slaves

The British colonies of the 1700s passed laws to control slaves. These laws promoted harsh, inhumane treatment of the slaves. The basis of the British laws was fear, as the planters attempted to control the slaves by severely punishing them. The Planters were fearful of slave revolts as there were a high percentage of blacks to whites on the plantations. The British laws also gave the planters authority over the slaves, who were regarded as the personal possession or the property of the masters. The word used to describe the slaves was "chattel" which is derived from the Latin word "capitale" which means "property". The masters were legally responsible for their slaves thus they had to provide food, clothing, shelter and medical attention. Slaves had no right The rights of the slaves were not recognized by the British laws, a slave could not appeal to the court of law against ill-treatment by his master. Justice for the slaves was therefore in the hands of

the master as they had no rights under the law. The British laws specifically prohibited slave marriages thus denying the slaves the need to feel insecure. Also, the Christianization and education of slaves in the British territories was forbidden by the slave laws. Manumission was dependent on the masters as in some British territories they were allowed this, although it was made difficult. Evidently, the British laws were severe because the planters were the ones who formulated them. Punishment of Slaves Whenever slaves were accused of doing anything wrong they were punished either immediately or after their court hearing. In the courts a slave accused of any crime against a white person was doomed. No testimony could be made by a slave against a white person. Therefore, the slave's side of the story could never be told in court of law. And of course, slaves were never members of juries. The punishment varied on the type of charge and the zone where they resided (rural and urban). Punishments in the British colonies included the following: If the slaves did wrong or slow down in their work they were whipped by the master. Whipping is the punishment white men liked using the most; it was their favourite punishment. Some slaves were also beaten to death. Whenever a slave did wrong and deserved a whipping, the master would decide how many whips they would get, if the master is kind he will not give the slave many. A slave got whipped when they stole items as well, with a minimum of 30 whips and a maximum of 100 whips. If they did anything worse than stealing they would get a far worse punishment. When a slave is new, or keeps on being stubborn, they are put in shackles until they are used to work on the plantations or until they stop being stubborn. If a slave did not listen to their master or overseer they would be chained to the ground. If

work was not done properly, or the slave did not listen or obey the rules and their owner was in a bad mood, they would be forced to walk on a treadmill. If the slave did something very bad, then also they would be forced to walk on a treadmill. The most brutal of all punishments was to be hung and left to die. This was mainly used if a slave runs away, and then is captured and brought back. Out of anger, the owner will sentence him or her to death and he or she will be hung. During punishments, the other slaves are forced to watch as well so that they don't try doing the same thing, or so that they are too scared to run away. (see figure 2) Conclusion After careful and extensive research it is my opinion that the African Slaves that were brought to the British West Indies endured harsh and inhumane conditions. Let it also be noted that these severe conditions were not only physical but mental and psychological. Slavery has contributed to several revolts and as such affected the relationship among white and blacks and many other races. In conclusion slaves were badly treated by the undeserving iniquitous, ruthless masters. The slaves had done nothing to deserve such treatments. As the ancient Greek author Aesop once said, " Better to starve than to be a fat slave" slavery encompassed both the mental and spiritual boundaries. Slaves tried to use " Obeah" and " Voodoo" to try to release their minds from the clutches of slavery. The slaves' resistance to their condition was similar to and influenced by, the Amerindians to being enslaved by the Spanish. This is said to because they not only refused to work but also tried to run away to join other bands of people to help fight the whites. They would both prefer death to bondage Bibliography -Claypole William & Robottom John, Caribbean Story Book 1, 3rd Edition (Published by: Longman 2001. -Hamilton

Doris, Lest We Forget: A study and revision guide for CXC Caribbean History, Caribbean Economy and Slavery (Published by: Jamaica Publishing House 2001). -Beckles Hilary & Shepherd Verene, Liberties Lost: The Indigenous Caribbean and Slave Systems (Published by: Cambridge University Press 2004). - Greenwood Robert, Dyde Brian & Hamber Shirley, Amerindians to Africa Book 1, 2ND edition (Published by: Macmillan Caribbean 2008). - www. Google. com -www. ask. com Appendix Figure1: Slaves transported to the British West Indies Figure2: Punishment endured by Slaves Figure3: Slaves Huts