

Slavery in british colonies



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Slavery in the British Colonies When the Americas were founded many European nations were trying to establish colonies. There were many failures but eventually they succeeded. Rich Europeans such as the British had no idea how to work the land, so they needed someone to do it for them. Although the British essentially were iffy about slavery, they slowly began getting rid of indentured servants, installing slavery, and then making slavery the major labor force system. In 1606 British merchants formed the Virginia Company to build a colony in the New World.

The rich colonists who came over, also brought other people with them. These people were indentured servants. The servants had a term of 4-7 years of service to the colonists who paid for their way over. At the end of their service the Master had to give the Indentured servant a plot of land. This was frustrating for the colonists, not only did they pay the indentured servants way, they had to give them land as well. Most indentured servants did not even care. They would slack on their work or not do it at all. They were going to get paid anyway so they did not listen.

Indentured servants were slowly beginning to become a nuisance more than a help. Slavery officially began in the British colonies in 1619. A Dutch merchant sold 20 Africans in Jamestown. Most colonists at this time still preferred indentured servants. The indentured servants were not only cheap, but experienced as well. The Africans were cheap but had no idea what to do or communicate effectively. The Africans were ripped away from their villages, homes, continent, families, and culture when they were sold into slavery. So they were not too obedient either.

Many tried to escape with good reason too. They were beat, killed, underfed, under clothed and worked from dawn till dusk. These were extremely harsh conditions that most slaves were not used to. Indentured servants were not treated as badly because in the colonists eyes they were just a poor person. Not an animal as they thought of the slaves. In 1650 there were 2, 000 slaves in North American colonies. Slavery slowly began to grow more and more popular over the years though. In the 1680's planters from the Chesapeake Bay such as Virginia and Maryland were switching from servants to slaves.

It steadily grew to less servants and more slaves. Slavery was for life so the Colonists who owned a slave kept them for their whole life. And if they had children the children were slaves as well. Slaves were a lot cheaper than having an indentured servant. By 1720 one-third of the population of Virginia were black slaves. Even more were in South Carolina. Slavery grew very rapid in the South because of Tobacco, Cotton, Rice and Sugarcane. In the North it was a lot more expensive to have a slave. It was not very profitable because there were not very many crops to tend to such as Rice and Tobacco.

James Oglethorpe founded Georgia in 1732 and attempted to keep slavery out. This of course failed because Slavery was then booming at the time and it was the only profitable good. By the end of the 1700's slavery was everywhere in the British colonies. Slavery was a big part in the British colonies, especially the southern colonies. It began with indentured servants, then a slow transition into slavery, and then everywhere had slaves. In the

1700's slavery boomed, because it was needed and indentured servants fell because they were lazy and not needed.