

# Slavery and the african-american population prior to the civil war essay examples...

[Sociology](#), [Population](#)



Unfortunately, slavery is a universal phenomenon known throughout history. Slavery in the United States had been practiced since early 17th century until the beginning of the 19th century and the abolition of slavery in 1865. African Americans had been enslaved and worked harder than white people for no payment. The status of a slave was almost exclusive for black-skinned people although there were cases when Africans were free and even held their own slaves. Usually the newcomers from Africa were a very easy target and their helplessness and vulnerability made the process of enslavement much easier.

The slave life in the States was different and varied in different states. Enslaved people were imported to the cities and lived in very bad conditions especially in the Southern States. They were the major labor source and worked in fields and carried out other physical jobs. Usually slaves lived on large plantations and sometimes in the cities. They preferred to live in huge communities and formed the whole quarters, where they were more or less free. Living in families was complicated and slave owners were against marriages between slaves. Also often some of the family members were separated if sold to another owner.

Surely slaves resisted and opposed their masters. They tried to keep their culture retelling folk tales, using their languages, performing their music and dance styles. In some places it caused problems as slave owners banned usage of drums. But nevertheless Africans managed to build a strong musical tradition using their instruments: drums, banjo, mandolins, etc. At the same time most of the African slaves kept very religious. Religion was very important in their life as it was self-calming and promising a better

future. Their priests convinced them that praying would make their owners kinder, the work - easier and will erase the problems. Slaves developed quite independent culture in America combining both African and American traditions. Enslaved people also practiced meeting each other in "invisible churches" worshipping secretly from their holders if those restricted their religion. During these meetings they also could share their opinions and discuss the issues of liberty, problems with their owners and the judgement expecting those who treated them cruelly. Many of them converted to Christianity, especially many joined Baptist and Evangelical Church. It can be easily explained as these branches of Christianity emphasized individual freedom and direct communication with God and thus comforted slaves' intension to become free. The phenomenon of becoming Christian was widespread and resulted in mixing African culture with the American traditions. The way they worshipped God was quite unique. They used their hands to clap during the service and kept dancing similarly to their homeland traditional worships.

It is important to add a few words on slave resistance and free blacks. Slave rebellions occurred quite often and were a source of concern for their owners. Many uprisings and revolts shook North America during the 18th and 19th centuries. In order to gain freedom many slaves were opposing the pressure and forming armed groups of rebels especially in the places where slaves formed a big percentage of population. For instance, a big uprising took place in New York in 1712, where slaves constituted the 10th part of the population. The revolt was vanquished and the rebels were burned or hanged. A term "free Negro" or "free blacks" was also known those days

and signified those black-skinned people who were free (either born free or escaped from slavery).