

African american slavery

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The economic system of the South was based on agriculture which was not possible without the assistance of the laborers. The non-availability of cheap labor and impracticability of the wage-earner system led to the adoption of the institution of slavery. The Negro slavery was introduced in the new world for the first time in 1619 when a Dutch vessel sold twenty one Negro slaves to the colonists of Virginia.

The tobacco growing colony found the Negro slave to be cheap, most dependable and efficient. As a result soon the system was adopted by other colonies. As trans-Atlantic slave trade used to bring fortunes to the traders who bought these Negroes on meager prices in Africa and used to sell them on ever-budding prices in the United States.

So this economic factor augmented slavery and the European private individuals engaged themselves in this trade to earn huge profits.

Slavery was encouraged by other flawed legislation that motivated the White population to purchase slaves in order to get economical benefits. For example in 2nd half of 17th century New Jersey under the proprietor's "Concessions and Agreement," put forward an offer of 60 acres of land for every slave imported from Africa. (Wright, p. 19).

This greatly prompted the slave trade and slavery was established in the American life as an institution protected and provoked by legal means. Plantation of tobacco in Virginia was another factor that compelled the white population to hold slavery.

Tobacco cultivation was difficult task and more care and effort was needed to grow tobacco. So due to their physical endurance and effectiveness,

Negroes were imported on large scale to get the maximum economic benefits in the state of Virginia. Slavery was revived in the early nineteenth century due to certain other economic factors. (Parkes, p. 206)

Slavery affected the American nation in several ways. Prof. Elkins manifests that slavery has deeper impact on the American legislation in the earlier years as an institutional efforts were put to provide safeguard to slavery. Another important effect of slavery was the surge of abolitionists in American history and their passionate movements.

The evil nature of the institution of slavery greatly aroused the conscience of the Northerners. Many factors like publication of Uncle Tom's Cabin, contact with fugitive slaves, political agitation of the subjects, denunciation of human bondage by the Northern clergy generated hatred among Southerners against Northerners.

This sectional divide between South and North resulted in the civil war. The end of war in 1865 did not solve the problems; instead it marked the beginning of a very difficult period yet this war caused abolition of slavery and set an impetus for the emergence of a new nation from the debris of war.

Disappearance of the Southern planters from the national scene resulted in the materialization of capitalistic mode of American economy that speeded up the industrialization. Slavery also affected the maturity of American Republic on the institutional level. Dred Scott case (Scott v. Sandford, 60 U. S. (19 How.) 393 (1856).) has its peculiar dimension that still hovers over the social panorama of American state.

The decision that free blacks were not citizens created a wide chasm between Afro-American and Whites. The most important legal case in African American history is Plessy vs. Ferguson an 1896 Supreme Court decision that upheld the constitutionality of a Louisiana statute requiring white and "colored" persons to be furnished "separate but equal" accommodations on railway trains.

This "separate but equal" doctrine again harmed the American nation by dividing it into two equal halves. It prompted segregation. This doctrine was overturned in 1954 with Brown vs. Board. This manifests that how slavery cast its effect on the evolution of American judicial system in general and its consciousness in particular. So slavery contributed to shape up the contours of a new American society.

References

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