

African american history

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Most of the African Americans are descendants of slaves that were moved and held in the United States from 1619-1865. This term is usually used to refer to the descendants from sub-Saharan African and is a replacement of the words "black", "Color", or Negro.

In this essay I will try and discuss how the African American ended up in the United States. For instance did they come to the United States as colonialists or did they end up as a matter of migration? In the latter section I will try and take a look at any form of discrimination that this group faced and if at all they were involved in any form of participation.

In answering the question of how the African Americans ended up in the United States, first we need to look at their history. The Portuguese were the first people to cross the Atlantic Ocean with slaves. It is the Portuguese that transferred their captives to South American countries where they had colonies.

According to Wikipedia (2007), Portuguese were the first to bring slaves out of Africa in 1443, and that the first African slaves arrived in 1619 at Jamestown, United States of America. The African Americans were thus immigrants, at no point in their history do we get learn that they colonized the United States. In fact they never lived as a colony; they did not take control of any part of the United States.

According to John K. (2006), there was a great increase in the number of slaves coming to America during 1660s. " They came mostly from west Africa". According to African American Odyssey (2007), during the slave trade period " millions of African became immigrants to the new world".

Indeed the African Americans were just immigrants (involuntary) to the United States.

The earlier black settlers were slaves that were forced to live Africa to Europe while others settled in the colony States of the European countries of South America. However, there is another group that has migrated to the United States voluntarily albeit later.

Immigrants are people who move to settle in a new place due to various reasons; some move because of economic hardship, others move because they have been ejected (forcefully) from their ancestral homes, others too migrate for other reasons. In the case of afro Americans it was a forceful relocation triggered by the slave trade.

The African Americans faced various forms of discrimination; racial segregation, racial prejudice among others. Blacks were racially segregated mainly by the white Americans, for instance; they were not allowed to attend the same schools as the whites. In 1896, the supreme court of the United States in a case of Plessey vs. Ferguson, mandated racial segregation within its states and localities.

According to the American Odyssey (2007), during the 19th century, some democratic controlled states, largely in the south, passed racially discriminating laws. These laws were aimed at the black community within the United States.

Blacks were not allowed to board the same buses as the whites, and if they did they were expected to give their seats up for the whites. A case in the point was demonstrated during the December of 1955, when Rosa Parks

refused to get out of her seat while aboard a public bus for a white man. She was later tried and convicted for allegedly violating a local ordinance and been disorderly.

This led to a protest and a boycott by the blacks. African Americans were secluded from school attended, according to Sundiata Cha-Jua, (2007; pg 1), " African American students and faculty encountered a hostile environment dominated by racial exclusion" this just demonstrates how the blacks were discriminated. " They segregated militia units based on race" (Jean West; n. d)

The exclusion of African Americans from the mainstream public and private schools made education inaccessible for most of them. However, this has improved with time, according to John K. Thornton, (2006; 2), the African Americans began to access unprecedented education and employment opportunities after the end of civil rights era. In most of the instances the blacks were the victims.

However, some blacks who were revolting towards slavery and discrimination also ended up participating in the racial violence. In 1831, according to African American Odyssey (2007), Nat Turner led an uprising in Southampton, Virginia, where slave rebels were on a door to door killing rampage.

About 60 whites were killed in the process. The period 1948-1965, about 200 churches and houses that belonged to blacks in the deep south were targeted and bombed (George Wallace; 1994; pg1), A century of tears and

triumph. This discrimination made most of blacks to be very disadvantaged socially, economically, among others, (John K. Thornton).

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