

The freedom of slaves

[History](#), [American History](#)



The year 1775 was when John Murray organized a colonial military unit called the Ethiopian Regiment that had over 30, 000 black slaves who leave their masters to join their organization. They were promised freedom if they joined Lord Dunmore to fight against the rebels in the revolutionary war, many of them however, died or were sent back to their masters.

Not only did these slaves risk their lives in order to gain their freedom, they also risked punishment from their owners if they were to get sent back.

Therefore not all slaves were able to benefit much from joining this Regiment. What the military has solved was them being known as the most skilled, equipped soldiers with naval superiority. Slaves were also freed due to the Revolution. Many black slaves died due to diseases such as smallpox and only 300 were able to contribute while the rest were thrown out of their boat or sent to jail.

Based on the primary documentation that was sent to Lord Dunmore, colonial governor in the American colonies; freeing black slaves after they fight for the British played a major role for the American Revolution and their strategy. Furthermore, this started a practice that led to events, such as Dunmore's issues with the Patriots.

He was in need of troops and later started enlisting any free man. This resulted to his recruitment of black slaves and of other origins. The letter was sent from the Council of Virginia, a reply to the Governors message congratulating the arrival of him and his family as well as concur with the House Of Burgesses in framing such laws as shall be for the welfare and true interest of this colony .

Lord Dunmore's contribution helped the colony build a stronger union as well as events leading up to it, such as the Tea Act. People from the North suspected the war would be unavoidable when the Coercive Acts was passed. However, Lord Dartmouth anticipated against hope for peace and willingly wanted to discuss further notion with the American Congress. Thus, he proposed for the colonies to signify their adherence to the imperial trade laws by reenacting those statutes .

John Ferling describes the decisions being made by the congress and people, such as John Adams, who was against the idea of going to war and Congress's second pivotal step was to urge each colony to put its militia upon a proper footing . Therefore, Adams claimed that Congress would neither create a national army nor assist the colonies in preparing their militias.

These events have affected black slaves due to the union being in need of recruits. They offered black slaves to gain their freedom in exchange for them to participate in their military union. Blacks were anxious to join the war due to an act of congress, it declared that the soldier that enlisted would be free forever, as well as their mother, wife, and children. The chance to fight outside of the union was also seen as an opportunity to prove themselves as people seeing as during that time period they were treated poorly due to their ethnicity.

In *Slave Nation: How Slavery United the Colonies & Sparked the American Revolution*, the authors argue about the role slaves take in the founding of the republic, from the Declaration of Independence to the making of the

constitution. Such as, the year 1776 when Thomas Jefferson proposed to abolish the slave act as well as an end to existing property rights of primogeniture. Alfred and Ruth gave detailed evidence in order to support their arguments and suggestions, since he opposed the concept of slavery, but instead modified the Declaration of Independence and removed the word property to liberty .

Another important event that shaped the union and impacted slaves was the Somerset case which was the cause of the American Revolution. Lord Mansfield declared a judgement in the Somerset's Case that affirmed that slavery was at odds with the English law and that no one can impose authority on slaves in Scotland or England. The case began to completely abolish the slave trade, however it was not until the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833 that Slavery was extinguished around all the British Empire.

The author of Slave Nation also revealed how much the British as well as the Americans relied on the black slaves before the Tea Act. They were used to cash crops such as tobacco, cotton, sugar, rice, etc. Moreover, documents such as the Declaration of Independence, played a major role during that time period. According to Thomas Jefferson he estimates that 30, 000 slaves walked off their plantation to fight in the Revolution. However, there were some black slaves who did not have the choice to fight and were not guaranteed the freedom from the constitution. The book demonstrated important events that occurred in 1776 where Jefferson proposed an end to existing property rights of primogeniture and was able to solve the problem by using language that was more general.

There are events where it goes more into what went on once they declared Independence and the debate they had. Peter Van Schaack, a loyalist from New York, claimed that British treatment of its colonies is harsh which is how they have met those conditions of being governed[4]. Later on blacks gained recognition and were starting to be looked at differently since it was in the middle of a time period where every black person was looked down on because of their status.

Furthermore, they were being used by the British and took advantage of the wartime confusion to migrate to other areas of the colonies. The British may have lost the war but they were still known as the most powerful country in the world due to their skilled and professional soldiers. The Americans only won the war only because they were aided by the French king who was opposed to offering the same liberties to his people .

Alfred and Ruth Blumrosen explain further in Slave Nation that the main focus was slaves being the motor of the Revolution and how to resolve their issue being internal liberty with the north on freedom from taxation by England. In addition, an important event that led to the abolishment of black slaves was the Somerset case in the American colonies and the laws being made throughout the years since many slaves walked away from their masters.

However, in 1778 when Virginia outlawed the importation of slaves it took years until slaves were abolished. Some slaves were being abolished immediately in the North by the constitution, but in 1776 was when Vermont writes a constitution in which slavery was eradicated. Whereas in Boston,

Massachusetts, the abolishment of slavery did not go through until a slave sued the state.

Another point that was brought up by Alfred and Ruth Blumrosen was how slavery united the 13 colonies and how America was built on a compromise on slavery and if it were not for the northern states not assenting to the southern demands there would be no nation, seeing as the south's economy is based on plantation . The attitudes of these men were influenced by the nature of the planting process and them being known as a successful tobacco grower was a personal achievement and considered it their independence.

The author Raphael from the book *The First American Revolution: Before Lexington and Concord*, points out during late August of 1774, patriots and British officials geared up for the court openings. They went further to discuss the rumor that British troops bombarded Boston and heard shots fired that resulted to six men being killed. Congress knew that war was coming and Britain was in need of more troops. Thomas Gage was assigned as a British Army General Soldier was served for North America, he was the most convincing witness to the power of the Massachusetts Revolution of 1774. In his letters he sent that fall to Lord Dartmouth he chronicled activities of his opponents, referring often to the proceedings of the Provincial Congress.

The author Ray mentioned how Massachusetts chose to mix black and white soldiers and afterwards thousands of black soldiers were sold in the West Indies making \$1, 000 for each one of them. It was not until 200 years and

another civil war before blacks were given the guarantees of the constitution to be freed. Most people during that time period did not have an explanation of slavery and took black slaves for granted especially for all the work they have done previously such as working in the field with tobacco, cotton, and sugar. Even though these measures slavery was disappearing in the North and not in the South.

Washington would be having a formal meeting with Congress discussing when reports of the reverses in Georgia arrived and were promptly referred to the committee. Negroes sufficient for Pioneers, servants & all fatigue Duty by Land & Water and Negroes who may be armed. as high as thirty five hundred thousand . The fear that Washington had was that the British might draw significant strength by arming American slaves. It first surfaced with Governor Dunmore's proclamation in 1775.

Nonetheless Dunmore had been operating from a ship in Chesapeake Bay, and until the British were able to remain in the south they ability to exploit such efforts was said to be limited. Thus the new southern strategy rested on appealing to loyalist, not slaves. Once the news from Georgia reached Congress some delegates assumed that they would arm black soldiers.

The greatest source of Danger, is the accession of strength of strength they will probably receive, from the black inhabitants,' one Maryland delegate wrote, and if they are resolved to prosecute the Measure, and to break through every tie of honor and Humanity, they will gain considerable strength. it was open question whether British would act more as liberators or as plunderers or new exploiters .

All in all, due to the occurrence of the American Revolution thousands of slaves were freed, there were also more blacks freed from the aftermath of the Revolution than any other war prior to that. Britain saw them as toys who were used to fight for the Empire on a condition being that they could be granted their freedom in exchange for taking arms. The slaveholders of the south did not however plan on giving weapons to the black slaves in fear that they would turn against their owners. Thus the northerners armed black slaves due to them having too much to do and to keep the farm going. Events such as the Somerset case that initiated the American Revolution also brought slaves to fight not only for their independence but for themselves and to be recognized as individuals rather than as objects.

Contents

While the Revolution responded to a variety of issues what really motivated the slaves was the decision in determining which side would result to their freedom the fastest. Many black slaves played a major role during this time period, both free and enslaved. Additionally, the American Revolution played a large role in defining the institution of slavery in the American colonies, but it also impacted the global slave trade for years to come. As a result Americans and British would not be here if it were not for the black slaves and how they were able to contribute in using both their farming and skills used in war.

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