

The caribbean slave society



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Women in Grenadian Slave Society, 1783 – 1838 A slave is a person held in servitude as the chattel of another. Slavery is a system whereby persons are held against their will from the time of their capture and are treated as property and are forced to work. Among these West African slaves were women that were brought to the Caribbean to work on the British Caribbean Sugar plantations. Historical records show that between 1784 and 1788, a total of 8216 male and 5346 female slaves were sold to Grenada. The article Women in Grenadian Slave Society, 1783 – 1838 reveals the important roles women (blacks, free blacks and coloured and whites) played during the time of slavery and highlights how some of them may have either bought their freedom or fought for it. They were valuable assets.

During the period of slavery the enslaved women were expected to perform two (2) jobs; to produce and reproduce. They worked in the cane fields just as hard as men and received the same punishments as men did. They were also expected to reproduce thus child bearing was a part of their job. These women were expected to conserve and replenish the slave population but for some that was not an option. Some women were unwilling to become pregnant others just refused to bring forth their child and have it suffer like they did so they used herbal mixtures to abort their children. Most of the women who did bring their children however were calcium deficient thus making malnourished children.

Being a slave woman was not proven to be an easy one. The female field slaves were considered to be the most socially inferior of all the slaves and were therefore sexually exploited by her master and other white men on the plantation. They were also offered up as prostitutes to

their owner's visiting friends and planters. As a result of this, most women contracted infections and diseases. The enslaved women in Grenada wanted to be free so most of them got it through manumission (the act of a slave owner freeing his or her slaves) through the three (3) main ways; some bought it from selling crops from their plots of land, other fought for it by committing acts of rebellion while others got it through the leniency of their masters. You can't separate peace from freedom because no one can be at peace unless he has his freedom. Malcolm X