



0. Free and Enslaved Africans in South Carolina - Story Preface

1. South Carolina - Beginnings

2. South Carolina - European Settlers

3. Free and Enslaved Africans in South Carolina

4. Natural Resources Led to Economic Prosperity in South Carolina

5. Pre-Revolutionary Period in South Carolina

6. The Patriot Movie and Conditions of Colonial Life in South Carolina

7. South Carolina - Causes and Effects of American Revolution

8. South Carolina and Adoption of the Declaration of Independence

9. South Carolina - Different Perspectives During the Revolution

10. Summary of the People and Battles in South Carolina during Revolution

11. Role of South Carolina after the Revolution

12. The Rebel Flag and a Shooting in Charleston

13. The Development of the New National Government

14. New Governments are Created

15. The Basic Principles of the US Constitution

16. Issues that Divide a Nation

17. Events Leading to the U.S. Civil War

18. Civil War Stirrings in South Carolina

19. 1860 Secession from the Union?

20. Military Strategy Impacts South Carolina

21. Reconstruction Policies in South Carolina

22. Economic Impact of Reconstruction in South Carolina

23. White Society Refuses Black Freedom

24. Governor Wade Hampton

25. South Carolina Industry Expansion

South Carolina had very fertile land that was great for growing rice, cotton, and indigo. However, the large plantations needed many workers to be successful as the labor required to cultivate the land was massive.

Many planters did not know how to grow these crops or have enough workers. Fewer indentured servants were willing to accept an indenture contract. The settlers attempted to force Native Americans to do the work, but since the Native Americans knew the land, escape was easy for them. Native Americans also did not know how to cultivate the land as they were used to using the slash-and-burn method for growing crops.

Carolina settlers from Barbados brought their slaves and the well-developed slave system with them. As more and more slaves were needed, slaves were forced through the "Middle Passage" which simply meant Africans were forced to go to from Africa to the West Indies, then sold on the auction block. This led to the largest forced

immigration in US history.

The enslaved and free Africans played a major role in the development of the culture and economy of South Carolina as they brought the knowledge of land cultivation with them. Africans also knew how to tend cattle, grow rice, harvest the naval stores (tar, pitch and turpentine) and lumber from the forests. This knowledge led to a booming trade with Barbados and England. These cash crops and the ever-growing plantation system continued to lead to an increasing need for more slaves.

Meanwhile, in West Africa and America, the different Native tribes would fight among themselves. When one tribe would win, they would make slaves of the losing tribe and sell them to European slave traders. Some Africans and Native Americans also would become slave traders as it was a profitable way of life.

The slaves/prisoners faced a very difficult life and those coming from Africa also faced living in a new country with a different language. The slaves would be sold at auctions. In the 1690s, the large-scale importation of slaves from Africa continued on a massive scale. Many slaves came through the port of Charleston and brought with them their language, dance, music, woodcarving, folk medicine, and basket weaving.

Africans would use music to keep up their spirits as they worked long hours on the plantations. Drums were a way to communicate with slaves on other plantations until they were banned, due to the Stono Rebellion.

In 1698, the slave population was beginning to outnumber the whites in massive numbers in various parts of South Carolina. However, slaves were essential to the plantation economical system and the government system, the Assembly, did not want to limit the number of slaves still coming into the colony.

Slave owners were increasingly becoming worried that slaves would revolt. A slave revolt did occur when a small group of slaves wanted to escape to St. Augustine, Florida. The slave revolt near Charles Town was called the Stono Rebellion. In the rebellion, two settlers were killed in a store. Drums were then used to encourage more slaves to join in the rebellion. The Governor, William Bull, called out the militia who then fought and won against the slaves. In all, twenty white settlers and at least forty slaves were killed.

As a result of the rebellion, strict laws were passed in 1740, also called the "Negro Act." Slaves could not earn money, carry guns, gather in large groups without white supervision, learn to write or read, and those who did were punished severely. The Negro Act also controlled what a slave wore and fined slave owners who were cruel to their slaves. It created tighter control on the slaves but did nothing to limit the number of slaves who were still being bought and sold.

South Carolina had fewer free African-Americans compared to other colonies. In other colonies, when a slave owner died the Last Will and Testament could free slaves for faithful service, or an owner could free a slave during the owner's life for various reasons. A small number of slaves were able to make money on their own skills and save money to purchase their own freedom. If a slave in South Carolina became free, the free person was required to leave the colony within six months or they would be re-enslaved and sold on the slave market.

On a plantation, the slaves cleared the land, cut timber, worked the fields or in the planter's house. They had no life of their own, could be sold by their master, and their children could be sold. Slaves would take care of the children and frequently cooked/cleaned the planter's house.

During the days of slavery in the South, most slaves did not like their owners. Most slaves usually lived in small cabins with dirt for floors and no windows. Slaves would be given one set of clothing. Slaves were always afraid of being sold or being separated from their families. Slaves could also be sold to pay for a gambling debt.

The field slaves, for the most part, did not eat well. In most cases, the house slaves would be treated better than field slaves. House slaves would eat better than field slaves and some would even travel with the family.

In most states, it was forbidden to teach a slave to read and write. Almost all slaves had to have the owner's permission to leave the plantation and could receive severe punishment if caught carrying a weapon.

Footnotes:

1) Unknown, Slavery and the Making of America, PBS.org, Jun/09/2015, Jun/09/2015,

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/slavery/timeline/1739.html>

2) unknown, Naval stores and the longleaf pine, UNC School of Education, Dec/31/1969, Jun/09/2015,

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3) unknown, SC Dept of Education,

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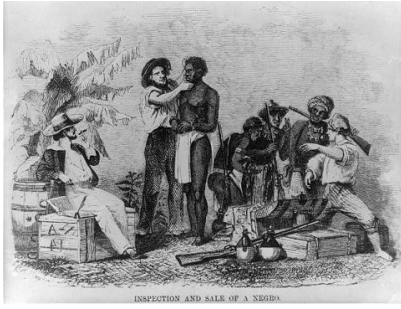
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See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Free-and-enslaved-Africans-in-South-Carolina-South-Carolina-History>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/Free-and-enslaved-Africans-in-South-Carolina-South-Carolina-History>



Buyers Inspect Slave Before Purchase

Image described above, [online courtesy Library of Congress](#).

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