



Revolutionary Times



Containing the Latest News from the Sons of the American Revolution

Slaves in the American Revolutionary War

In the 15th century, Portugal became the first European nation to take significant part in African slave trading. By the 1480s, Portuguese ships were already transporting Africans for use as slaves on the sugar plantations in the Cape Verde and Madeira islands in the eastern Atlantic.

By the 16th century, the Portuguese dominated the early trans-Atlantic slave trade on the African coast. The Portuguese developed a trading relationship with the Kingdom of Kongo, which existed from the 14th to the 19th centuries.

The first Africans in English North America were those pirated in 1619 by the White Lion and the Treasurer from the Spanish frigate San Juan Bautista in July, and delivered to Jamestown six weeks later at the latter end of August.

By 1775 more than a half-million African Americans, most of them enslaved, were living in the 13 colonies.

Both the British and the colonists believed that slaves could serve an important role during the revolution. African American soldiers served with valor at the battles of Lexington and Bunker Hill. A slave helped row Washington across the Delaware.

Altogether, some 5,000 free blacks and slaves served in the Continental army during the Revolution. By 1778, many states, including Virginia, granted freedom to slaves who served in the Revolutionary war.

Unlike the Continental Army, the Navy recruited both free and enslaved blacks from the very start of the Revolutionary War. The American Revolution had profound effects on the institution of slavery.

Several thousand slaves won their freedom by serving on either side of the War of Independence. As a result of the Revolution, a

surprising number of slaves were released from slavery, while thousands of others freed themselves by running away.

Although the rise of the free black population is one of the most notable achievements of this time frame, it is important to note that the overall impact of the Revolution on slavery had negative consequences.

In the North, where slavery was on its way out, racism still persisted, as in a Massachusetts law of 1786 that prohibited whites from legally marrying African Americans, Indians or people of mixed race.

The Revolution clearly had a mixed impact on slavery and contradictory meanings for African Americans.

It failed to reconcile slavery with the new promotion of equality, social justice and democracy. Tensions eventually boiled over and effectively tore the nation in two in the 1850s and 1860s.



This broadsheet is dedicated to the 250th Anniversary Celebration of the Declaration of Independence for more information visit the National Society Sons of the American Revolution website at: www.sar.org

Presented by: The Hawaii Society Sons of the American Revolution
<https://hawaiisar.org/> For more:
<https://tinyurl.com/2kak9cef>