

Blog Post

Millions of African slaves were being sent to America by ship for years. This was no pleasant journey either. 10 out of the 12 million slaves who were being sent here didn't survive the long trip as noted in "www.theroot.com". In 1807 the import of African slaves was banned in the United States which made it so no new slaves could come to America. That did not mean that there would not be slaves anymore. It meant that plantation owners would have to breed their slaves so that slavery could go on forever. This was called the second middle passage. This new system of slave breeding was to acquire new slaves without incurring the cost of purchase, and to fill labor shortages. This was proven to be a more effective way of bringing new slaves here because they didn't have to travel for months on a boat which caused a lot of deaths.

Plantation owners forced women to bear many children against their will which over time would bring a large amount of forced labor to their bidding. Young women were often advertised for sale as "good breeding stock." To encourage child-bearing, some plantation owners promised women slaves their freedom after they had produced fifteen children. One slave trader from Virginia boasted that his successful breeding policies enabled him to sell 6,000 slave children a year. These people treated these slaves like farm animals and didn't even think of Africans as human. This type of treatment is horrible to do to anyone, human or animal, and these white men are doing it for their own personal gain. Many people in the 1800's considered this a normal thing that didn't seem cruel to them.

Being born into slavery is worse than being brought here from Africa, in my opinion, because some children stayed with their mother until they were only three years old, some when they were seven and others stayed with their mothers most of their life. In most situations, slave children were sold several times throughout their childhood. Some, if given the opportunity, were later able to return to their original plantations, but it was rarely possible. For most slave children, the separation from their parents and the siblings was the hardest aspect of being sold. Slaves went to great lengths to keep their family together, but there was often limits to what they could do I can't imagine what would be in someone's sick mind to do this to innocent people. Slavery was the biggest industry during this time, and slaves were worth more than gold and silver. They were known as being 3/5ths of a human, but this makes it sound like they were even less than that - as if they were just an item. This is how Dred Scott was treated on trial when he had lived in Illinois for four years yet the Supreme Court decided that he would be put back into slavery because he was property, not a person. Really, there was no way for slaves to get out of this situation because while more slaves were being bred, the plantation owners were getting richer and more powerful. This is somewhat relatable to a modern day problem where employees at Walmart are being paid very low wages because they don't have enough education to find decent paying jobs, even needing in some cases to apply for government assistance just to make end meet, while the CEO makes billions a year. The owners and managers are getting richer because they are selling goods on a massive scale similar to slave owners profiting from the labor of slaves and selling cotton for a huge earnings.

The more slaves that came in the next several decades were able to make more material that we exported. This material was mainly cotton. In 1794, Eli Whitney made a machine called the cotton gin which allowed cotton to be produced a lot faster and easier than before which made a huge difference. It was true that the cotton gin reduced the labor of removing seeds, though it did not reduce the need for slaves to grow and pick the cotton. In fact, the opposite occurred. Cotton growing became so profitable for the plantation owners that it greatly increased their demand for both land and slave labor.

America did not have a shortage of cotton because they would just keep making more, exporting it, and making money to buy more slaves to make more cotton. It was pretty much just a never ending cycle. Our country is still being run in a similar way because we find a way to make the rich people richer and the poor people stay mainly the same. All people despite their race want to be successful and happy but in the 19th century mostly white people had that opportunity. Often times greed is what caused these rich white men to think that just being rich wasn't enough and that they had to dominate other people.

<https://www.theroot.com/how-many-slaves-landed-in-the-us>

<https://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/cotton-gin-patent>

<http://slavery.msa.maryland.gov/html/antebellum/essay1.html>

<http://spartacus-educational.com/USASbreeding.htm>