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## Life of a Slave - Life for enslaved Men and Women

Life for a slave was unfair, cruel, and demanding. Slaves would be brutally punished, abused sexually, and even murdered. Slaves would work long hard days from sunup to sundown to complete task that their masters had gave them. The South had verdant land where slavery was needed to aid the production of crops that were vital to their economy. Without slavery it would have been impossible for the South to meet the worldwide demand for its products. Slavery improved the South's economy leaps and bounds. Slavery played a huge role in the expansion of the United States Economy. Life of a slave was incredibly difficult. Children, women, and elderly were not exempt from this long harsh work hours. Their diet did not add up to the work they would be completing during the day. Their clothing was worn and old. Slaveholders would supply their slaves with the bare minimum of food, clothing, and housing. Slaveholders were more worried about keeping the slaves alive and working than keeping them comfortable.

Most slaves would live in stick shacks that would have dirt floors and cracks in the walls. One freedom of the slaves was that they got to develop families. The slaveholders thought that the more the slaves produced offsprings the more free labor they would be gaining. There was no promise that the family would be able to stay together because slaveholders would sell and trade slaves. Slaves were not to be educated. Slaveholders thought that if slaves would became educated that they would realize how bad they actually have it and want to run away. Also if slaves became educated they would be able to read maps and articles that would help them escape. If one slave was educated they would read the bible to the rest of the slaves. If they would get caught teaching other slaves to read they would be severely punished. If a slave would not complete the job in a manner that the slaveholder wanted they would be beaten, whipped, have to whip other slaves, lose meals. Anything was up for grabs, slaveholders did not care about a slaves feelings or condition when it came to punishment.

In 1774 it was not against the law in North Carolina to abuse or even murder a slave. Slaves had no right to protest against their masters and if they most of them would be convicted. Slaves obviously did not want to stay and live in these conditions so they would run away. Some would runaway to just be free or to find family. It was very difficult for a slave to run away and not be caught. If a slave was caught trying to escape they would most likely be severely punished. Some would be sold to the deep south so it would be more difficult for them to runaway. Some slaves would be returned to their master or sold to a different owner. Most slaves would continue to risk their lives to get to freedom even after an unsuccessful escape. Slavery was cruel and evil, but without it the United States may not have flourished in the way it did.

During the Antebellum Period, the economy was rapidly expanding and improving. The big question: Was slavery actually necessary for the progress of America? It was definitely not the right way to go about the situation but it was the quickest and most efficient form of production they had in the seventeenth and eighteenth century. There is no doubt that it directly contributed to the wealthy nation we are today. Believe it or not slavery is still a problem. Human trafficking, debt bondage, forced marriage, and domestic servitude are all examples of present day slavery. These all qualify as slavery because people are getting forced to work, they are owned, they get sold as property, and they have restrictions on their freedom.

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