

Teaching About Slavery—Political Correctness or Good History and Perspective?

Teaching about Slavery – Political or Good History and Perspective?

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Abstract *The article is about the ignorance of American students concerning the historical nature of slavery (thinking it as essentially a Euro-American, White, Christian institution foisted on blacks), the "myths" surrounding the institution of slavery, and how to place the teaching of slavery into proper historical perspective so that students can achieve historical context and perspective. (55 words)*

Keywords

"Myths" about slavery, African slavery, Black-on-black slavery, Islamic slavery, slavery, teaching about slavery in the United States.

Setting the Stage

"I was surprised to hear that African Americans were not the only slaves.... Why is it that they do not teach you this while you are in school?"

"I have always heard about the African slaves to the west but never realized how much other slavery has gone on... we grow up in a society that only talks about the slaves in the beginning of the United States...."

"Perhaps the most interesting fact I learned...about black Africa was that the European Americans were not the first people to subject them to slavery...My whole life I've only been taught that white, Christian Americans went to Africa and brought back slaves."

"For some reason I never thought that other races beside black were slaves....I think ... our teachers made us develop a stereotype that slaves were only blacks"

" I had no idea slavery was widely practiced throughout world history....."

"I was always under the impression that Americans were the instigators of slave trade and that we were the only country that was subjecting this on human beings...."

"I saw slavery as very straightforward. The white man went to Africa and violently apprehended men and women, then brought them back to the United States for slavery....I also did not know that slavery was a native institution to Africa....I thought the idea of slavery was forcefully introduced to Africa...."

I never knew that Africa had slavery before slavery was even introduced into the United States."

"I never really made the connection... that slavery existed before the Europeans came to Africa...I learned that slavery was not based [exclusively] on skin color"

Introduction

The above are typical responses of my World Civilizations students, written in their logs--their thoughts and ideas on the course--to our discussion of slavery. Most American students believe slavery was a White, Christian Euro-American phenomenon foisted on black Africans and essentially a North American tragedy. Students don't realize that slavery was "natural" and "normal" throughout history. Christine Balt and Seymour Drescher have written, "A little over two centuries ago [slavery] existed as a virtually unchallenged... element of the international

economic network." Richard Hellie notes that "slavery existed almost everywhere." To Paul Lovejoy, "those who focus on slavery in the Americas without reference to slavery in Africa have neglected a major problem in the history of Africans." (1) We fail our students and distort history when this is what they learn.

There are at least five reasons for this problem.

First, the emphasis on U.S. history (natural in the U.S.) and not world history, and the discussion of slavery within American society, lets students think that slavery was only an institution perpetrated on backs by whites (generally American, Anglo-Saxon, Christian).

Second, even today, beyond American history, we concentrate on Western and not World civilization. This basically ignores other civilizations where slavery flourished.

Third, although easy to do, we generally fail to put slavery into historical perspective. Many Jews have appropriated the word "holocaust" and decry its use in a non-Jewish context; many African-Americans have appropriated slavery as "their" issue and believe discussing slavery elsewhere or placing it into historical perspective belittles American slavery and is racist. (2)

Fourth, many teachers simply know too little about slavery to place it into perspective. We know a good deal about American slavery but are ignorant of its extent elsewhere.

Fifth, "political correctness" is always present. However, as David Landes, has argued, "I prefer truth to goodthink. I feel surer of my ground." (3)

When we teachers fail to put slavery into historical perspective, we fail to train our students properly.

What are the myths that students and teachers seem to share? First, slavery was essentially an American (i.e., US) phenomenon. Second, slavery was a Christian phenomenon. Third, African slavery was "easier," or "milder," than American. Fourth, slavery was something whites perpetrated on blacks. Fifth, "New World" slavery was a North American phenomenon. Explaining these myths will help students put slavery into correct historical context and gain a better understanding of history and today's world.

Myth One: Slavery as an American (i.e., US) problem

American students learn something about slavery by studying Code of Hammurabi. Judeo-Christian students may be familiar with Hebrew slavery from the laws concerning slavery in Exodus 21: 2ff and Leviticus 25:44ff. But it is a Teflon approach; slavery as an age-old, worldwide phenomenon just doesn't stick.

Yet, "slavery [has] existed almost everywhere," since earliest times, and from three diverse human sources--the Slavic peoples, people from the Iranian steppe, and the Germanic/Celtic/Romance people of continental Europe. (4)

Later, as W.G. de Burgh pointed out, "among the Greeks, as general throughout antiquity, slavery formed part of the traditional order and...was accepted without question." Greece was "the first known major slave society. " "The census of 309 BC showed 400,000 slaves just in Attica," and one-third of Athens's population was slave. (5)

The percentage of slaves in the Roman Empire was also probably 30%. Some argue that Rome itself eventually had as many as 900,000 slaves. (6) Panevin sees the primary sources of Roman (and ancient slavery in general) as war, indebtedness, slave-raiding piracy, and the "natural" increase of slaves through sexual relations. (7)

War supplied many slaves. After the Second Punic War Rome enslaved 30,000 citizens of Tarentum because they supported Carthage. In 167, after the Third Macedonian War, over

150,000 people from Epirus were enslaved. In 146, after the Third Punic War, 60,000 Carthaginians were enslaved. Another surge occurred in the age of Marius and Sulla. After the Cimbri-Teutonic War, Sulla seized 50,000 as slaves. Julius Caesar's Gallic wars led to the enslavement, depending on estimates, of 400,000-1,000,000 Gauls. (8) Further, "the lot of most [Roman] slaves...was miserable." "Unskilled slaves... were often brutally treated....and many rural owners chained their chattel at night to prevent their escape." Cato said that masters should "sell worn-out oxen, blemished cattle, blemished sheep, wool, hides, an old slave, a sickly slave, and whatever else is superfluous." (9) Roman slavery induced large-scale slave revolts. Best known is that led by Spartacus, numbering 70,000-120,000, which broke out in 73 BC and was defeated only in 71 BC by Marcus Licinius Crassus, who celebrated by crucifying 6,000 defeated slaves. (10) Manumission of Roman slaves was nonetheless common. In the Empire freedmen filled "a large percentage of the lower ranks of the civil service, they filled every trade and profession, the commerce of Italy was largely in their hands, and they became the managers of estates and of business undertakings of all sorts." (11) (

Elsewhere in Europe, 10% of England's population of England, based on the Domesday Book in 1086, were slaves, and "continental Europe—France, Germany, Poland, Lithuania, and Russia—all knew slavery." (12) Slavery was also widespread on the Iberian Peninsula, both Roman and Muslim times. As for Russia, "for all of early modern Russia 10 percent would seem to be an absolute lower bound as a portion of the total population that was subject to the laws of slavery." (13) When Peter the Great (1689-1725) theoretically ended slavery he did not emancipate slaves but merged them into the Russian peasant class, thereby blurring the distinction between slave and serfs/peasants, comprising 90% of the population. Serfdom was really a form of slavery. Russian masters could brutalize their serfs, sell them, whip them until they died, exploit them sexually, etc. Russian and American slavery, both ending in the 1860s, were essentially the same: "Russian serfdom had by the second half of the eighteenth century become essentially a variant of slavery, much closer to American chattel slavery than to the serfdom of, say, medieval France" (14)

Finally, twentieth century Europe saw perhaps the worst forms of slavery under Hitler and Stalin. By September 1944 there were 7.5 million non-German slave laborers and an additional 2.5 million POWs in Germany; fewer than 2% went voluntarily. Conditions were unbelievably bad. Dr. William Jaeger--deposed at Nuremberg--was "senior doctor" of the huge Krupp industrial work's slaves:

Upon my first visit, I found these females suffering from open festering wounds and other diseases....there were no medical supplies....The sole clothing of each consisted of a sack with holes for their arms and head....The amount of food in the camp was extremely meager and of very poor quality....many workers were forced to go to work in their bare feet, even in winter....Sanitary conditions were atrocious....At times the water supply at the camps was shut off for periods of from eight to fourteen days...." (15)

Bolshevik slavery was worse because it lasted longer, engulfed tens of millions of people and millions of deaths, and had living conditions equally as bad. (16) Slavery also existed in Asia. Slavery existed during the first Chinese dynasty, the Shang. Perhaps 5% of the population in the Han Dynasty (ca. 200 B.C.-200 AD), was slave. Chinese slavery ended only in 1910. Conrad Schirokauer says slavery existed in China but that not more than 1% of the Han population was slave. D.N. Knightley has argued that "although Marxist historians have categorized the Shang as a slave society, it would be more accurate to describe it as a dependent society....If slavery

existed, it was psychological and ideological, not legal." After the rise of Islam, the large Islamic trade led to black slaves being shipped to China; the Chinese scholar Chu Yu wrote in 1119 that "In Kauang-chou [Canton] most of the wealthy people keep devil-slaves....their colour is as black as [Chinese] ink, their lips are red, their teeth white and their hair curly...." (17)

In Japan, Schirokauer says that "at the bottom of the social scale were a small class of household slaves." Takeshi Toyoda argues slaves during the Yamato Era (ca. 300-800 AD) "accounted for less than one-tenth of the population," which implies a significant number of slaves. (18)

Slavery existed in India long before the coming of the Muslims. In India "domestic slavery was common." When Britain sought to end Indian slavery in the 19th century, the census enumerated 8-9,000,000 slaves. (19) Elsewhere in Asia slavery was more widespread. In Korea perhaps "a third to half of the entire population for most of the millennium between the Silla period and mid-18th century" was slave. in parts of Thailand and Burma perhaps 25-33% of the population between the 1600s and early 1900s consisted of slaves. (20)

As we shall see below, slavery was also widespread in the Muslim world, Africa, and even pre-Columbian Meso-America.

In summary, to think that slavery was unique to the Americas and/or the United States is grossly inaccurate.

Myth Two: Slavery as a Christian Institution

Students are surprised to learn that Islamic slavery was as significant as Western, Christian slavery. Ronald Segal's, Islam's Black Slaves; the Other Black Diaspora, is enlightening. Segal makes one indisputable point and several debatable ones. (21) Indisputably, the number of African black slaves moved north and east was at least as great as the number sent across the Atlantic, and the result was "a flow of slaves possibly greater in total than that across the Atlantic" (22) Segal accepts the figure of over 7,000,000 such slaves just between 650 and 1600. (23)

Second, Segal accepts the figures of the Islamic trade in African blacks for following centuries, in this case relying on Paul Lovejoy's figures: 900,000 in the 1600s, 1,300,000 in the 1700s, and 2,000,000 in the 1800s. (24)

Third, Lovejoy rejects Austen's pre-1600 figure of 7,220,000, arguing it could be much lower or higher and that the pre-1600 figures should be 3.5-10.0 million. (25) Hence, we can come up with two tables.

Austen figures	Lovejoy figures	
To 1600	7,220,000	3,500,000-10,000,000
1600-1800	2,200,000	2,200,000 2,100,000
1800-1900	<u>2,000,000</u>	<u>2,100,000</u> <u>2,100,000</u>
TOTALS:	11,420,000	7,800,000- 14,200,000

Fourth, Segal concludes that "the annual average for eleven and a half centuries [650-1800] would have been 8,270 per annum" (9.51 million, or 8270 times 1150). But that excludes 2,000,000 for the nineteenth century. Thus, the total of 11,510,500 is "a figure not far short of the 11,863,000 estimated to have been loaded onto ships during the four centuries of the Atlantic trade" (26) Segal cites even higher figures, such, 14,000,000 in the Islamic trade by the Frenchman Raymond Maury. Hellie's figures are 18,000,000, covering the period 650-1905. (27)

Segal's comparisons of Islamic and western slavery are debatable. Segal loathes western slavery and takes a view of Islamic slavery which he himself seems to contradict, although making some good points. Thus, Segal writes that "both Christianity and Islam...long sanctioned the capture, sale, ownership, and use of men, women, and children from black Africa." Yet he invariably states that Islamic slavery was less evil, and that, comparatively, "the history of Islam emerged with some credit." (28) Thus, after dealing with the numbers of slaves, he writes that "even if the volume of the two trades [Islamic and Atlantic] were roughly the same, the Atlantic trade involved only four centuries, while the Islamic one stretched well beyond that," i.e., over 12-13 centuries). (29) Is one is less guilty for embezzling \$11,000,000 over 12.5 years than over 4 years? If Islamic slavery lasted much longer, was it more theoretically ingrained and therefore worse than western slavery?

Segal writes that Islam condoned slavery, but not of other Muslims. "The enslavement of unbelievers was both a compensation for Muslim deaths in a lawful war and a way of promoting conversion to the faith." Further, "in Islam, slavery was never the moral, political, and economic issue that it was in the West, where it engendered a multitude of tracts and books in denunciation or defense of the institution." (30) Muslims were not to enslave other Muslims; the "Koran also expressly encouraged the freeing of slaves," and children born to female slaves were to be free, and the Prophet forbade mutilation and castration. (31)

Segal concludes that "Islam has been...relatively humane in its treatment of slaves and its readiness to free them," that "the treatment of slaves in Islam was overall more benign," and that "the freeing of individual slaves ...was much more frequent and widespread in Islam." (32) Yet Segal admits that Muslims ignored many of these precepts. Thus, "Muslims enslaved other Muslims, sometimes on doctrinal pretexts....and captives were enslaved, regardless of whether they were Muslims ...," all "in total disregard of Islamic doctrine." (33) Further, while arguing that Islam is not inherently racist in, he admits that Islam became racist because of conquest, because Black Africa seemed less developed, and because Islam placed greater influence on intellect than physical qualities. Thus, "the association of peculiar physical prowess with intellectual inferiority both rationalized and promoted the disparagement of blacks." (34)

Ali al-Husayn ibn abd Allah ibn Sina (980-1037; known in the West as Avicenna) wrote that blacks "lack self-control and steadiness of mind and are overcome by fickleness, foolishness, and ignorance;" he spoke of those lacking reason, "such as the rabble of Bujia, the savages of Ghana, the scum of Zanj, and their like." The great Muslim historian, Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406) wrote that "the Negro nations are, as a rule, submissive to slavery [because they] have attributes that are quite similar to those of dumb animals." (35)

Muslim sexual stereotyping also hurt blacks. The Islamic view of women and the need to protect them led to eunuchs becoming important in Islamic male slavery. There were white slave eunuchs, but blacks were preferred. And "unlike white eunuchs, deprived only of their testicles, black ones were subjected to the most radical form of castration....based on the assumption that the blacks had an ungovernable sexual appetite." (36) This occurred despite Islam's prohibition against castration, and "the high price of slave eunuchs—up to seven times that of uncastrated male slaves in the nineteenth century—reflected both their relative scarcity, as a result of the high death rate which the operation involved, and an all-but insatiable demand for them" (37) Furthermore, male slaves, whether castrated or not, were often forced into homosexual sex, again against Muslim principles. (38)

Even Segal admits "this was all a far cry from the call to compassion, justice, tolerance, the respect for human dignity, that belonged to the divine design communicated by the Prophet. Though never remotely institutionalized as they eventually became in the West, racist attitudes did emerge in Islam as a rationalization or result of the trade in black slaves." (39)

Segal's view of a compassionate Islam is also tested by the treatment of slaves in transit to their place of slavery. While "the Islamic trade had always involved violence and cruelties, suffering and loss of life....the nineteenth century proved to be exceptional only in the extent of its horrors" because "the raiding and warfare for slaves were conducted on a scale and with a ruthlessness that seemed at times to be frantic." One nineteenth century report indicated that "for every ten slaves who reached Cairo, fifty had died along the way." (40)

Islamic slavery compared favorably with Western slavery because it was likelier for slaves to become prominent. Many women concubines had children who rose to high position, especially in the Ottoman Empire, where most of the sultans' children were from slave concubines. A trusted slave eunuch could also become powerful at court. (41)

Segal also correctly connects slavery and economics. "Slaves in Islam were directed mainly at the service sector—concubines, cooks, porters and soldiers—with slavery itself primarily a form of consumption rather than a factor of production." (42)

While correct, this requires clarification. The early Islamic trade led many slaves to the fields. The poor treatment of plantation and mine slaves led to major slave revolts as early as 770. The largest occurred in Persia, led by black slaves called the Zanj, eventually numbering 15,000. This led Islam to utilize fewer slaves in production. Yet in Muslim Spain, where slaves may have comprised 20% of the urban population, black slaves "were also used as rural laborers, mainly on the large estates." Further, Afro-Arab slavery, especially in East Africa and especially but not exclusively in the nineteenth century, used large numbers of black slaves similar to use in the United States. (43)

"Sexploitation" was more important than production in Islamic slavery. In the Atlantic trade 2/3 of the slaves were male; in the Islamic trade 2/3 of the slaves were female. A major use of female slaves was for sex and as concubines, although women also worked as musicians, singers, dancers, and domestics. Segal points out that Abd al Rahman III's harem in Cordoba (912-61) had 6,000 concubines, and the Fatamid palace in Cairo had 12,000. Tradesmen and artisans also kept courtesan slaves, but obviously far fewer. Concubines who bore a master's child could not be sent away, therefore gaining more protection than a wife. Further, a slave's child with a free man was not a slave. (44)

Comparatively, one might point out that Islam never had any meaningful dissent about slavery, indicating that it was far more accepted—even if less heinous (which is debatable)—than in Christendom. Further, as Segal admits, slavery in Africa existed for almost 1,000 years before the Europeans came and lasted long after they left. Saudi Arabia outlawed slavery only in 1962. Some slavery continues in Africa today. Segal also admits that Europeans, especially the British, took the lead in ending slavery after 1800. (45)

We should heed Segal himself: "A slave was a slave for all that.....Even masters persuaded of their own piety and benevolence sexually exploited their concubines...Islamic slavery was scarcely more compassionate than its Western counterpart. (46)

Myth Three: Only Whites owned Black Slaves; Slavery as an indigenous African condition

Slavery was not "foisted" on Africa by outsiders. "Slaves have been owned in black Africa throughout recorded history....Slavery was practiced everywhere [in Africa] before the rise of Islam...." "Slavery has been an important phenomenon throughout {African} history.... as one of the principal areas where slavery was common." (47)

In Islamic Ghana before 1600 about a third of the population was slave. The same was true among other early states of the western Sudan, including Mali (1200-1500...and Songhai (1464-1720). Slavery was also prominent in Ghana and presumably elsewhere in Africa long before the transatlantic slave trade. (48) Although existing earlier, the expansion of slavery after 1600 coincided with the Atlantic slave trade. As a result, "the role of slaves in the [African] economy and society became more important, resulting in the transformation of the social, economic and political order." (49)

Before 1600 "slavery was already an important institution" in areas such as the Kongo, Benin, the Akan states on the Gold Coast, and Sierra Leone. "The dominant influence was Islamic...because Islam had become a strong influence within many of the states and societies ... where slaves were used extensively." The expansion of internal African slavery was facilitated by Africa's political fragmentation. Yet new American food crops maintain population despite large-scale export of slaves. (50) The worst century for African slavery was the nineteenth, the very century Europeans were trying to end slavery in Africa. "By the last decades of the nineteenth century, the African social order was more firmly rooted in slavery than ever before.... slavery had become essential to the organization of production, no matter what social and political roles were also satisfied through slave use." (51) Pakenham points out that "in Central Africa the slave trade was the fourth Horseman, riding behind war, famine, and plague." Even Segal admits that whole areas were essentially depleted of people from slave raiding. (52)

In important areas the slave population was extremely high. Perhaps half the people in the Asante areas were slaves: "In the early 1870s, the population of the Kumasi area was thought to be about equally slave and free. On the coast, the ratio of slave to free was at least as high....slave holdings in Dahomey and the Yoruba states of Ibadan, Ijebu, Abeokuta, and Lagos were so large that free people constituted only a minority of the population." Also, "by the end of the nineteenth century, 30 to 50 per cent of the total population of the western Sudan was slave, and in some locations the percentage was higher, reaching 80 per cent near some commercial centers....Slaves might have comprised 2/3 of the population of the Malinke, 50 percent of Kano." Zanzibar slavery increased from 15,000 in 1819 to over 100,000 just by the 1830s. There work in clove production led to slave mortality rates of 15-20% annually. (53) Although African slaves were overwhelmingly owned by Africans, Europeans-- Portuguese and Boers, especially--and Indians also owned slaves in parts of Africa. (54)

Some slavery continues in Africa today, such as ritual "fetish" slavery in Ghana, Togo, Benin, and Nigeria. Since the seventeenth century, the ancestors of an individual who committed a crime must supply and re-supply the fetish priest with young virgins, whom he uses for labor and sex. In the Sudan tribal raids lead to enslavement, especially of young people. In recent years hundreds have been redeemed, some by Dinka and Arab elders, some by Christian Solidarity International, a Swiss charity that buys slaves in order to free them. (55)

Clearly, blacks enslaved blacks. Lovejoy writes: "It is inaccurate to think that Africans enslaved their brothers—although this sometimes happened. Rather, Africans enslaved their enemies....In

Africa, the enslavers and the slave owners were often the same." Indeed, "politics and slave trading were closely associated," and often [black] African governments themselves monopolized the lucrative slave trade. (56).

It is also inaccurate that African slavery was not used for productive purposes and was "benign" and based on kinship (as opposed to production), although there is some truth in those views. Even before 1600 slaves were used for productive work (in agriculture and mining) in Songhai and especially under Askia Daoud (1549-1583), the western Sudan, Ethiopia and the Zambezi valley, the Toghata salt-work in the Sahara, and in East Africa. After 1600, especially in the northern savanna, "slaves were...employed on plantations wherever merchants and aristocrats had access to large numbers of slaves." Slaves in production increased greatly in the nineteenth century. In Dahomey "the most important development in the nineteenth century was the king's investment in plantation slavery." And the rapid expansion of slavery in Zanzibar was directly connected with the clove plantations. (57)

The treatment of slaves varied widely everywhere. But that African slavery was easier and the slaves assimilated is a myth, says Lovejoy. "The myth for all slaves was that individuals were assimilated....[but] the scale of slavery in most areas was so great that real assimilation was impossible....In parts of Asante, Dahomey, the Yoruba states, and the Biafran interior, slaves formed a majority of the population." Further, "treatment of slaves could be severe....plantation slaves were involved in productive activities that demonstrate a type of slave regime that was far different from the stereotype of a benign African slavery."(58)

Myth Four: In the West, slavery was/is a United States Issue

Slavery existed in Meso-America before the Europeans arrived. Slave-owning societies included the Klamath, Pawnee, and Yurok from California to Alaska, Georgia's Creek Indians, the Comanches in Texas, lower Amazon Tupians, the Incas, and the Aztecs. (59)

Meso-American slavery was generally less atrocious. Slaves could sometimes buy their freedom. Women slaves were often concubines. But the Aztecs used conquered peoples /slaves for their mass ritual executions. Also, a slave who performed poorly and was dismissed by three consecutive owners would be used for human sacrifice. (60)

Slavery on a massive scale came with the Europeans. But relatively few transatlantic slaves went to the future United States.

Region and Country Total % of Total Imports

British North America 399,000 4.17

Spanish America 1,552,100 16.23

British Caribbean 1,665,000 17.41

French Caribbean 1, 600,200 16.73

Dutch Caribbean 500,000 5.22

Danish Caribbean 28,000 .29

Brazil 3,646,800 38.12

Old World (Europe, Sao Thome,
Atlantic Islands) 175,000 1.83

TOTALS 9,566,100 100.00 (61)

Portuguese Brazil imported nine times as many slaves as the British and Americans imported into what became the United States. Brazil, the major slave state in the Americas, was half-slave

about 1800 and still 33% in 1850, when slave imports were barred. Free Immigration raised Brazil's population from 4,000,000 in 1840 to 14,000,000 by 1890. Still, when Brazil abolished slavery in 1888, 850,000 blacks, 5.9% of the population, were freed. Indeed, contemporary slavery continues to in Brazil and plays an economic role. (62)

Even Spaniards, French, and Danes imported more slaves from Africa than the British North American colonies. The Slave trade became illegal in Mexico, Chile, and Argentina between 1810 and 1812. Spain continued the slave trade in its colonies until 1880, but slavery was abolished in Chile in 1823, Mexico in 1829, Peru in 1854, Puerto Rico in 1873, Cuba in 1880, and Brazil in 1888. (63)

Myth Five: Only whites owned slaves in the US

The final misconception: only whites owned slaves in the U.S. Clearly "slavery is an American embarrassment. The nation's historical treatment of black men and women has compromised its perfectionist and egalitarian ideals." (64)

The 1860 census, including slaves, counted 31,443,321 people; slaves totaled 3,953,546, or 12.57%. There were 385,000 slave owners, 88% owning under twenty slaves; about 50% owned five or fewer slaves. (65) But it was not all white-on-black slavery.

Thus, freed black slaves actually owned slaves. In 1860, while 385,000 whites owned slaves, 10,000-12,000 free blacks owned slaves. Grooms says that, "large numbers of free Negroes owned black slaves....in numbers disproportionate to their representation in society at large....." A higher percentage of free blacks owned slaves than did free whites. (66)

Although most whites and blacks owned few slaves, some blacks owned many slaves. William Ellison was South Carolina's largest black slave owner; by 1860 he and his sons owned 72 slaves. According to Grooms, "Ellison sold the female and many of the male children born to his female slaves at an average price of \$400. Ellison had a reputation as a harsh master. His slaves were said to be the district's worst fed and clothed." Simultaneously, at least six free blacks in Louisiana owned at least 65 slaves, the largest number being the 152 owned by a widow, C. Richards, and her son, who ran a large sugar plantation. (67)

Why did blacks own black slaves? Groom rejects the predominant view that "black slave masters were simply individuals who purchased the freedom of a spouse or a child from a white slaveholder and had been unable to legally manumit them." This is coupled with the view that most black slave owners were benevolent masters. This view misrepresents of the majority of instances. Larry Koger argues that to many black slave owners "slavery was viewed as a profit-making institution to be exploited," that "many black masters were firmly committed to chattel slavers and saw no reasons for manumitting their slaves," that "their economic self-interest overrode whatever moral concerns or guilt they may have harbored about slavery," and that "most of the black women who conveyed their slaves in marriage settlements were not related to their slaves by kinship; thus their slaves were primarily viewed as a commodity." (68)

Slavery was a white institution. Whites owned the overwhelming number of black slaves. But the relatively few free blacks were more likely to own slaves than free whites. .

Conclusion

What conclusions follow?

First, we need to teach slavery in correct historical perspective. American students have been taught a view of slavery that lacks historical perspective

Second, we must then ask the broader question of the nature of slavery, of evil, of the wars, hatreds, economic conditions, and intolerance that have bred slavery throughout history.

We won't resolve the issue, but we will help our students better

understand human nature and of slavery throughout history and learn that perspective is an important framework into which we must place historical phenomena.

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End Notes

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2. The author is Jewish, has taught courses on the Holocaust, and regularly teaches a one-semester survey of Judaism and Jewish history.
3. David Landes, The Wealth and Poverty of Nations; Why some are so Rich and Some so Poor (New York: W.W. Norton & Co. 1998), xxi.
4. Hellie, "Slavery," 292.
5. W.G. de Burgh, The Legacy of the Ancient World (Harmondsworth, Eng.: Penguin Press, 1967), p. 185 (originally published in 1923); Hellie, "Slavery," 290; de Burgh, 186.
6. Hellie, "Slavery," 290; K.V. Panevin, compiler, Istoriia drevnego Rima [The History of Ancient Rome] (St. Petersburg: Poligon, 1999), 361. By comparison, in 1860-1861 about 12.5% of the population of the United States was enslaved.
7. Panevin, 273-74.

8. Panevin, 273-74 and 360. See also Arthur Boak, A History of Rome to 565 A.D. (4th edition; New York: the Macmillan Co., 1959), 155.
9. Thomas W. Africa, The Immense Majesty: A History of Rome and the Roman Empire (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1974), 254, 150, 143, 144.
10. Ibid., 155, 175; Boak, 155, 190; Panevin, 364.
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14. Peter Kolchin, Unfree Labor: American Slavery and Russian Serfdom (Cambridge, MA.: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1987), x. For an excellent description of Russian serfdom see Jerome Blum, Lord and Peasant in Russia: from the Ninth to the Nineteenth Century (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1961).
15. Cited in William Shirer, The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich: A History of Nazi Germany (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1960), 948-49. See also Ulrich Herbert, Hitler's Foreign Workers: Enforced Foreign Labor in Germany under the Third Reich (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1997, 510 pp.).
16. For a short summary of modern Bolshevik slavery see Samuel A. Oppenheim, "Labor Camps in the USSR, Modern Encyclopedia of Russian and Soviet History (Gulf Breeze, FL.: Academic International Press, 1976-93), Vol. 18 (1980), 236-42. For increasingly longer studies see Robert Conquest, Kolyma: The Arctic Death Camps (New York: Viking Press, 1978); Robert Conquest, The Great Terror: Stalin's Purges of the Thirties (New York: Macmillan, 1968), and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, The Gulag Archipelago, 1918-1953 (3 vols. In 7 parts; New York: Harper & Row, 1974-1976). For a recent Russian view see Galina M. Ivanova, Labor Camp Socialism: the Gulag in the Soviet Totalitarian System (edited by Donald J. Raleigh; translated by Carol Flath; Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2000).
17. Hellie, "Slavery," 289, 293; Conrad Schirokauer, A Brief History of Chinese and Japanese Civilizations (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1978), 61; D.N. Knightley, "China," Encyclopedia Britannica (1995), Vol. 16, 69; and (Chu Yu) quoted in Ronald Segal, Islam's Black Slaves; The Other Black Diaspora (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001), 69.
18. Schirokauer, 139; "Japan," Encyclopedia Britannica (1995), Vol. 22, 279-80.
19. See Encyclopedia Britannica (1995), Vol. 21, 41-2, and Hellie, "Slavery," 289.
20. Hellie, "Slavery," 289.
21. See Note 17 for primary note. Segal was born in South Africa and is a former editor and publisher of Africa South. Opposed to apartheid, he left South Africa for political exile in 1960, lived in England, and was banned from returning to South Africa for more than thirty years. Islam's Black Slaves is his thirteenth book; his most previous work, The Black Diaspora: Five Centuries of the Black Experience Outside Africa (1995) discusses the Atlantic slave trade; Islam's Black Slaves is the counterpart to that earlier book.
22. Segal, 55, 61.
23. Segal relies on the work of Ralph Austen, who argues that just between 650 and 1600 there were 7,220,000 black slaves in the Islamic trade (4,820,000 via the trans-Saharan route, 1,600,000 for the Red Sea route, and 800,000 in the East Coast route). Ibid., 55-56: Ralph Austen, "The Trans-Saharan Slave Trade: A Tentative Census," in The Uncommon market: Essays in the Economic History of the Atlantic slave Trade, eds. H.A. Gemery and J.S. Hogendorn (New York: Academic Press, 1979), 66-68.
24. Segal, 56.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid., 56-7. Those Americanists who are familiar with Philip Curtin's work will compare the figure of 11,863,000 (Lovejoy, 19; the actual figure is 11,698,000, although Segal does not cite

his source for 11,863,000) with Curtin's figure of 9,566,100 slaves coming to the Americas (Philip Curtin, The Atlantic Slave Trade; A Census [Madison, Wi.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969], 268. The discrepancy is probably clarified by realizing that Lovejoy's figures are "Slave exports from Africa" while Curtin's are "Estimated slave imports into the Americas" (emphasis added). The difference of 2,141,000 (using Lovejoy's correct figures and not those used by Segal) is 18.3%, which is in the range of figures that scholars believe died in transport to the Americas. We shall discuss losses in the Islamic trade below. Further, the figures above for the Islamic trade make it unclear whether or not this included total slaves captured or those sold alive later. If the latter, it would raise the total number of Islam's black slaves.

27. Segal, 57; Hellie, "Slavery," 290.

28. *Ibid.*, 3, 9. See also x, 5, 35-39, 61, and *passim*.

29. *Ibid.*, 61.

30. *Ibid.*, 37, 22, ix.

31. *Ibid.*, 35-39.

32. *Ibid.*, 5, x-xi, 9.

33. *Ibid.*, 37, 170.

34. *Ibid.*, 47ff.

35. Quoted in *Ibid.*, 48-49.

36. *Ibid.*, 52.

37. *Ibid.*, 41.

38. *Ibid.*, 41-42.

39. *Ibid.*, 64-65.

40. *Ibid.*, 149, 145, 151.

41. *Ibid.*, 9, 46, 109-112.

42. *Ibid.*, 4. See also 107.

43. *Ibid.*, 28, 42-45, 78, 60.

44. *Ibid.*, 4, 61, 35-39, 50.

45. *Ibid.*, ix-x, 116-17, 147 ff; Hellie, "Slavery," 293; Thomas Pakenham, The Scramble for Africa: White Man's Conquest of the Dark Continent from 1876 to 1912 (New York: Avon Books, 1992, originally published in 1991), *passim*.

46. Segal, 5.

47. Hellie, "Slavery," 290 and Lovejoy, 1.

48. Hellie, "Slavery," 291.

49. Lovejoy, 1.

50. *Ibid.*, 23, 41, 68, 110-11, 115.

51. *Ibid.*, 246.

52. Pakenham, 286; Segal, 153, 156, 160, 173.

53. *Ibid.*, 170-71, 184, 185, 189, 198, 210.

54. *Ibid.*, 222, 233-34.

55. Howard W. French, "The Ritual Slaves of Ghana: Young and Female," The New York Times, January 20, 1997, A-1, A-4; The Economist, February 9, 2002, 42, and Nicholas D. Kristof, "A Slave's Journey in Sudan," The New York Times, April 23, 2002, Op-Ed page.

56. Lovejoy, 22, 100. See also Segal, 49, 99, 146-47, 157, 166.

57. *Ibid.*, 31-2, 34, 111, 112, 171, 223-24.

58. *Ibid.*, 161, 214.

59. Hellie, "Slavery," 290.

60. Jacques Soustelle, Daily Life of the Aztecs on the Eve of the Spanish Conquest (translated from the French by Patrick O'Brien; Stanford, CA.: Stanford University Press, 1961 and originally published in 1955), 73-78; Jacques Soustelle, "Pre-Columbian Civilizations," Encyclopedia Britannica (1995 edition), 26: 24; Hellie, "Slavery," 290.

61. Curtin, 268. See Note 26 for the discrepancy between the number of slave exports across the Atlantic and the arrivals in the New World. 28,300 of the French number were shipped to Louisiana.
62. Hellie, "Slavery," 291; "Brazil," Encyclopedia Britannica (1995) 22:820; "Brazil's Prized Export Rely on Slaves and Scorched Land," The New York Times, March 25, 2002, A-1, A-6.
63. Hellie, "Slavery," 293.
64. T.H. Breen and Stephen Innes, "Myne Own Ground;" Race and Freedom on Virginia's Eastern Shore, 1640-1676 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 3.
65. World Almanac and Book of Facts 2001 (Mahwah, N.J.: World Almanac Books, 2001), 370; "Selected Statistics on Slavery in the United States," accessed on the web at <<http://innercity.org/holt/slavechron.html>>, and <<http://members.aol.com/jfepperson/state.html>>.
66. The figure on the number of black slave owners is from an untitled review of Michael P. Johnson and James L. Roark, Black Masters: A Free Family of Color in the Old South (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1984), accessed on the web at <<http://www.claytoncramer.com/blackmasters.htm>>. Grooms's quotation is from Robert M. Grooms, "Dixie's Censored Subject; Black Slaveowners," c. 1997 by The Barnes Review and accessed on the web at <http://americancivilwar.com/authors/black_slaveowners.htm>. See also Philip Burnham, "Selling Poor Steven," American Heritage 44 (1) 1993, 90-97 and Philip J. Schwarz, "Emancipators, Protectors and Anomalies: Free Black Slaveowners in Virginia," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 95 (3): 1997, 317-338.
67. Breen and Innes, 5; Grooms.
68. Grooms; Larry Koger, Black Slaveowners: Free Black Slave Masters in South Carolina, 1790-1860 (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1995), excerpts from Chapter Six reprinted from Issues & Views (Summer 1998) and accessed on the web at <<http://www.issues-views.com/index.php/sect/1006/article/1091>>.