THE SLAVE TRADE & ITS LEGACY IN THE US

Week 2:
Slavery in America (to 1722)
SCHEDULE

• Last time: PIRATES! (The 1722 Battle of Cape Lopez)
• Today: What was slavery in America like at the time of the battle and how did that happen?
• Next Week: The battle resulted in British supremacy in the trade. What changed as a result?
• Feb 2: The spread of chattel slavery to British American territories & beyond
• Feb 9: Slavery in the US compared to other places in the Americas
• Feb 16: Legacies
LAST TIME

January 1722

War of Spanish Succession (1701-1714)
Cape Coast Castle, Royal Africa Company Stronghold
WHY?
RAC list of men, women, and children enslaved by the company, Artifacts from a dig in Savi, “Storage” for enslaved Africans at Cape Coast Castle, a so-called “Slave Contract” between the Dutch and a group of Caboceers at Kommenda
1720 map of the US by Johann Baptist Homann which shows colonization by various European slaving empires of what is now the US: Spanish Florida (pink), British North America (green), and French Louisiana (yellow). Not pictured: Dutch New Amsterdam, Swedish New Sweden.
SLAVERY IN SPANISH FLORIDA

1513: First African sets foot in what would become the US: Juan Garrido, a free Explorer with the Ponce de Leon entourage

1517: Charles V permitted the slave trade. The first settlers brought enslaved Africans with them, and engaged in trade of Indigenous people all across the Americas.

Bartolome de Las Casas

Complex role of the Church: The Catholic church both enslaved people, and extended judicial protections to the enslaved. Enslaved could use the Inquisition to get justice for cruel slaveholders.

Fort Mose: Black Military City that defended Spanish Florida against the English
SLAVERY IN THE 13 COLONIES

• Differed colony to colony
• 1619, colonists brought enslaved Africans to Virginia
• Trade in Indigenous people boomed 1670-1715: Northern colonies sold indigenous people to the Caribbean plantations, while Southerners enslaved them.

• Slavery grew quickly in the South because of the plantations. In New England it was more common to have one or two slaves working for a household, business, or small farm. Enslaved people often learned special skills and crafts.

• Rhode Island, a major slave ship manufacturing hub, introduced laws to protect the enslaved. Banned slavery in 1652, but not enforced. 6.3% of the population was enslaved.
SLAVERY IN DUTCH NEW AMSTERDAM

First Africans arrived in Dutch New Amsterdam in the 1620s, through privateering against the Spanish and Portuguese.

First Slave Auction in New Amsterdam in 1655

While enslavement was enforced, there were free Black citizens of New Amsterdam who intermarried with white colonists, and were eligible to participate in slavery, hold land, and become prominent members of the community and church.
SLAVERY IN SWEDISH NEW SWEDEN

• 1639 Antonius/Antoni Swart, an African man enslaved by the Swedish Africa Company was the first enslaved African under Sweden’s flag to enter what is now the US. Sailor & soldier.

• In Delaware River Valley, the Indigenous were sedentary farmers who traded with the Swedes - no Indigenous slave trade.

• Few skilled Swedes volunteered to come to New Sweden, so the colonists prioritized enslaved who had a trade.

• Swedish failed slave trade on the Gold Coast meant that enslaved people had to be obtained through illegal trade with neighboring colonies. Slave population stayed small, which limited many of the abuses enslaved in bigger colonies faced.
SLAVERY IN FRENCH LOUISIANA (NEW FRANCE)

• The French began trading in Indigenous captives of war (Chitimacha, Atakapa, Bayogoula, Natchez, Choctaw, Chicasaw, Taensa, Alabamon) and slowly transitioned to forced African slave labor.

• French colonies all over the Americas had higher proportions of free Black people (Gents de Coleur) than any other colonies. (13.2% of Black people in French Louisiana were free)

• Code Noir: 1685, Louis XIV defined the conditions of enslavement in the French empire in this legal document. Outlined rules for both the enslaved and slaveholders to follow. Based on a mixture of Roman law, Catholic principles, and general practices in the French Caribbean.
WHY ARE THESE DISTINCTIONS IMPORTANT?

- Roman society had racism, but their slavery was NOT race-based
- No moral justification of enslavement
- Slavery was a state of being, not an identity
- Enslaved people were granted human rights and legal protections
- Enslaved people often held prestigious careers (education, medicine, politics, accounting)
- The Enslaved had opportunities of social mobility
- Enslaved could attain Roman citizenship after manumission
NEXT TIME: WHAT CHANGES AFTER THE 1722 BATTLE OF CAPE LOPEZ?