

First Negro Slaves Arrived South Year Before Mayflower

By JULES LOR
A Dutch ship dropped anchor in the harbor of Jamestown, Va., one hot August day and her captain rowed ashore and introduced to John Rolfe he had a cargo of "20 Negroes" he wished to swap with tobacco. The Negroes probably had been captured as pirate booty on the high seas. Where they came from really didn't matter much to the colonists. After all, they were indentured servants themselves. A few months earlier a boatload of 90 "young males" had arrived from Europe to become wives of the first 90 bachelors who would put up the price of 20 pounds of tobacco.

The year was 1619. The Mayflower arrived in 1620. However wide the chasm of racial separation was to become during the succeeding 330 years not a single segment in the fabric of American life would go untouched by the black thread introduced into the country's social and cultural loom that day at Jamestown.

The people of Jamestown could have expected none of this. **WHITES SOLD TOO**
The 20 Negroes melted nicely into their established system of servitude whereby a man could be sold, or sell himself, for a certain duration. After working for his buyer off his bondage he was as free, white or black as any other man. For four decades Negroes lived in Virginia on a basis of equality, accumulating land, voting in assemblies, there was no inferiority attached to skin color. That came later.

The significance of their arrival in 1619 was that it marked the first contact between the American colonies and the Atlantic slave trade. For nearly four centuries beginning about 1500 slave ships flying Portuguese, Dutch, English and finally American flags competed for favor on the African coast.

MANY DIED
They stacked their human cargo in crowded, unventilated holds and headed for thriving markets in the new world. Each day during the 10-week voyage they could count on having to toss a few dead ones over the side.

Most of the slaves imported in America came from the West Coast, the Gold Coast, Gambia and Senegal—some kidnapped by white men, some captured by corrupt African chieftains and traded for rum and guns. When the trade finally pelleted out more than 15,000,000 Negroes to conservative guests, had died before they could be sold. Historically slaves were merely unfortunate folks who happened to have been captured in their own land.

Race wasn't a factor and there was no stigma of basic inferiority attached to their skin. Portugal, for example, had elaborate codes which made slavery far from hopeless plight. Families could not be split up; masters were forbidden to injure slaves; slaves could testify in court, even against their owners.

LACKED FADE
But in America there were no slave codes. And only Negroes were slaves. This slavery in the United States gradually came to be regarded as the natural condition of the black man. As it became necessary from time to time for American law to define slave he was described variously as "a chattel" or "real estate" and finally merely as "article of merchandise."

Legally, slaves were incapable of matrimony, which meant they could have children but not families. The law forbade a slave to learn to read or write, to leave the premises without a pass or to assemble with fellow slaves without a white person present. He couldn't testify in any litigation involving a white person.

Edwin Whittaker's invention of the cotton gin made slavery an economic necessity as small farms became huge plantations. By 1850 three-fourths of the world's cotton was being supplied by the U.S. Gulf states. Planters felt the economy of the South depended on slave labor. To a great many in the cotton kingdom it appeared obvious that slavery was a positive good, following the natural order of things.

their first major victory in 1808 when Congress declared the slave trade illegal. The act didn't stop the trade but it did increase the hazard and slaves became far more valuable. George Washington paid \$500 for a slave but in 1853 a No. 1 male fetched \$1,200 on the New Orleans market and by 1860 the price was \$1,800. When civil war came fewer than five per cent of the South's 8,000,000 people were slaveowners.

William Lloyd Garrison, one of the most militant of the abolitionists, advocated moral suasion and passive resistance. John Brown took an opposite stance, holding that "slavery is a state of war."

Abolitionist literature flooded the mails. In the South it was confiscated and in 1853 a mob sacked the Charleston, S.C., post office and burned all the propaganda they could find.

The civil war solved some problems but left many more. The South was in ruins and

disorganized former slaves were discarded over the wreckage. Only one in 10 could read or write. Now able to own property, few were equipped to manage it. But with federal bayonets to protect them at the polls and northerners to show them how to vote, they became a powerful political force.

CORRUPTION RIFE
Soon the state legislatures of South Carolina, Florida, Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi had majorities of Negro members. Most learned the rudiments of reading and writing after they were elected. Many of them engaged in what one historian refers to as "a saturation of corrupt expenditures."

The hatred engendered by war flamed again. "Negro rule in the South was such an obvious failure that few northern states were willing to try it. Connecticut, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Kansas, Ohio and

Michigan, for example, refused the Negro the right to vote. When federal troops left the South in 1877 white reaction was swift and predictable. Legal barriers began to be erected against the Negro. Private organizations were formed to restore "the southern way of life"—the KKK, the White Brotherhood, Pale Faces.

Lines of segregation were drawn. When Homer Plessy, a Negro, was removed from a white railroad coach in 1892 and took the case to the U.S. Supreme Court the idea of "separate but equal" became law. The constitution, wrote Justice Henry Brown of Michigan, "could not have been intended to abolish distinctions based on color or to enforce . . . a commingling of the races upon terms unsatisfactory to either."

Negroes looked instead at Justice John Harlan's dissenting opinion. "In the eye of the law,

wrote Justice Harlan, "there is in this country no superior, dominant, ruling class of citizens. There is no caste here. Our constitution is color blind and neither knows nor tolerates classes among citizens."

For the next 50 years distinctions based on color were not hard to find. Park benches were labeled, as were theatre entrances and soft drink machines. But the main efforts of Negroes were aimed at the distinctions made in the help wanted ads, pay windows, classrooms, neighborhoods.

In the history of the Negro in America the year 1954 was significant as the year "involuntary servitude" was outlawed. No one can know when the next turning point will be. But the suspicion is that it cannot be far off.

some cases, the head shaved, Lipstick was painfully removed by sandpaper. Female fury aroused by these assaults erupted next evening and has, for the moment, kept the Negro males at bay.

Zulu nurses, prominent among the straight-hair and lipstick set, armed themselves with insecticide sprayers filled with ammonia. They used their weapons to good effect in a counter-attack on the "Puritans."

Two factors appear to have motivated the Zulus: male in his anti-cosmetic campaign — African nationalism and tradition. One Zulu said: "We are fighting for our freedom. Those of our women who straighten their

Angry Young Zulus Attack Women Who Use Cosmetics

The province of Natal, with Durban its largest city, is the home of the Zulus, perhaps the proudest of all Africa's tribes. Zulus shake their heads and regard the use of cosmetics as a sign of deteriorating morals and loose living. But the cosmetics manufacturers continue to do good business here and in the other major cities of South Africa.

Commented Thoko Muzina, a Negro actress who appeared in London in the cast of the South African musical King Kong: "Those Durban thugs are crazy. What do they think we are? They think we are savages in a jungle? They are laughing at our freedom. Those of our women who straighten their

hair and use lipstick are copying the whites. If we imitate people of other races then we debase ourselves. We are Africans and we are proud of being Africans."

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