*“I being so obedient, he thought I wouldn’t run, but I was determined to run if I could . . .” – Edward Hicks, LA [7]*

## Introduction

Turning the history pages back to the seventeenth century to early twentieth century, Virginia proved to be the house of slaves. This was the place where slaves from African regions were transported and sold to the cruel masters, and were then forced to work in fields for day and night for their survival, as well as for the survival of their families. This slave population worked in farms, mines, and plantations in colonies of South America [1]. Working hard could not affect them, but the behavioral and physical challenges, they faced proved to be great threat to the social norms. Masters wanted entire control over their slaves and didn’t want to face even 1% loss of their investment. They were aware of the power of their slaves and that is why kept them under strict control. They punished them hard to waste their energies, so that they weren’t able to think of escape and freedom, and thus couldn’t recognize their strengths against their masters. Such cruelty of the masters of that time makes it clear that **the slaves were firmly controlled in an ironclad status because of their masters’ fear of losing power over them.**

## Argument

The history of African Americans in the United States depicts a dark and gloomy shadow on the intact concern of black adaptation. Africans were exploited and oppressed for several hundred years by racial discrimination in the US. Their era of independence started in the 1780s when they were entirely disqualified by the Post-Revolutionary America. They did not even get the basic rights as human beings, and they faced discrimination in all areas of life like employment opportunities, votes, education [2] . According to historians, the worst conditions of slavery were in South, and the demand for slaves increased in 1793 due to the cotton gin. It caused an increase in slave population of South to work on cotton plantations. In the second half of the nineteenth century, half a million of blacks were working in cities, who were facing discrimination and cruelty of their masters for the sake of their survival.

*“Negroes dissatisfied to work in a gang & doing badly . . . evidently want to work task work, which I will not do again.” . . . “The Negroes have for . . . years killed about half my shoats & now must suffer for it.” – James Henry Hammond, SC [8]*

When going in details of the history, it reveals that at first, the Africans were indentured servants and not slaves. During the initiation of colonial period white and black workers operated together, where both were dealt with equal right and equal behaviors. No one could imagine that the things would turn dark for the African Americans and their survival will become a threat for their lives. In middle of the seventeenth century, America faced a great labor crises due to which they had to find an immediate solution to prevent any sort of loss to their fields. Finally, the Americans resolved the problem through slavery and imported several slaves from the Africa [3,4]. The industry owners and field masters purchased the African American men and women, resulted in forced labor of black people by white landowners. Africans were inexpensive, strong and easily available from their continent in unlimited supplies, so their enslavement became vital for American economy and agriculture. This difference drew a line between black and white servants, and finally, black slaves got deprived of all rights and freedoms as their lives were controlled by white landlords.

*“My object is to get the most I can for the property . . . I care but little to whom and how they are sold, whether together or separated.” – Thomas Clemson [11]*

From 1650 to 1850 about 10 to 12 million Africans were imported to New World. This process started very slowly as before 17th century three lac slaves were transported to America and then the process speeded up during the 18th century, and about six million slaves were imported. The estimates are not included the Africans who lost their lives on the journey to New World during the trip named as Middle Passage [5]. According to some sources, about 12% to 40% of slaves died due to different reasons like disease, suicide or injuries, during the journey. Due to a plantation in South Atlantic colonies, labor demand exceeded in mid-1700.The leading owner of these slaves was Virginia with 120,000 black slaves in 1756 which were 50% of the total population of the colony. The increasing population of blacks developed fear in the white population, of black insurrection. So, a white militia was shaped, and activities of the black population were limited in all colonies through legislation. The owners were given rights to punish the slaves harshly, even for inconsequential transgressions.

*“Stripped all the boys . . . and this boy appeared to be the finest of the lot. Unknown [8], LA”*

The American Revolution was a radical upheaval that occurred during 1765 and 1783 in which colonizers of the [Thirteen Colonies](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thirteen_Colonies) of America sustained their rebuttal by force, to defer to the power of King and Government of [Britain](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_of_Great_Britain) and originated the self-governing [United States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States). During the revolutionary war against British when colonists fight for their rights and freedom denying the basic human rights of the black population. But the closure of American Revolution caused a release of thousands of slaves from the North. In 1790, about 8% of the black slaves set free in America, and the African American population reached to 760,000 [1]. But the free blacks had to follow certain regulations like slaves. In 1788, The authorization of the United States Constitution guaranteed equality and rights to the white population and ignored Black people. The US Census reports considered slaves as three-fifth of an individual for congressional representation of the state. So, the free blacks were considered as "Quasi-free" as they had limited employments and several restrictions to voting, travel and other rights. It’s a great evidence that Americans were aware of the slaves’ power and that is why they didn’t want to give them full freedom. The masters, and the government of United States of America, were aware that giving power to African Americans could make them able to learn and earn better, after which they would prefer a better living style than working in the fields.

*“I can’t make my people work or do anything.” Landon Carter, VA [4]*

## Counter Argument

Some of the authors are of the view that African Americans choose slavery for their survival otherwise it wasn’t difficult for them to escape [6]. There exists several stories about the escape of slaves, who found their way to get rid of their masters, no matter what patterns did they follow. They were strong than their masters and thus could protest against them instead of following their instructions and harming each other for the sake of few cents.

*“I was never acquainted with a slave who believed that he violated any rule of morality by appropriating to himself any thing that belonged to his master, it if was necessary to his comfort.” - Charles Ball [9]*

Accepting such arguments of the author will be unjustified to the slaves of that time, as they had no other option but either to die or to follow their masters. The slave owners were aware of the strength of their slaves and that is why they kept them busy day and nights. They forced them to work harder than their capacity and tortured them in different ways so that they must not think to use their power against their masters ever. The masters were always afraid of the reaction of their slaves and that is why they punished them hard whenever they raised their head to think of their escape. Many of the slaves were killed while being punished, and that proved to be an example to others who could ever imagined of the escape. The slaves had no families, no children, and many of them witnessed the loss of their loved ones through their masters. This cruelty made every slave unable to think of their rights and forced them to keep their masters happy for the sake of protective shield and free from any sort of punishments (Morgan). In some cases, the Negroes were ordered to kill their wives and children to show their obedience to their masters. Thus, freedom became a dream for the Black slaves, and they were left with no other option but to obey their masters. This cruelty, hate, and forced attitude was nothing but just the actual fear of masters of losing their investment over their slaves and power of mastery.

Finally in nineteenth century, the slaves of America realized their strengths and understood that their generations won’t ever achieve anything if they won’t stand for their rights. Thus, an abolitionist movement in 1830 emerged as a potent force, and antislavery revolts started which remain continued for next half century. In white circles, the black population was considered threatful, so a reverse migration philosophy emerged to solve the black dilemma. So, by 1830 about 1500 blacks were settled back to Africa, and others opposed the idea and desired for equality of rights in America.

## Conclusion

Slavery proved to be great curse for the African Americans, and they had to struggle hard to get rid of those chains. Slaves faced several situations in their lives, from leaving from their places to separation from families. Many of them evidenced the death of their loved ones, and were left with no other options but to follow the instructions of their masters or wait for the death. The masters were cruel to their slaves and this raised a lot of questions. Some of the authors argued that masters’ cruelty was essential to gain better economical results of their industries, whereas other were of the view slavery was Black Slaves’ choice and so they had to face it. However, the slavery can never be a choice of any person, no matter poor or rich. The masters were aware of the power of their slaves and that is why kept them under strict control. They punished them hard to waste their energies, so that they weren’t able to think of escape and freedom, and thus couldn’t recognize their strengths against their masters. Also, the authorization of the United States Constitution guaranteed equality and rights to the white population and ignored Black people, and free blacks were considered as "Quasi-free" as they had limited employments and several restrictions to voting, travel and other rights. It’s a great evidence that Americans were aware of the slaves’ power and that is why they didn’t want to give them full freedom. The masters knew that giving power to African Americans could make them able to learn and earn better, after which they would prefer a better living style than working in the fields. Thus, they forced them to work harder than their capacity and tortured them in different ways so that they must not think to use their power against their masters ever. Many of the slaves were killed while being punished, and that proved to be an example to others who could ever imagined of the escape. This cruelty made every slave unable to think of their rights and kept them focused to keep their masters happy for the sake of protective shield and free from any sort of punishments. Such cruelty of the masters of that time makes it clear that **the slaves were firmly controlled in an ironclad status because of their masters’ fear of losing power over them.**

References

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