Slavery in the Americas
Latin American Slavery

• Due to high cost, mostly served on plantations and domestic service

• By the end of the colonial period, slaves formed a minority of the total black/mulatto pop.

• Frequently ran away and often formed communities (*quilombos*) in mountains/jungles to lead resistance movements

• Freed blacks worked in agriculture and as artisans, required to pay a tribute like Indians
Brazil

- Slaves imported b/c Indians lacked a strong work ethic
- Slave labor created a populous class of unemployed whites; socially unacceptable for whites to do hard labor
- "Discipline was maintained with a severity that often degenerated into sadistic cruelty where the infliction of corporal punishment was concerned” – Charles Boxer
  - Forced prostitution of female slaves
  - Frequent suicides, low rate of reproduction
- Majority of freed blacks were tenant farmers/sharecroppers who owed labor and allegiance to landowners for privilege of farming piece of land
  - Others – squatters who settled the frontiers; artisans
• 1826 – Signed treaty w/ England to end slave trade by 1831; Brazil didn't enforce; 1850 – still imported more than 50K slaves/year
• 1850s – Brazil passes **Queiroz Anti-Slave-Trade Law** (effective)
  – Severe labor shortage → large flow of slaves from N to S (coffee = $$)
  – $$ used for slave imports funneled into *infrastructure, agriculture*
• Abolitionist movements began in the 1860s in full force
  – **US Civil War & War of the Triple Alliance** called for emancipation
  – Brazil, Cuba and Puerto Rico remained slaveholding countries
  – 1870 – Spain frees all the newborn and aged slaves in Cuba & PR
• Gov. frees slaves that agree to become soldiers
• **Rio Branco Law** (1871) – Freed newborn slaves
  – Masters had to care for them until 8
  – Could release them to the state in exchange for bonds or keep them as laborers until 21 (ineffective law)
1884 – Slavery first declared illegal in Northern states
1885 – Free slaves over the age of 60
  – but first had to work three more years
Joaquim Nabuco – leading abolitionist; organized “underground railroad”
May 1888 – slavery *officially* abolished "as a result of abolitionist agitation, mass flights of slaves, armed clashes...in effect, not through reform but by revolution."

**Results:** Little changed for freedmen after emancipation → still worked for masters under harsh conditions; many lost jobs to immigrants
Cuba

• During the first half of the 1800s, 600K slaves arrived in Cuba to work in sugar plantations
• Slave rebellions broke out in 1810, 1812, 1844
• As a defense against abolition movements, Cuban creole landowners considered annexation to US
• Ten Years' War 1868-1878 – Cuba tries to gain independence from Spain
  – Some concessions but not independence
  – To gain support of blacks, ESP gives them their freedom in 1880 w/ 8-year apprenticeship period
Notable US Slave Rebellions

- **Stono, SC (1739)** – Largest colonial rebellion. 90 killed ➔ restricted education for slaves & created 10yr. Moratorium of Af. Slave trade
- **Gabriel Prosser (1800)** – Failed rebellion in Richmond, VA with 25 collaborators; betrayed and hanged.
- **Denmark Vesey (1822)** – educated freed slave & African mystic Gullah Jack plan rebellion to kill every white person in Charleston, SC; intricate information network discovered ➔ hanged with 35 others.
- **Nat Turner (1831)** – slave rebellion in Southampton County, VA ➔ bloodiest slave insurrection in the South (60 whites and many blacks killed); most successful & most frightening
- **Amistad (1838)** – **Joseph Cinque** led mutiny of slave ship & led to landmark court case saying the slaves had the right to mutiny
Abolition Timeline

- **18th Century** – **Quakers** first abolitionists
- By 1800s, North had basically abolished slavery
- **1820s** – Upper South – Quaker movement which called for gradual, compensated emancipation & colonization in Africa
- **1817** – American Colonization Society formed
  - 1822 – Liberia first resettled
- **1820s** – **Benjamin Lundy**, NJ Quaker, leads movement – Gradual, compensation & colonization gave **William Lloyd Garrison** his start
- **Jan. 1, 1831** – Garrison begins publishing **The Liberator** – Immediate, no compensation & without colonization
  - 1832 – organized the New England Anti-Slavery Society
  - 1833 – helped organize the American Anti-Slavery Society
  - 1840 – nearly 200,000 abolitionists
• Theodore Dwight Weld – best organizer of abolitionist movements; *Slavery As It Is*

• Abolitionists spoke out against
  – physical abuses of slavery,
  – failure to give legal marriages to slaves,
  – separation of children from parents,
  – denial of self-improvement,
  – institution wasn’t weakening but strengthening
  – hypocrisy of America as democracy with slavery
  – British West Indies emancipation led to more cries of American emancipation
Frederick Douglass, Sojourner Truth – leading freed black abolitionists

David Walker – militant black abolitionist, *Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World*

Harriet Tubman – escaped from slavery, then led 19 groups of people to freedom on the Underground Railroad

Abolitionist Tactics – slavery was a sin → denies unalienable rights → politically pressured Congress to outlaw interstate slave trade & exclude slavery from territories
Opposition

- Mob violence to stop abolitionists
  - Business leaders in North supported this because feared loss in trade with South
  - Nationalists feared break up of union; Church leaders warned against sectionalism; racism

- Free Blacks in North
  - Forbidden from most trades and professions
  - Excluded from public schools
  - Segregated in Church, transportation
  - Barred from public office/jury duty
  - Couldn't vote except in New England and New York
  - Couldn't settle in some Western states
Progress?

• **Gag rule** (1836-1844) – Forbade Congress from hearing petitions related to slavery → abolitionists fighting for freedom to appeal

• **Prigg v. Penn** (1842) – Allowed states to withhold assistance of supporting the Fugitive Slave Act of 1793, led to adoption of personal-liberty laws

• United in their call for no slavery in new Western territories
Pro-Slavery?

- African-Americans were descendants of Ham, who was cursed in the Bible
- **Mosaic Law** said that Jews were to make bondsman of the heathens
- Prophets, Christ, etc. never condemned slavery; servants were to obey
- Slavery is part of history (Aristotle) in every organized society the men of superior talents would become masters over those of inferior talents
- Provided efficient and orderly labor system (plantations = organized communities) everyone works and is provided for (practical socialism)
- Slaves happy and well cared for...
- Racially-based arguments – Best case scenario for black Americans (inferior to white race intellectually); by freeing the whites from menial tasks, all members of the privileged caste were elevated