

African and Native Intersections

Introduction: Mainland North America



With the arrival of Europeans in the Americas, the desire for a cheap source of labor led to the enslavement of Native and African peoples. Even where Indian labor was not employed, Africans and Native people interconnected sometimes as compatriots, sometimes as enslaved brethren, other times as slave and slave master and, yet again, as violent enemies. One single story regarding the relationship of Africans and Native Americans does not exist, just as one single story of the relationship between any collections of people does not exist. The intersections of African and Native American people are particularly complex and are far too detailed for this brief lesson. However, it is our goal to introduce readers to some of the topics surrounding the interaction of these groups in hopes of planting seeds that will flourish into further research and study.

The people of Mainland North America, referred to as Indians were never held in bondage to the degree of Africans, but where possible within the Americas and in the Caribbean, Indians were enslaved. Europeans used wars between various African factions as well as Indian factions to the European economic advantage. Captives

from both groups were enslaved and transported to various European interests throughout the Americas.

Throughout the following pages, we will consider early intersections from the colonial and national period through the end of the Civil War. We will examine the Eastern Seaboard colonies of Virginia, Dutch New Netherland (present-day New York) as well as North Carolina, South Carolina and Florida.

- Land and Labor: The Virginia Connections
- Land and Identity
- Dutch/New Amsterdam
- Native People and Africans in Bondage
- Mutual Flight from Enslavement