

**STORY OF THE SLAVE; PAPER READ
BEFORE THE MONMOUTH COLONY
HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION ON
OCTOBER 30TH, 1902. SLAVERY
AND SERVITUDE IN NEW JERSEY**

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Story of the slave; paper read before the Monmouth Colony Historical association on October 30th, 1902. Slavery and servitude in New Jersey by Alfred M. Heston

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STORY OF THE SLAVE

Paper read before the Monmouth County Historical Association on October 30th, 1902, wherein is given some account of

Slavery and Servitude in New Jersey

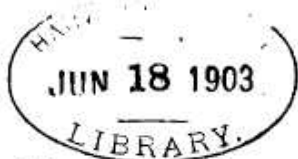
WITH NOTES

Concerning Slaves and Redemptioners in other States

By Alfred M. Heston, of Atlantic City, member of
the New Jersey Historical Society

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Slavery and Servitude in New Jersey

SLAVERY existed in America long before 1619, when the Dutch traders brought their cargo of human freight to Jamestown. The Aztecs of Mexico enslaved not only their enemies taken in battle, but those of their own nation who were convicted of theft and other crimes. "By a stern law," says Prescott, "every tax defaulter was liable to be taken and sold as a slave." The same authority adds that slave dealing was an honorable calling among the Aztecs. After the discovery, in 1492, the unsuspecting natives of the West Indies, race and stock of the Aztecs, were seized by the Spaniards and put to work in the mines.*

Las Casas, whose father accompanied Columbus on his first voyage, and who was honored with the title of "Protector of the Indians," outraged at the exhibitions of cruelty in Cuba, proposed to relieve the natives by sending out Castilian laborers and importing negro slaves from Africa. As a youth in Spain, Las Casas had been attended by an Indian page whom his father had brought with him from Hispaniola. Thus the uncompromising advocate of freedom for the Indian began his career as the owner of a slave.†

Although Las Casas succeeded in substituting the negro for the Indian as a slave, he did not prevent Indian slavery, especially in the English colonies on the mainland, where, for many years, Indians, taken prisoners in war, were held as slaves. In a few cases, too, the whites who landed along

*An account of this phase of American slavery is given in Fiske's *Discovery of America*, Vol. II.

†Prescott's "Conquest of Mexico," Vol. I, Bk. 2, ch. 8.

the unsettled coast could not resist the temptation to entice the Indians aboard ship, and then sail away to sell them in the settlements elsewhere.*

*Lawson, historian of North Carolina (pp. 73, 74), writing of those New Englanders who sought to plant a colony at the mouth of Cape Fear River, in 1660, says they were driven off by the Indians, whose children they had sent north under pretext of having them educated. The Indians suspected that their children had been sold into slavery, and became so hostile that the whites were glad to leave that part of the country.

In a report made to the States-General of Holland, in 1616, Captain Hendrickson speaks of having discovered and explored "certain lands, a bay and three rivers" (the Delaware, Schuylkill and Maurice Rivers), in a small yacht of sixteen tons burden named the "Onrest," built at Manhattan. In this report to the States-General he further describes some of the productions of the country, and says that he bought three of the native inhabitants from the Mingoos and Mohicans, who held them in slavery, and for whom he gave in exchange kettles, beads and merchandise.

An instance of the capturing of Indians for slaves is found in the account of the Tuscarora war, in North Carolina. When the attack began, in 1711, Governor Hyde, of North Carolina, sent to the Governor of South Carolina for aid. He directed his agents there not to fail to represent "that great advantage may be made of slaves, there being many of them, women and children—may we not believe three or four thousand?" The Indian allies, coming from South Carolina to aid Hyde, took back a great number of slaves from the conquered people in North Carolina. The Indians, said Colonel Pollock, as soon as they had taken the fort and secured their slaves, marched away straight to their homes. Tom Blount, chief of a tribe of friendly Indians in that section, also secured his captives for slaves. He proposed to attack a certain small tribe, in which he thought there might not be enough people to give each of his own warriors an Indian slave, and he accordingly asked the North Carolina Council to promise some reward to those who might not happen to have slaves allotted to them. Most of the Indian slaves taken in this Tuscarora war were carried to other colonies, a good many going to Massachusetts and Connecticut. They were sold for about ten pounds each. More than 700 of them were captured and sold before the war was ended.

Strachey, in his "Travayle into Virginia," speaks of a story that he had from the subjects of an Indian chief, Eyanoco, who lived at Ritanoce, somewhere in the region to the south of Virginia, and who had seven whites who had escaped out of the massacre at Roanoke, and these he used to beat copper. "It is not improbable that there is a shadow of truth in the statement, although the details must be fictitious," says Dr. John Spencer Bassett, in his monograph on slavery and servitude in North Carolina. "That the Indians of the colony later on did enslave the whites whom they could take in their waters, or who were shipwrecked off the coast, we know from the preamble of an act of the Assembly about 1707. This form of white servitude left no trace in the life of the colony."

With the white man enslaving the red through greed of gain, small wonder is it that the red man enslaved the white, the motive in the latter case, however, being revenge, rather than profit. The first slaves that we hear of in North Carolina were white people, whose masters were Indians; seven whites who had escaped from the massacre at Roanoke in 1711 being enslaved by the Indians. Per contra, the first slaves that we hear of in New Jersey were Indians and their masters were white people. During the first half of the seventeenth century, the Swedes on the Delaware and the Dutch on the Hudson enslaved members of the various tribes thereabout.*

The Dutch settlers of New Amsterdam, also, after the manner of the times in New Jersey, tried to enslave the aboriginal red men, but the task proved both harassing and unprofitable. Indeed, this attempted enslaving of the Indians by the Dutch burghers led to such trouble that the burghers, in self defence, built a wall across the lower end of Manhattan, whereby the liberty-loving red man was kept from driving the slave-catching white man over the battery and into the bay. The site of this wall is now the money mart of New York.

The Dutch† and Swedes, first settlers on the Hudson and Delaware, respectively, finding Indian slavery impossible, brought negroes to our province from the west coast of Africa; but while slavery was one of the social customs of

*In 1640 it was enacted in Massachusetts that there shall never be any bond slavery in that province, unless it be the lawful captives taken in "just wars," or such as shall willingly sell themselves. In New Jersey there was no war of extermination, as in Massachusetts, and no captives taken in "just wars," but the Indians—a few it may be—were enslaved from the beginning, and half-breeds, the off-spring of Indian mothers, were likewise enslaved. As late as 1797, in a habeas corpus proceeding, Chief Justice Kinsey delivered an opinion before the Supreme Court, in which he said, "The Indians have been so long recognized as slaves in our law that it would be as great a violation of the rights to establish a contrary doctrine at the present day as it would be in the case of the African, and as useless to investigate the manner in which they originally lost their freedom."

†See page 40 of this monograph.

these two colonizing nations, it did not become a recognized system until the advent of the English in 1664.*

The earliest recorded instance of ownership of negro slaves in New Jersey is that of Colonel Richard Morris, of Shrewsbury, who, as early as 1680, had sixty or seventy slaves about his mill and plantation. It is said that ten years later nearly all the inhabitants of northern New Jersey owned slaves.†

Queen Anne's instruction to her cousin, Lord Cornbury, Governor of New Jersey, shows clearly a desire to encourage the importation of African slaves, and the Governor was specifically instructed to report annually the number thereof. A statute passed in 1714, and repealed in 1721, imposing a duty of ten pounds on every slave imported for sale, was called forth by the desire to stimulate the introduction of white servants, a similar statute in Pennsylvania having had that effect.‡

Small as she is and large as was her interest in slavery, New Jersey was surpassed by Rhode Island—"little Rhodie"—in the magnitude of her importations from Africa.

In 1770 Rhode Island had as many as 170 vessels engaged in the slave trade, and it is undoubtedly true, as Samuel

*A certain Conningsmarke, a Swede, popularly known as "the long Finne," having been convicted of stirring up an insurrection in Delaware, as part of his punishment, was sentenced by the Council at New York, in 1669, to be sent to "Barbadoes, or some other remote plantation, to be sold." After having been kept prisoner in the "Stadt-house at York" for a year, the long Finne was duly transported to Barbadoes and sold into slavery.—Smith's History of New Jersey, pp. 53, 54.

†Although begun during the proprietary period, previous to 1702, slavery in New Jersey did not become a recognized system until the time of Queen Anne, when there was a steady increase in the number of slaves until 1776, with special forms of trial and punishment prescribed in the criminal law. This was also the period of a strong abolition movement among the Friends, ending in 1776, with the denial by Friends of the right of membership in their society to slaveholders.

‡Queen Anne was "willing to recommend" to the Royal African Company that the province "may have a constant and sufficient supply of merchantable negroes, at moderate rates," and the Governor, on his part, was instructed to "take especial care" to secure prompt payment for the same.

Hopkins says in his "Reminiscences," that Rhode Island was more deeply interested in the slave trade than any other colony in New England. There is a record of one good old elder, whose ventures on the African coast always turned out well, who returned thanks on the Sunday following the arrival of a slaver into the harbor of Newport, in these words: "An overruling Providence has been pleased to bring to this land of freedom another cargo of benighted heathen, to enjoy the blessings of a gospel dispensation."*

Sir John Hawkins, who, as is well known, commanded the first English expedition to Africa for slaves, issued to his captains the following orders: "Serve God daily; love one another; preserve your victuals; beware of fire; keep good company." It has been said that "Hawkins sailed on the ship *Jesus*, with faith as serene as if he had sailed on a crusade." At one time they were so long becalmed at sea as to face starvation, but the pious slaver says in his notes, "Almighty God, who never suffereth his elect to perish, sent us the ordinary breeze."

The infamy of this slave traffic was attached quite as much to the people of the North as to those of the South. In fact, the well-to-do deacons and church members of New England controlled the business. The history of that time reveals Peter Faneuil with one hand piling up profits from his immense slave trade, while with the other he was erecting a cradle of liberty in Boston, and dispensing private and

*Originally the right to enslave the negro was based on the fact that he was a pagan. If such were the case, the early American colonists asked themselves, would not conversion enfranchise him? It was a matter of doubt in the minds of the settlers, and hence they hesitated to allow their negroes to become converted. Maryland, in 1671, enacted that conversion or baptism should not be taken to give freedom to slaves. In 1677, an English court gave an opinion that converted slaves were "infranchised." James Adams, a clergyman of the Established Church, who was in North Carolina in 1709, complained because the masters would "by no means permit their slaves to be baptized, having a false notion that a Christian slave is by law free." A few of the negroes, he said, were instructed in the principles of religion, but they were not baptized. [See note on page 40.]