Study Guide # 1 Slavery in Belize

**Slavery in British Honduras**

- A person owned by someone else and is forced to work for that person; He/she is property to a MASTER; European contact with America= enslavement of natives and then importation of slaves; Queen Isabella ordered them to be placed in Encomiendas; Bartolomew De las Casas recommended importation of African captives.

- Why slavery? The forestocracy (principal inhabitants that controlled the settlement of British Honduras) needed labor to extract logwood and Mahogany; The Plantocracy (plantation owners who held political and economic power in the Caribbean) needed labor to produce sugar.

- Early attempts to get labor: a. European Indentured Laborers: signed work contracts in Europe to work in the Caribbean; b. Redemptioneers: made a deal with ship captains to work in exchange to pay for their trip; c. Criminals: served time in the Caribbean.

- Slavery in Africa: In case of famine, parents placed their children as domestic slaves in the care of wealthy persons; Persons could be sold into slavery as a form of paying debt; Men could be enslaved for crimes; Prisoners of war could be turned into slaves.

- Trade for Africans 1518: The Spanish government supported the trade; Sold Asientos (license to trade for slaves) to the Portuguese; The Dutch West India Company== the leading power in the Atlantic.

**The Atlantic World**

- The interaction of peoples, and empires on the coasts of the Atlantic Ocean; Europeans took manufactured goods to Africa---bought Captives and sailed to America---bought raw materials and sailed to Europe; Transatlantic slave trade describes the removal of 10 to 15 million people from Africa (1400-1800s).

- Rationale for African captives in the West Indies:
  - Physical: West Africa was closer to the Caribbean than Europe; the east to west trade winds facilitated the trade.
  - Political: West Africa suffered from Political division and the Europeans took advantage of the situation.
  - Economic: Unoccupied land in America attracted Europeans; it was cheap to get slaves from Africa.
  - Religious: Noah’s condemnation of Ham to servitude backed slavery
  - Social: Slavery was a major institution for thousands of years; created the idea that slavery= blacks

- Promoting African slavery: The Dutch West India Company gained control of the trade through raiding Portuguese ports

- Dutch arguments: African captives were cheaper, Africans were loyal to their masters, African captives had children, Captives served as assurance for loans/debts, Dutch guaranteed a steady supply, Africans came with agricultural backgrounds.

Getting slaves

- Night raids: Raiders came from kingdoms and victims from villages; Surprise night attack—firing houses---collected villagers– yoking them two by two with forked sticks around their necks into a coffle= walked to the coast; Strong and fit survived.

- Selling in Africa: Selling cities: Salago, Oke Odan, Kumasi, Abomey, and Oyo; Africans sold to dealers who traded with Europeans= Dealers paid for the Africans, and taxes and marched them to the coast; Dealers traded with company factors/agents= surgeons checked each captive= branded= placed on baracoons or on a ship.

- Trading on the coast: Europeans acquiring slaves: 1. Purchased from African dealers; 2. sailed directly to trading stations/cities- captains and surgeons went to inspect in trading ports; On deck box-like trays of 150 centimeters long and 50 centimeters wide and high; men were placed in the boxes with iron shackles around their ankles joined by chains; women and children placed below deck; Provisions rice, yams, oil, a few fresh fruits and water.

- The Middle Passage: For the first days slaves were kept below deck; On high seas= doctors made morning rounds, a lot of sicknesses and deaths; Lasted for 6-10 weeks; Main markets: Barbados, Martinique, Jamaica, and Hispanola.
-Sales and Auctions: Captives stripped, shaved, and palm oiled; and concealed wounds (cosmetic mixtures); Scramble: Africans divided in groups with set prices—after a signal planters rushed on board—to see which was the best offer; Auction sale: After being bought they were branded and issued clothing—headed to the plantation.

Work in British Honduras

Organization of work: Extraction of forest products required moving around production units—temporary isolated camps; Logwood extraction was small scale—Mahogany required more labor; Cut the tree---move it through paths in the bush to riversides---placed at Barquadier (landing places)—gangs brought trees to the river to form rafts.

Work in Camps: Huntsmen: went into the wilderness to hunt for the trees; marked them and reported it to his master; Axe-men: Able-bodied slaves cut down the tree; cleared all around the tree and build a barbeque (a platform that elevated the axe man for him to easily chop down the tree); and chopped branches; Cattle-men: Transported logs to the river side—created rafts to flow downstream to a boom; Food production at camp: Women were taken for food preparation and planting and harvesting short term agricultural products.

In town: Food production in town: elders were used by the masters for the production of food to feed the other slaves; Done on the outskirts of the town; Domestic workers: Female slaves were taken as domestic workers for their masters; Their duties included: cleaning the master’s house, babysitting, washing, cooking, and they even had to perform sexual roles with their masters; Many of them were later taken as concubines.

Slave Control

Why control? Control: TO DIRECT THE ACTIONS OR FUNCTIONS OF SOMEONE OR SOMETHING; TO CAUSE SOMEONE OR SOMETHING TO ACT OR FUNCTION IN A CERTAIN WAY; The increase in the African slave population resulted in the increase of fear amongst the forestocracy; slaves outnumbered whites harming the white’s ability to control them; black codes or police laws were created in the British, French and Spanish Caribbean.

Control through laws: Laws designed to protect the forestocracy; Early warning systems against revolts= slave codes; European planters developed ways to suppress and punish any form of slave misconduct or insurrection.

Inhumane and illegal actions to suppress resistance and “domesticate” the enslaved Africans; Legal backing sanctified many such customs: a majority of the Civil laws and Codes, passed by the planters, called for the physical punishment of slaves; In Barbados: laws allowed planters to beat criminally charged slaves up to maiming and killing them; For stealing or the destruction of goods, a slave would "be publicly and severely whipped, not exceeding Forty Lashes.

Deficiency Act: To stop the higher slave population in relation to the white population; Most assemblies passed a deficiency (shortage) Act--to match the numbers of enslaved with a large enough proportion of free people; The life of a slave in such a colony was dominated by laws drawn up by the local assembly (Forestocracy).

Reasons for control: Consolidated slave laws (British), Siete Partidas (Spanish), Code Noir (French); Worried about the Protection of property and control of an unwilling workforce; Slaves= things; Prohibited congregation, bearing of arms, and any violence against whites.

Control methods:

- Militias: Trained white men militarily to be on alert for any uprising.
- Garrisons: (1600s) British troops were sent to Jamaica, Barbados, and leeward islands—also worked as police for the masters.
- Constables (Jumpers): Appointed, patrolled the streets, checked on slave activities, whipped slaves, and enforced a curfew system.
- Social Darwinism: justified superiority through skin color
- Religion: Christianity was used to judge morality. Slaves were taught that they were inferior—derived from God
- Education: Teaching the slaves to do their work and to be obedient. Did not want slaves to know how to read and write.

Punishments: Severe and used to deter and humiliate
Punishments included: flogging, personal coercion of whipping, mutilations and lesser punishments were accompanied with humiliating and disgusting acts; The methods used for enforcing the death penalty; hanging, beaten to death, lashed to a cart wheel, hang up in an iron cage to die of hunger and thirst, hanged until near death then cut into pieces, and also burnt to death.