

# The Slave Triangle



The history of slavery in the United States began shortly after the English first settlement in Virginia and lasted until the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment to the US Constitution.

## The Slave Triangle

The Atlantic slave trade, also known as the Slave Triangle, is the name given to the traffic of human beings, from England to Africa and to the colonies of the "New World",

from the 16<sup>th</sup> century to the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Most of the West and Central African slaves who arrived to the New World, were captured in raids and kidnapping, but others were also bought or traded with African Kings who captured them from enemy tribes.

### The three legs

The first leg of the triangle was the export of goods from Europe to Africa. For each captive, the African kings accepted any kind of goods from Europe. The second leg of the triangle exported enslaved Africans across the Atlantic Ocean to the Southern states of the USA. The third and final part of the triangle was the return of goods to Europe from the Americas, especially cotton, sugar, and tobacco. The result was a great wealth for the United States during the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### The role of slaves

Slave traders did not want intact slave families, but "self-reproducing units" with equal numbers of men and women, and life conditions of slaves varied with the slave's skin colour. Darker slaves worked in the fields, while lighter-skinned ones could work in houses.

But from the 1750s, during the American Revolution slavery began to be considered a social evil and had to be abolished.

### The abolition movement

Influential people of this Movement were: John Brown (who wanted slaves' uprising) Harriet Beecher Stowe (author of the novel Uncle Tom's Cabin) and Harriet Tubman, who helped 350 slaves to escape from the South, and who was a member of the *Underground Railroad*.

### Now answer these questions:

1. When did the history of slavery in the USA begin?
2. What was the Slave Triangle?
3. Where did most of the black slaves come from?
4. How were they caught?
5. What did the African Kings accept in exchange for human beings?
6. How many legs did the Slave Triangle have?
7. Which were the goods transported during the third leg of the Slave Triangle?
8. What did the US gain from slavery?
9. Which were the differences in the treatment of slaves?
10. Do you think that the USA have totally resolved their racial problems? Why? Express your ideas on the slavery issue.