

Inquiring Minds Topic – 22 November 2019

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Slavery and It's Imprint On The Present

How did slavery shape our country?

In the U.S. today, the number of black people incarcerated is more than the number of blacks put into slavery at any one time in our history.

“In 2016, the average black family had a net worth of \$17,600, compared with \$171,000 for the average white family.”

The first enslaved black people arrived in Virginia 400 years ago. What is slavery's imprint on the present?

After the Civil War, many of the newly freed slaves were forced into sharecropping, a pseudo slavery. The abolition of slavery did not end white supremacy.

Legal discrimination prevented black families to get a decent education, find jobs, buy a home and build wealth. Legal discrimination pushed black families into economically deprived slums. The newly freed slave were locked out of political and economic life. Where were the voices of Liberty, Equality and Justice?

Back in the early seventeenth century, comprehensive slave codes were passed enslaving blacks of virtually all rights. Beating, whipping and rape were commonplace. “The genetic makeup of the average black person in the U.S. today is an estimated 16.7 percent European in large part because of that brutal legacy.”

Southern planters used slaves for their labor intensive crops of cotton, tobacco, rice and indigo. Slavery soon spread to all of the American colonies. In 1756, slaves made up more than a quarter of the population in and around the city of New York.

“Slave labor was critical to the economic success of the American colonies and the early republic.” Why were black slaves valued more as property than as human beings?

In 1619, a year before the Pilgrims arrived in America, an English state sponsored pirate ship, traded between 20 and 30 Africans in chains to colonists from nearby Jamestown in exchange for food. And so it began.

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