Slavery and the Plantation Economy in the Caribbean in the 19th century

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The French Colony of Saint Domingue (Haiti)
Saint Domingue (Haiti) Located in the Caribbean between Cuba and Puerto Rico
Background 1700’s

- Population consisted of 90% slaves
- Produced 40% of Europe's sugar and 60% of their coffee
- Had the most slaves at the time other than Brazil
- Transported around 40,000 slaves per year
- Plantations here had around 40 up to 200 slaves in one plantation
1750-1784 French Rule as Tension Builds Within the Colony

- Beginning around the late 1750’s, freed mulattos and blacks began using their own plantations to better their lives, but the French were not ok with this.
- Being one of the largest plantation societies in the world, high population occurred as well as the thirst for wealth.
- White planters believed that they should have self-government as opposed to every other population that wanted freedom.
Once the Seven Year war ends in Europe, The Treaty of Paris is signed. Colonists fear that France will have to much power over Saint Domingue. In return colonists begin to control the administrative board. More restrictions are put upon blacks and mulattos creating an uprising in the colony.

French West Indies. A depiction of slave quarters at a plantation on Saint Domingue
Primary Source
A petition is submitted to St. Dominique assembly requesting political rights for free persons of color. And November, another, similar petition is submitted by a white columns, who is then arrested at his residence, dragged through the streets, and brutally killed by a furious mob of Blanc who cut off his head and paraded it through on a spike.

In 1789, at this time, the King freed all slaves in Saint Domingue.
1791 Haitian Revolution Begins

- The biggest first step was taking over the port of Au Prince in 1791
- Slaves planned out the rebellion to burn down the plantations on a certain night
  - Local colonies began revolting towards the French plantation owners
  - Mirebalais, Arcahaie, Petite-Rivière, Verrettes, and Saint Marc until nearly half the province is in armed rebellion.
  - Around 15,000 slaves start the first revolution in Haiti. A chain reaction begins but slaves are eventually stop and return to their plantations in the west.
  - In the south slaves refused to back down and continue to fight for freedom, and now consider themselves equal.
Continued

The same year, all colored people are considered free under France’s administration (1791)
By 1796 L'ouverture led the army of slaves composed of 20,000 or so.

Once slaves had taken over most of Saint Domingue, they...

- Are able to kill white population
- Create a military dictatorship around the protection of slaves.
- Able to defeat all of Frances inside power
- Gain enough followers to create political positions for colored
Napoleon Bonaparte (1799)

- Napoleon attempted to bring back old ways of slavery in the Colonies
  - He believed
    - White superior race
    - No anti-slavery movements
    - All colonies set themselves by a standard set of rules/laws
    - Slavery should continue to benefit France
- Napoleon sends 40,000 troops to reclaim Saint Domingue
- Forced out of Saint Domingue and loses a toll of 32,000 men while trying to regain it.
- In return ships Louverture back to France where he later dies
1801-1805
Revolution Finally Ends and Independence is Gained

- After the French were completely forced out of what is soon to be known Haiti, the new colonists create a new constitution and declare themselves independent.
- Some of the colonists were still upset though because Louverture still thought that plantations were genuinely important for the success of Haiti.
- As time went on a mill system was introduced which didn’t require as many workers.
- Thus freed slaves took on more developed specialized jobs.
- They were the first independent nation in the Caribbean and the second democracy in the western hemisphere.
Important periods of time in the colony

- Began in the late 1600’s
- 1789 Revolution in France between local colonies across the seas and France itself.
- Slavery slowly increased in population until the early late 1800’s as the colonies broke away from France.
- Island was initially owned by Spain but over the years it transferred into France hands.
- Slave Rebellion began in 1791 to 1804 when the slaves gained the right to be independent from France.
The French Colonies of Martinique and Guadeloupe
Martinique and Guadeloupe are Located...
1780’s-1790’s

- Around 1789 there was a total of 170,000 slaves
- Around 89,000 of those were based out of Guadeloupe and the other 72,000 in Martinique
- Specialized work had increased
- Especially in forms of producing coffee,
1800's-1810's Napoleon and France

- Napoleon's army of 40,000 troops enters the Caribbean in hopes of taking it over.
- Napoleon's army is once again defeated and France restores control over both islands.
- Slavery was reformed for awhile until the slaves overthrew the rest of the French soldiers.
- He decides to pull out of Martinique and Guadeloupe because he sees the power of the free slave army.
- By 1815 the two islands were restored to France but the Bourbon restoration government re-established slavery.
Sugar BOOM

- Producing around 20,000 metric tons of sugar per year by 1820
- By 1831 180,000 slaves were working producing 70,000 tons of sugar per year
- Average plantation size was 112 slaves in the 1820s and decreased to around 79 within the 1830s
- The two islands flourished because of the Haitian revolution that lasted from 1789-1805
- Then in the late 1830s the resources that they used to produce declined dramatically which consisted of...
  - Cotton
  - Coffee- decline of only 9% of slaves working on coffee plantations
  - Indigo
Slavery Abolished

- By 1831 slavery was officially abolished on the two islands
- Manusmisson was removed as free colored were given full rights of a citizen
- By 1848 the population was composed of more than $\frac{1}{3}$ free colored folk
- This caused the search for alternative forms of labor
- This also caused a new class of free powerful colored class
Effects of 19th Century Freedom

- New powerful group of Landowners on small farms producing food crops for local markets which finally benefits the local economy compared to France.
- New specialization develops the free citizens to be able to pursue duties that they couldn't have years before (especially run their own plantation)
- New inter-relationships between colonies and their cities
- Increase in mulatto and black population. Guaranteed freedom to newborns
The Spanish Colony of Cuba
Cuba
Sugar Booms, the Coffee Trade, and Cuban Rebellion

- 1790s-1820s
- 1830s-1860s
- 1780s-1844
- 1868-1878
The First Sugar Boom, 1790s-1820s

- Plantation model = Canary Islands
- Increase in Sugar demands in Europe
- Scientific Revolution techniques from the French
- 1790s = 18,000 tons
- 1810s = 37,000 tons
- 1820s = 70,000 tons
- Eventually overcomes Saint Domingue
Slavery in the first Sugar Boom

- 1770s = 44,000 slaves
- 1790s = 84,000
- 1810s = 212,000
- 1820s = 262,000
- At this point, almost all Africans
- Numbers for all slaves in Cuba

(1820s)
- 25% in sugar
- 13% in coffee
- 20-30% in small agriculture
- 50-66% the # of sugar in urban centers
- Varied urban jobs
- ⅓ - ⅕ slaves in Cuba living in cities (progressively gets less %)
The Second Sugar Boom 1830s-1860s

- Railroads
  - Expansion (inward from the coasts)
  - Faster Transport
  - Freed Slaves from transport jobs

- Steam Power
  - Refinement
  - Increased Efficiency
  - Increased in importance
  - Less ingenios, greater production over time
    - 1846 - 1,422 (20% steam)
    - 1861 - 1,365 (71% steam)

- Reached a peak of 41% of world sugar production
Slavery in the second Sugar Boom

- Increased efficiency processing in ingenios
- Increased demand for raw sugar cane
- Increased demand for slaves to harvest the cane
- Brought in new laborers
  - Enslaved Mayan Indians
  - Chinese coolies
- Increased African slave trade (outlawed in Spain in 1811)

- 1862
  - Average estate had 126 slaves
  - 70% of production in Western Havana areas

*Important!*
The Cuban Rebellion and the Ten Years War
1868-1878

- Eastern Half instigated the rebellion
- Wealthy slave owners vs “restrictive” imperial government
- Spanish forces destroyed plantations
- Eastern plantations freed slaves for troops
- Many freed slaves remained free after the war
- East = free colored area w/ peasant agriculture

- Centrales system of ingenios
- Huge refinement factories
- Left production to smaller planters
- Started experimenting with mixed-labor systems
Why fight?

1. Spanish rule in Cuba enforced arbitrary laws and rules
2. Spanish taxation in Cuba was excessive
3. Spanish government in Cuba was corrupt
4. Cubans were excluded from employment in the Spanish/Cuban government
5. Cubans were denied the right of assembly
Coffee production

- Late introduction to world production
- Fast growth/Early Peak in production
  - 1780 = NA
  - 1830s = Peak, 1,000 Cafetales
    - Same amount of slaves as sugar (50k)
    - Passed Jamaica for Caribbean control of coffee exports
- Never passed Brazilian production
- Major production ended in 1840s
  - 1844 & 1846 - Cuban Hurricanes
    - Half the earlier production
  - Destroyed Cafetales got replaced by sugar plantations (both need similar fertile land)
- Slaves used in sugar passed those used in coffee by a significant amount from 1830s onward
Race Populations and Culture in Cuba

- Four main groups in Cuba
  - Black Slaves
  - Free blacks and Mulattos
  - White laborers
  - White plantation owners
- 1861 = 360,000 slaves, 500,000 free blacks and mulattos, around 700,000 whites (over 1 million by the 1870s)
- Eastern Cuba = rich in black and mulatto culture because of the rebellion
- Very small percentage of the white plantation owners owned a majority of the rural slaves
- Slaves and whites grew in population faster, both from immigration and natural growth (very reduced natural growth for slaves)
- Free Black and Mulatto population grew slower, but permanently increased and grew almost exponentially (slow at first and then faster and faster)
Slave uses in Cuba

- Rural
  - Sugar
  - Coffee
  - Small Agricultural Units
  - Transport - Evolved into jobs regarding the railroads
  - Soldiers

- Some slaves were even able to “rent” their freedom by routinely paying their owners a fixed amount so that they could live away from “home.”

- Urban
  - Ports - needed slaves to pack and load all the sugar and coffee being shipped out
  - Domestic uses - middle-high income houses typically had domestic slaves
  - Various specialized jobs (Prostitutes, Salespeople, Masons, Carpenters)
  - Unskilled jobs (basic physical work, easy transportation jobs, basic service industries)
The Spanish Colony of Puerto Rico
Basic history of Puerto Rico

- Puerto Rico was the first Spanish stronghold in the Caribbean.
- During settlement, Natives were forced into servitude by the Spanish in their pursuit of gold on the island.
- Originally the area was used for gold mining.
- 1521 the island was renamed Puerto Rico.
- Island was a strategic stronghold for Spain in attempts of expansion into Mexico and North America.
- Island was attacked a lot as a result of its desirable position.
  - Spain realized its value and devoted time and resources to the construction of defenses for the island.
  - Specifically the settlement San Juan.
- Early agricultural and economic growth was slowed by Spain’s centrist economy.
Basic History continued...

- Spain forced the island to only trade directly with them
- Smuggling became a big part of the economy
  - They would smuggle products to trade with neighbors in the Caribbean
  - No taxation
  - Almost everyone on the island was involved
- Late 17th century a gold rush in Peru began that created a decline in the population of Puerto Rico
- 500 families were sent from the canary islands to combat this declining population
- To make up the loss in laborers slaves were brought in
- 18th century marked the revival of Puerto Rico
  - Number of settlements went from 5 to 40
  - Population increased by 150,000
  - Coffee was introduced
More will admire this when it is known that there are on this island, **39,846 free people and 5,037 slaves**; that the heat is very warm; very temperate, and as favorable to the Europeans as to the natives; that is bathed of many fast flowing rivers, that abound in good fish; that in the mountains there is never a lack of water; that in the plains there are beautiful plains, that of corn, rice, tobacco and other fruits, give two and even three harvests a year, that you can regulate that everything you sow gives eighty to one; that sugar cane is the thickest, highest, juiciest and sweetest in America; that cotton, indigo, coffee, tabasco pepper, cocoa, nutmeg and vanilla are of good quality; that the inferior quality of the tobacco is attributed to the greed of the harvesters to catch it before it is ready so that it has more juice and weight; With the exception of this fruit, coffee and sugar cane, the rest are wild in the mountains. The blackberry wood, very sought after by foreigners for its yellow dyes, is very abundant, likewise the guayacán, which is very strong wood for blocks, and of which they are used for various furniture, and antigallic tisanes. The Dutch and English draw considerable portions each year; goes from 43,000 pesos what matters. On the island there is an abundance of excellent woods for buildings, mills, construction of small commercial vessels and coal. I have seen in the vicinity of Guayama, saltpeter. There are enough salinas for consumption; infinite herbs, roots and medicinal gums, which could form a considerable line of commerce.

O’reilly’s report led to stimulation for export
Sugar production

- 18th century marked beginning of sugar production in the area
- Late to develop compared to other Caribbean neighbors
- Early on the peasants were main source of commercial agricultural labor
- 1791 Saint Domingue collapsed
  - This created a opportunity for Puerto Rico to expand their business in exportation with the lessened competition
- Puerto Rico had excellent soil and a good climate for sugar
  - Warm
  - Steady sources of water for irrigation
Sugar production continued...

- Until late into Puerto Rico’s development, subsistence agriculture was the large majority of their overall agricultural production
  - Differed from Cuba or other Caribbean islands with smaller peasant class
  - Amount of lands devoted to subsistence agriculture was double that for production for export
  - Related to the large native population
The geography of Puerto Rico differed from that of other Caribbean sugar producers.

○ The internal parts of Puerto Rico were mountainous.
  ■ This guaranteed the continuation of substance peasant agriculture as the land was unfit for commercial use.

○ The commercial agriculture, done for export, was all coastal in narrow flat strips of land.
  ■ As opposed to the great plains of Cuba.
Production for exportation

- The production of sugar, tobacco, and coffee increased exponentially from around 1800-1870
  - In 1810 Puerto Rico was exporting 2,000 metric tons of sugar
  - By the late 1820s they were exporting 16,000 tons
  - In this same time period coffee exportation went from 3,000 to 6,000 metric tons
  - 1830s they were producing 36,000 metric units which was one third that of Cuba
  - In the 1840s it was providing the united states with 22% of all their sugar
  - 1870 it was exporting 100,000 metric tons, 7% of the sugar in the world
Puerto Rico’s population showed massive growth in the 18th century with an increase of 150,000 people.

By 1827 the population of the island in total was around 300,000.

The native population was recovered by this time period from the times of rampant disease.

- Rapid growth of this population was shown during the 19th century.
  - Large part of the reason for the large peasant class.

Free population was growing 2% per annum in this time period.
Slave populations

- There was a much smaller population of African slaves in Puerto Rico compared to Cuba or other Caribbean neighbors.
- In 1815, 19,000 slaves worked on the island.
- From that period on, the number of slaves grew at a rate of 4% per annum.
- By 1828, the population reached 32,000, and by 1834, 42,000.
- The slave population stabilized at 42,000 because of British pressure cutting off access to the Atlantic Slave Trade.
- The slave population stayed stagnant while the free population increased, causing the percentage of slaves to drop from 12% to 9%.
Use of Slaves

- Slaves were used differently in Puerto Rico compared to other places around the world.
- There was an almost complete dedication of slaves to agriculture in Puerto Rico.
  - 2/3rds to 3/4ths of all slaves were used for agricultural purpose.
- Slaves almost completely were used for working the Haciendas (plantations).
Haciendas

- Haciendas in Puerto Rico were smaller in size
  - The geography restricted them to narrow strips of coastal land
  - Average size was around 60 acres of land
    - In the rest of the Caribbean the average size was closer to 200-300
- One Hacienda in Puerto Rico would use around 40 slaves
- Production in these smaller Haciendas was greater per area than that of neighboring islands
Jornaleros and the Peasant class

- The peasant class was vast from the beginning of production in Puerto Rico.
- For most of the history of the island the peasants contributed the majority of production.
- 1815-1834 slaves took over a good portion of the labor.
- 1834 new slaves were cut off yet sugar productions continued to expand.
  - Jornaleros were the factor continuing the growth.
  - They were free daily-wage workers.
- Jornaleros had multiple effects.
  - Did skilled work that slaves would do on other Caribbean islands.
    - Allowing for total dedication of slaves to agriculture.
  - Added to the workforce when slaves became unavailable.
Abolition of Slavery

- Emancipation occurred in 1873 as a result of a variety of causes
  - Anti-slavery elements in Spain
    - Moral
  - Erodation by slaves with complaints and demands
- Freed slaves were required to sign contracts for 3 years with former masters
- Fear of violence from freed slaves was proven to be meritless
Outline Activity

Can you spot the differences?
Important Aspects

Specialized jobs by slaves in cities

Urban whites utilizing African slaves

Higher number of whites in cities than slaves or mulattos

Very European influenced colony, notice the clothing worn by the slaves
El FIN