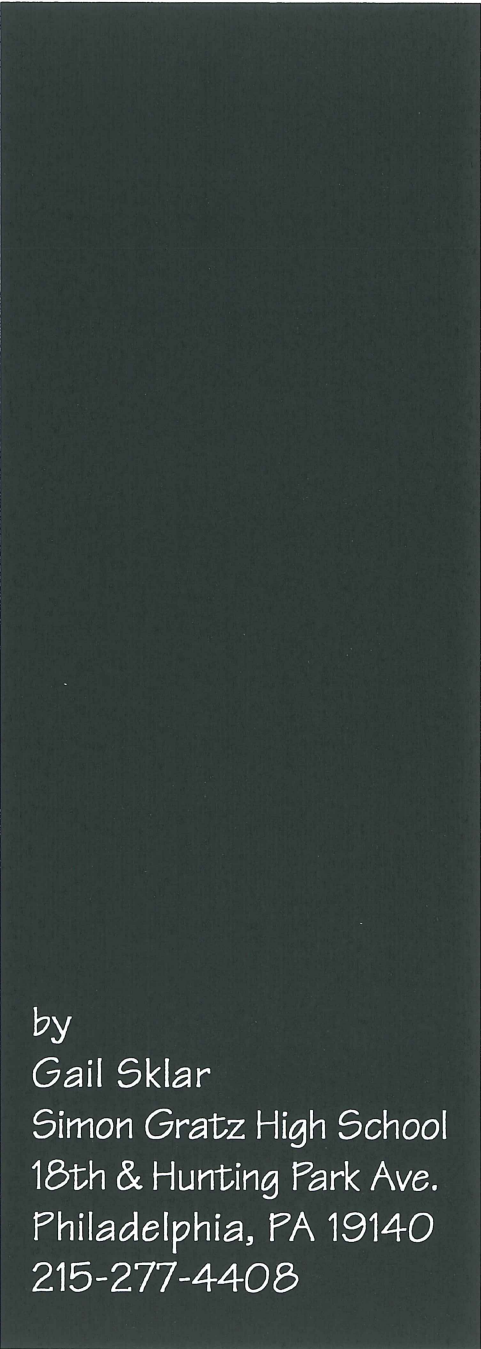




# SLAVE WOMEN OF AFRICAN DECENT IN BRAZIL, HAITI, AND JAMAICA



**Level:** *grades 9-12.*  
**Course:** *world history/culture, Afro-American, Latin and Caribbean studies, Spanish, English*

## Rationale

Students too readily accept everything that they read in books as "THE TRUTH." Teachers often hear, "Well, I read it in the book. It must be true." or "It was on the news, in the newspaper, or in a magazine." Unfortunately too many students hear teachers say that if it's in the book, then it must be so. Much of what has been called history has been recorded as such by men of the dominant culture of that society. The men who write the text, have decided what should be recorded and what is important. There is little written about women let alone minority women. Innumerable students have deducted that since women and members of minority groups rarely appear in history texts they have contributed little to history. As an outcome of this unit, students will begin to question the authenticity of what they read and what is the history of other groups of people.

By including the subject of women in the study of history and culture, students will be forced to use non-traditional sources for research. These sources can range from journals/diaries, paintings, letters, novels of that era, court records, tombstones, lyrics of songs, and in religious documents or traditions. Students given these kinds of documents must learn to read and ask questions, not just to read, accept, and answer questions at the end of the chapter. As a result of this unit, students will learn to

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read, question, to make connections, and to develop hypotheses of the history of women and other groups of people who are not members of the dominant elite.

This unit will be divided into two parts. The first will encourage students to construct a history of women of African slave decent in the countries of Brazil, Haiti, and Jamaica. Secondly, they will write a paper in which they defend the data they have developed.

## Objectives

- \* Students will demonstrate their ability to question what read, see, or hear.
- \* Students will demonstrate their ability to question about who is missing from their history texts.
- \* Students will demonstrate their ability to work cooperatively.
- \* Students will demonstrate their ability to do a research paper using primary documents or by using non-traditional research documents.

## Time Needed

This unit of study will take approximately one month. Students will meet in block rosters.

## Lesson 1:

The class will be divided into three groups designated by the teacher. The groups will be told to choose its own faciliator, recorder, time keeper, and a person who will be in charge of the file. Each group will be given several textbooks on world history and American history. They will be given handouts on which the following instructions and questions will be asked:

Using the books that I've given each group, write down the following things you discover about women:

1. in the Table of Contents or in a random chapter
2. in the Index
3. in the pictures or illustrations
4. in the captions under the pictures and the illustrations

Your group will now summarize/compile in written form:

1. What was found in the four areas?
2. What kinds of differences were found between the books?

The groups will report out on their findings. The results should be recorded on experience chart paper (large chart paper generally used by primary teachers) a separate sheet for each group. Have the students compare/contrast the responses of the three groups. Ask the students why they think their results occurred.

Next, have the students repeat the same activity substituting African Americans for women.

## Lesson 2:

The students will be given five minutes to write a reflection on what they know about slavery in the Americas. They will be asked to share out ( verbally share their thoughts or writings. On experience chart paper, their responses will be recorded. After the students have finished sharing, they will be asked what countries were they talking/writing about? They will be asked, What countries make up the Americas? A map will then be posted and a review will be held on the countries. They question will be posed if any student knows anyone who lived in South America, Central America, the Caribbean, or Canada. They will share what they “know” about that particular culture. Next they will be asked to write a reflection on what they know about slavery in Brazil, Haiti, or Jamaica. Their responses will be recorded on chart paper labeled either Brazil, Haiti, or Jamaica. This chart paper should remain hanging and dated.

The students will be told that they will continue to work in the same cooperative learning groups. In addition, the group members must decide if the various group roles will remain static or if they will rotate.

They will be given a packet of articles, primary sources, and some traditional texts on slavery in their assigned country of either Brazil, Haiti, or Jamaica. The teacher should then coach the students into defining primary and secondary sources. Also, primary sources should be identified and posted in the room so that the students learn them to the automatic level. Various types and locations of secondary sources will be identified.

After reading the information, they should then determine:

1. what they know
2. what they need to know
3. where they need to go to get the information

## Lessons 3 and 4:

The teacher should review how to footnote and to cite quotes. Proper bibliography form should also be taught and practice given in both these areas.

## Lessons 5 to 8

The students should be working and researching their designated country. They should bring in new information each class session to share with their group. Each time they should also review and answer:

1. what they know
2. what they need to know
3. where they need to go to get the information

As the groups are working the teacher should circulate and spend time with each group. The teacher can, by this process, answer questions, evaluate group progress, and coach the group on in their work.



## Lesson 9

The group will report out on their findings and present their position and supporting information to the class. The students will then entertain questions from their peers. The part of the class not presenting will evaluate the group which did present. They will also be asked to write about what they learned from the presentation.

The presenting group will write a reflection about their process and their product. They will be asked:

1. What did you like best about your project?
2. What could you have done better?
3. What did you learn?
4. What grade do you think your group deserves?
5. Write three possible essay questions to ask the class.

## Lesson 10:

The students will hand in their research papers. They will again be asked to write a reflection for five minutes on what they know about slavery in Brazil, then Haiti, and finally, Jamaica. The students will share out indicating the country they are speaking about. The teacher will record the information as it is said on experience chart paper. The students and teacher will then compare the original experience chart paper with the new. The differences will be indicated.

## Bibliography

**\*\*Books with primary sources are starred at the end of the citation.**

Bastide, Roger, trans. Peter Green. African Civilisations In The New World. NY: Harper and Row, 1971.

Presents a view of people of African decent in terms of religion, folklore, and other forms of culture.

Beckles, Hilary McD. Natural Rebels A Social History Of Enslaved Black Women In Barbados. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1989. **\*\***

This is a well informed text describing the life of Black slave women in Barbados. It is a wonderful source book. It discusses rebellion by Africans on ships and the role some women played. Contains first person accounts.

Bethell, Leslie. The Abolition Of The Brazilian Slave Trade. Cambridge: University Printing House, 1970.



This text focuses on England's role in the abolition movement in Brazil. Some first person accounts. There is little about the slaves themselves.

Bush, Barbara. Slave Women In Caribbean Society 1650-1838. Kingston: Heinemann Publishers, 1990. \*\*

This is an excellent text. It is full of information, first person accounts, and resources. It covers such topics as slave women in resistance, as transmitters of African culture, and their role in the labor force.

Chambers, Frances, Compiler. Haiti, Volume 39, World Bibliographic Series. Oxford: Cleo Press, 1993.

Conniff, Michael, L. and Thomas Davis. Africans In The Americas: A History Of Black Diaspora. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994. \*\*

Includes bibliographic references. It covers slave trade and slavery in the Americas and Africans in the Americas since abolition.

Conrad, Rober, E. Children Of God's Fire. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973. \*\*

Collection of court documents, manumissions, speeches, and newspaper ads.

Corbett, Bob, "The Haitian Revolution of 1791-1803: An Historical Essay in Four Parts," Internet URL: <http://www.primenet.com/~rafreid/haitrev1.html>

Ewbank, Thomas. Life In Brazil, A Journal Of A Visit To The Land The Cocoa And The Palm. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1856. \*\*

This is a first person account. The author gives minute accounts of life in Brazil in 1953 from his eyes.

Fouchard, Jean, trans. A. Faulkner Watts. The Haitian Maroones; Liberty Or Death. New York: Edward W. Blyden Press, 1981.

Genovese, Eugene D. From Rebellion To Revolution. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979.

In this text, women are invisible. There are some first person accounts of slave and Maroon rebellions.

Genovese, Eugene D. The Slave Economics, Vol. II. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1973.

Essays presenting the history of slaves in South America, especially Brazil, the Caribbean, And the Southern United States. The first essay deals with the idea that the slave economy was dependent on "external demand". (P.2)

Goveia, Elsa. "The West Indian Slave Laws", Regisita De Ciencias Sociales, Vol. 4, #1 (March 1960): 75-105. Especially pages 92-103.

Higman, B.W. Slave Population And Economy In Jamaica, 1807-1834. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976.\*\*

This text gives an analysis of slave populations in Jamaica.

Ingram, K. E. Jamaica, VOL. 45. World Bibliographic Series xii. Oxford: Clio Press, 1984.

This is a bibliographic reference which attempted to understand and draw attention to the history and culture of Jamaica.

Karasch, Mary Catherine. Slave Life In Rio De Janeiro 1808-1850. Thesis submitted June 1972. Printed in 1982 by University Microfilms International, Ann Arbor.

This is her doctoral dissertation. There is lots of excellent background information.

Klein, Herbert S. African Slavery In Latin America And The Caribbean. NY: Oxford University Press, 1986.

This is an excellent text. While it contains no first person accounts, the bibliographic are excellent.

Knaster, Meri. Women In Spanish America: An Annotated Bibliography From Pre-Conquest To Contemporary Times. Boston: C. K. Hall & Co, 1977.

This text contains mainly secondary sources, in Spanish and English, some of which contain primary sources.

Kopytoff, Barbara, "The Development of Jamaican Maroon Ethnicity" Caribbean Quarterly, 22 June-Sept. 33-50.

This article stresses the disproportionate number of men to women and the low birth rate.

Lipski, John M. "A New Perspective on Afro-Dominican Spanish: The Haitian Contribution" Research Paper Series No. 26, May 1994. Albuquerque: Latin American Institute.

This paper discusses the effect Afro-Dominican language past and present. It gives a overview on Africans in this area.

Mellafe, Rolanda, Trans. J. W. Judge. Negro In Latin America. Berkley: University Press, 1975.

This text covers the establishment of slavery, the forms of slave trade, sources, routes, the marketing of slaves, the dependency of the colonial economy upon slavery, the society that developed, abolition, and alternatives to this peculiar institution. It also looks at laws of marriage.

Morner, M. "Buy or Breed?" Sources of Slavery in the Plantation Societies of the New World. Stockholm: Institute of Latin American Studies, 1980.

This is a report which summaries, succinctly the literature up to 1980 on prices, gender, mortality rates of Africans in the Americas during slavery.

Morrissey, Marietta. Slave Women In The New World, Gender Stratification In The Caribbean. Kansas City: University Press, 1989.

This is a source which describes the lives of slaves in the Caribbean.

Morrissey, Marietta. Women's Work, Family, Formation And Reproduction Among Caribbean Slavery. Working Paper #76 Dec. 1984. Texas Technical University.

This paper reviews the hypothesis that the organization of family is related to labor shortages or surpluses.

Pendle, George. A History Of Latin America. London: Penguin Books, 1963.

This is a short basic overview of the history of LatinAmerica.

Porter, Dorothy B. Afro-Braziliana: A Working Bibliography. Boston: G. K. Hall and Co., 1970.

This is a collection of works mainly by Afro-Brazilians, mostly in Portuguese. One can infer the richness of their contribution to the life, history, and culture of Brazil.

Reis, Joao Jose', trans. Arthur Brakel. Slave Rebellion In Brazil. Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1993.\*\*

This book describes a rebellion by the Malis who were Muslim Africans in 19th century Bahia. It is based on the declarations of African prisoners and legal documents.

Roberts, George W. and Sonja A. Sinclair. Women In Jamacia. Millwood: Kio Press, 1978.

This book takes on the subject of existing patterns in Jamcia and how they can be viewed in the context of religious institutions and the ceromonies involved in their establishments and functioning.

Robertson, Claire C and Martin Klein. Women and Slavery in Africa. Madison: University of WI, 1963.

This book is a collection of essays supporting the hypothesis that female slaves were valued more for their labor than for their labor than for their reproductive abilities. It also points out that slavery existed before the white Europeans arrived.

Schwartz, Stuart B. Slaves, Peasants, And Rebels. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992.

This is a volume of essays which covers sugar plantation life, slave life, and slave resistance in colonial Brazil.

Tuelon, Alan. "Nanny-Maroon Chieftainess" Caribbean Quarterly, 19 (Dec.) 20-25.



This article traces the legend of Nanny. It contains direct quotes from others who have written about her. This is an excellent article for student questioning.

#### **Resources:**

Curriculum Resource Center for Latin American Studies. Tulane University, New Orleans, LA 70118. Tel. (504) 865-5165 or (504) 865-6719.

#### **Videos, Curricula, Catalogs**

Jackdaw Publications, Division of Golden Owl Publishing, P.O. Box 503, Amawalk, NY 110501  
(914) 962-0034

Women in World History Curriculum. Write: Women in World History, PEF (Philadelphia Education Fund), 7 Benjamin Franklin Parkway, Suite 700, Phila. PA 19103-1294.

Women's History Catalog, National Women's History Project, 7738 Bell Road, Windsor, CA 95492-8518  
(707) 838-6000

#### **Films**

"BAHIA: Africa in the Americas"

"Children of Gods' Fire: A Documentary History of Black Slavery in Brazil" by Robert Edgar Conrad.