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## Enslaved People in the United States

There was a period of time in the history of the United States when slavery was legal. As hard as it is to believe, until the end of the Civil War in the 1860s, it was legal in southern states to enslave black African Americans and force them to work on southern plantations. These people endured harsh treatment, inhuman living conditions, and endless amounts of grueling labor for the benefit of the plantation owner and his family. The treatment was as terrible as bitten by a dog with rabies.

The treatment of the workers was as terrible as living in a dog house. If you angered the owner you would be put in jail. As a slave you got no freedom and was treated like an animal. Most of the time you got sold and may never see your family again. Sometimes you would live in dread or fear of the overseer. If you tried to escape you would get shot or whipped or have your toes cut off so they would not run again. The treatment was not even as great as the field work.

When you are a field worker you get up at the crack of dawn and work with horrific conditions. If you stood up you would get whipped in the back and was made get back to work. If you got one hundred or two hundred pounds of cotton bolls you would still go back to work. If you did not get the amount you needed could get whipped. If you were old they would sell you or would make you take care of the kids until they were old enough to work in the field. If the master needed a domestic worker you would get out of the field work if you were pleasant.

Slaves that worked in the main house were domestic workers. They were treated better than field workers. The work was not as horrible but more demanding. The domestic workers worked day and night to serve his master and his family. When you slept you slept in the attic or the basement. If you were a field worker you had a horrendous house.

Enslaved people survived in spite of housing conditions that were barely livable. Most slaves lived in small one-room cabins with a dozen people. These crowded cabins lacked any privacy so they had to hang a cloth to separate themselves from the other slaves. The only source of heat was a fire in the middle of the floor. They had to sleep on hay beds, and when the roof leaked the floor got muddy and the bed got wet and muddy.

Being a slave was so terrible that it was as bad as slave owners buying slaves even when the slave owners knew that having slaves was wrong they did it anyway.