

Cost of Slavery in the US: Loss of Human Lives

BACKGROUND

Setting up the stage of the discussion. I am totally horrified by slavery as a concept, and by its terrible role in US history both by the loss of human lives it caused and by the damage it did to US society ripples of which still reverberate today.

Slavery, including taking humans as hostages, was condemned by most civilized societies throughout world history, at least as a concept, with some exceptions. In me personally this condemnation is multiplied many times over by my religion and its absolute non-negotiable position against slavery and hostage-taking in today's world. The ancient world is, well, ancient, and we all graduated from it a long time ago.

Since focus here is US: slavery and loss of human lives, let's start with some history.

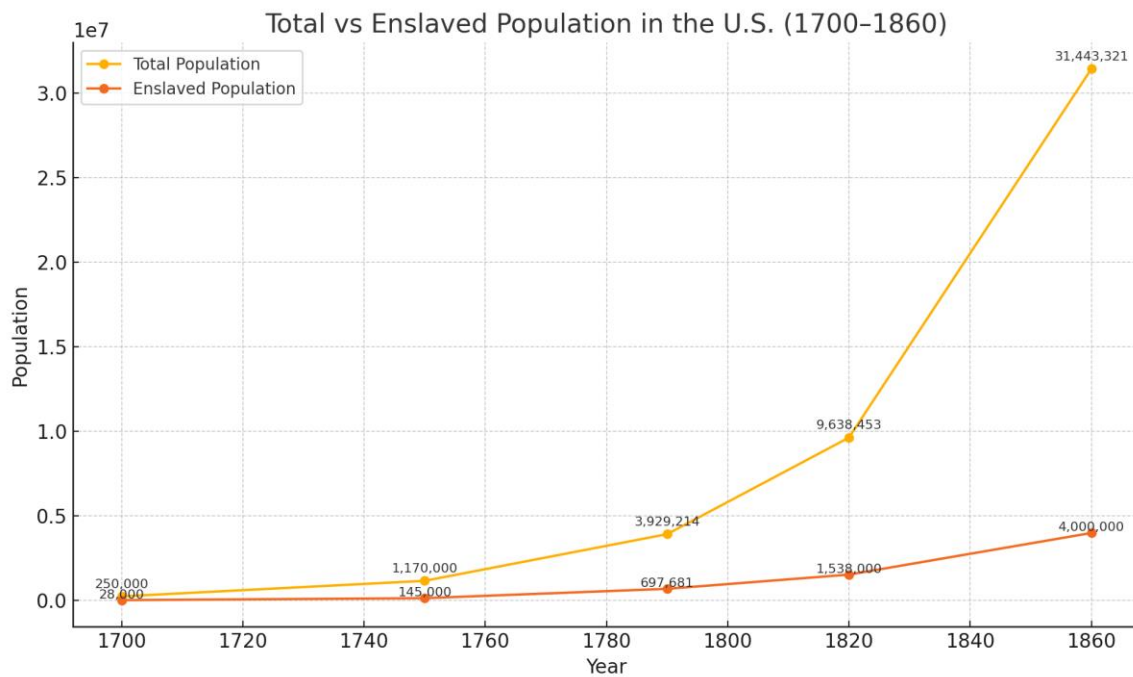
1. BEGINNING OF SLAVERY

The **first African slaves** were brought to what would become the United States in **1619**, when about **20 enslaved Africans** were taken to the English colony of **Virginia**. However, these were small numbers relative to the total population at the time. Noticeable and sustained increases began **later in the 17th century and escalated dramatically in the 18th century**, particularly in the Southern colonies.

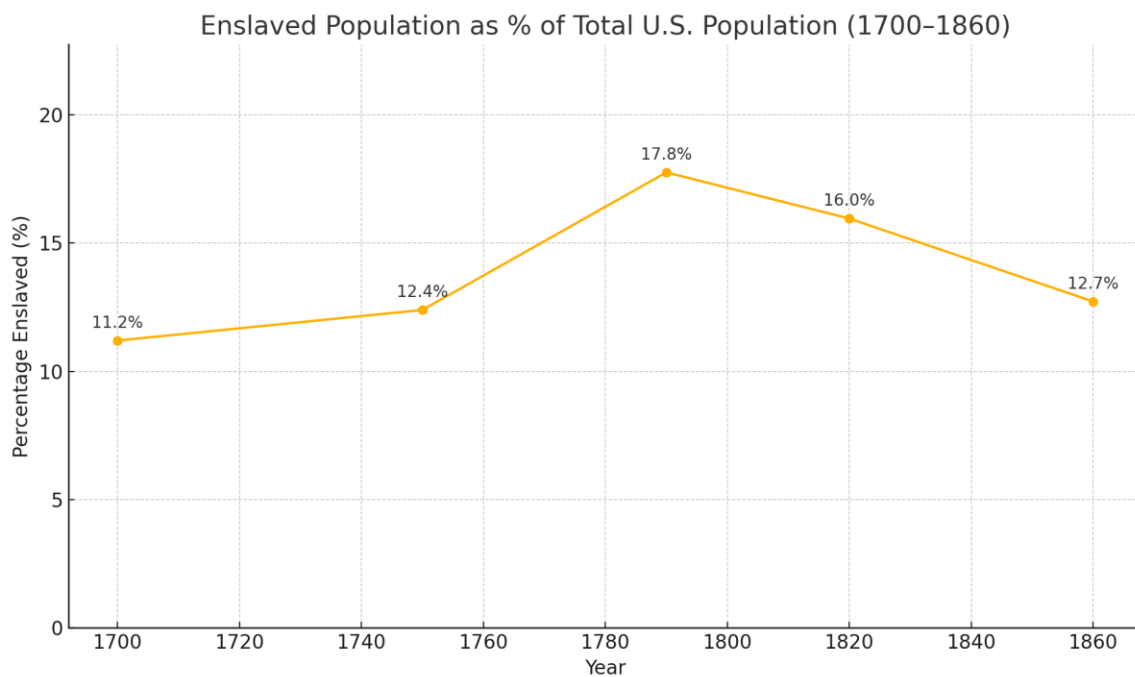
Here's a breakdown using **enslaved population as a proportion of total population**, with emphasis on when slavery became demographically significant:

 Growth of Enslaved Population Relative to Total U.S. Population				
Year	Total U.S. Population	Enslaved Population	% of Total	Notes
1700	~250,000	~28,000	~11%	Slavery entrenched in Southern colonies.
1750	~1,170,000	~145,000	~12%	Growth of plantation economy.
1790	~3.9 million	~700,000	~18%	First U.S. Census; slavery widespread in South.
1820	~9.6 million	~1.5 million	~16%	Slavery expands westward.
1860	~31.4 million	~4 million	~13%	On the eve of the Civil War.

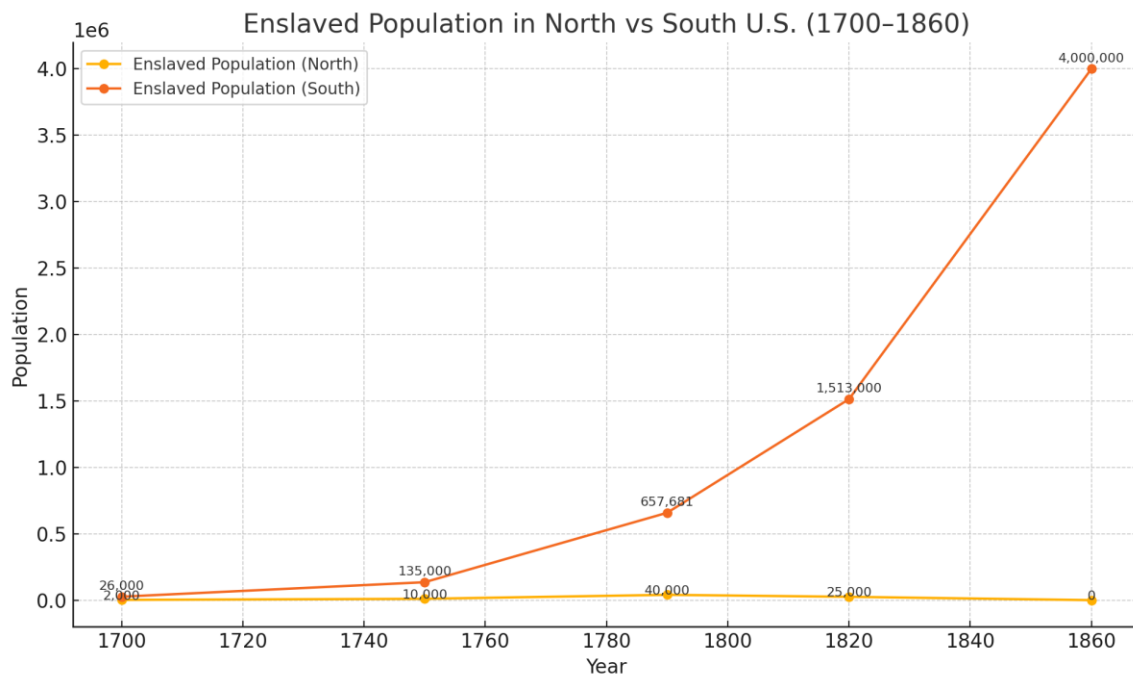
To get a perspective of the numbers, below are a few graphs showing the population of enslaved population in US.



Here is the graph showing the absolute numbers of the total U.S. population and the enslaved population from 1700 to 1860. You can clearly see the dramatic growth in both populations, with the enslaved population increasing significantly until the Civil War.



Here again we can see, slavery became a significant demographic factor by the mid-18th century and remained so until the Civil War.



Here's the graph showing the enslaved population in the Northern and Southern U.S. from 1700 to 1860. The Northern enslaved population peaked mid-1700s and then declined, with slavery nearly abolished in the North by 1860. In contrast, the Southern enslaved population grew steadily and dramatically until the Civil War.

By 1750, the enslaved population made up **over 10%** of the total colonial population. This is the threshold where slavery becomes demographically **significant** on a national scale—though even earlier, it was already dominant in certain colonies like **South Carolina**, **Virginia**, and **Georgia**, where slaves often made up **30–60% of the local population**.

2. LOSS OF HUMAN LIVES

The most significant loss of human life closely related to slavery are the casualties of the US Civil War:

Civil War Casualties (1861–1865):

The Civil War, fundamentally rooted in the issue of slavery, resulted in substantial loss of life:

- **Total Military Deaths:** Approximately 620,000 to 750,000 soldiers, with recent estimates suggesting the higher end.
- **Union Forces:** About 110,100 killed in battle; 224,580 deaths from disease.
- **Confederate Forces:** Approximately 94,000 killed in battle; 164,000 deaths from disease.

The total number of casualties of the war, about 700,000, underscores the war's (and, in the present context, slavery's) left a devastating impact on the American population, and its history to this day. Not only in terms of population – the people who were killed were in the prime of their lives – but also by fracturing the social fabric of US society, and perhaps its culture in general.

3. IMPLICATIONS OF SLAVERY

“...I am totally horrified by slavery as a concept, and by its terrible role in US history both by the loss of human lives it caused and by the damage it did to US society ripples of which still reverberate today.” I conjecture that with no slavery in the US, it would

develop into a much different country in many respects. The slaveowners driven by their greed and laziness to work the fields – such a puny justification for slavery they brought in the country and imposed on the rest – hardworking Americans who came to America voluntarily from the entire world, predominantly from Europe with its “western culture” as we often say – destroyed that future or at least damaged it in large measure. So, on a personal level, I feel absolute disgust towards those slaveowners, even the consequences of what they did are irreversible, except in our imagination through replaying our history with all those slaveowners never born...