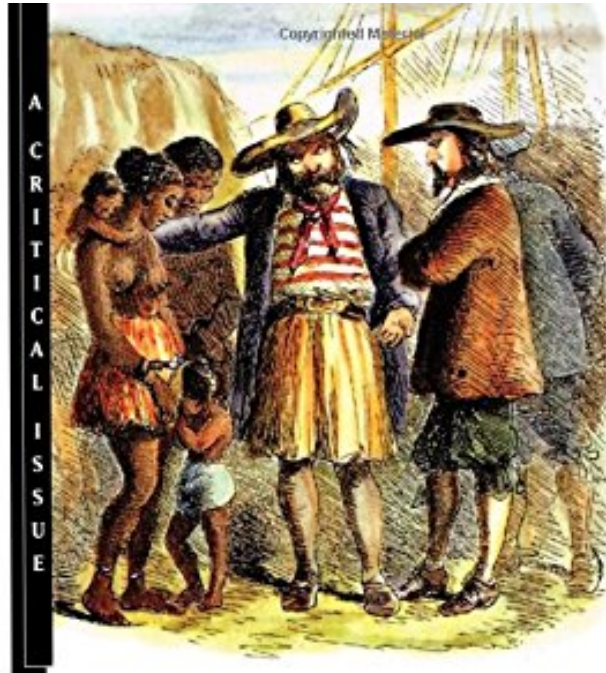


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The Origins of American Slavery: Freedom and Bondage in the English Colonies (Critical Issue)

Betty Wood

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Freedom and Bondage in the English Colonies

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Betty Wood, explores the meaning of freedom and bondage in 16th Century English thought. The author follows the spread of slavery in the Spanish and French colonies and their assessment of their own labor shortages and interprets the decision of the English to resort to slave labor in the colonies. The author follows the spread of slavery through the 17th century from the Caribbean to Virginia tobacco country and finally among the Puritans and Quakers further north in America...this is a very interesting read...get one for yourself and you decide.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. BoringBy KATRINA P MORRISOne of the MOST boring books you will ever read0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Thought I knew about the slave trade history/development in the ...By CustomerThought I knew about the slave trade history/development in the US, but learned a lot in a very easy-to-read book.

The Hill and Wang Critical Issues Series: concise, affordable works on pivotal topics in American history, society, and politics. *The Origins of American Slavery* is a short analysis that shows the complex rationale behind the English establishment of American slavery in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This new assessment of a pivotal time in the formation of what was to become the United States offers thought-provoking insights into the English influence on the development of the "peculiar institution."

.com Though there was no tradition of slavery in England, it was the norm throughout British colonies in North America and the Caribbean by the end of the 17th century. Historian Betty Wood examines the reasons for its spread in this scholarly, but readable, book. She begins by noting that the British believed slavery was appropriate for non-Christian foreigners, and that Africans belonged to that category. Once the need for cheap labor in the Americas became apparent, planters turned to Africa, and slavery, which had once seemed unthinkable, spread throughout the colonies in an unholy alliance of these two factors--racism and economics. From *Library Journal* Wood (Women's Work, Men's Work, Univ. of Georgia, 1995) examines here the causes and development of slavery throughout British America. She shows the philosophical underpinnings of early American slavery in 16th-century British thought and English attitudes concerning West Africans and Native Americans, revealing that the dynamics of early slavery were more complex than commonly supposed?not so much because of racial attitudes as religious differences and labor needs. She traces slavery from the Caribbean region into the Chesapeake Bay area and on into New England and the Middle Colonies, examining each area in terms of its own variations. Of particular interest are Puritan and Quaker opinions regarding slavery, neither sect having had misgivings about the practice or making money from slave trade. This valuable study is recommended for all libraries.?Robert A. Curtis, Taylor Memorial P.L., Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc. From *Booklist* Why did British colonists in America adopt and accept the practice of slavery so readily when there existed no model of slavery at home in Britain? Wood poses and attempts to answer this perplexing historical question by investigating the earliest origins of American slavery and the initial response of the colonists to the enslavement of West Africans. Rather than enslaving Native Americans or other Europeans, the colonists singled out Africans as their victims. The exclusive nature of this practice has led many to believe that the slave systems established in English America were rooted solely in racial prejudice. Others cite economic and demographic realities as the primary cause of the institutionalization of slavery. Wood's analysis reveals that a more complex dynamic involving a myriad of economic, cultural, social, religious, and ethnic considerations was necessary to forge the development and contribute to the widespread acceptance of slavery in the Caribbean islands and on the American mainland. An important contribution to the scholarly examination of the genesis of slavery in the U.S. Margaret Flanagan