

Sugar

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Excerpt #3

1. Slavery in America is often misunderstood as only ever existing in and benefitting Southern states and/or large plantation owners. Describe at least 3 pieces of evidence found in the first paragraph that disprove this claim?
2. As described in paragraph 2, what factors led to Louisiana becoming a sugar-producing territory?
3. List two pieces of evidence found in paragraph 3 that prove that freed white people in Louisiana financially benefited from the labor of enslaved persons.

Before French Jesuit priests planted the first cane stalk near Baronne Street in New Orleans in 1751, sugar was already a huge moneymaker in British New York. By the 1720s, one of every two ships in the city's port was either arriving from or heading to the Caribbean, importing sugar and enslaved people and exporting flour, meat and shipbuilding supplies. The trade was so lucrative that Wall Street's most impressive buildings were Trinity Church at one end, facing the Hudson River, and the [five-story sugar warehouses on the other](#), close to the East River and near the busy slave market. New York's enslaved population reached 20 percent, prompting the New York General Assembly in 1730 to issue a consolidated slave code, making it "unlawful for above three slaves" to meet on their own, and authorizing "each town" to employ "a common whipper for their slaves."

In 1795, Étienne de Boré, a New Orleans sugar planter, granulated the first sugar crystals in the Louisiana Territory. With the advent of sugar processing locally, sugar plantations exploded up and down both banks of the Mississippi River. All of this was possible because of the abundantly rich alluvial soil, combined with the technical mastery of seasoned French and Spanish planters from around the cane-growing basin of the Gulf and the Caribbean — and because of the toil of thousands of enslaved people. More French planters and their enslaved expert sugar workers poured into Louisiana as Toussaint L'Ouverture and Jean-Jacques Dessalines led a successful revolution to secure Haiti's independence from France.

Within five decades, Louisiana planters were producing a quarter of the world's cane-sugar supply. During her antebellum reign, Queen Sugar bested King Cotton locally, making Louisiana the second-richest state in per capita wealth. According to the historian Richard Follett, the state ranked third in banking capital behind New York and Massachusetts in 1840. The value of enslaved people alone represented tens of millions of dollars in capital that financed investments, loans and businesses. Much of that investment funneled back into the

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sugar mills, the “most industrialized sector of Southern agriculture,” Follett writes in his 2005 book, “Sugar Masters: Planters and Slaves in Louisiana’s Cane World 1820-1860.” No other agricultural region came close to the amount of capital investment in farming by the eve of the Civil War. In 1853, Representative Miles Taylor of Louisiana bragged that his state’s success was “without parallel in the United States, or indeed in the world in any branch of industry.”