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—Contributor.....Lisa Chase
—Contributor email.....lchasevt@gmail.com
—For section.....Voices/Letters from readers
—Format.....LETTERS - Opinions - Letters to the Editor
—Dateline.....Putney
—Article Number:.....43059



Notes from editor (not for publication):



HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

####BEGIN HED####

1 How enslaved African people made the Carolinas rich

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3 TEXT BODY:

####BEGIN TEXT####

4 In observance of Black History Month:

5 I was recently a visitor in Charleston, South Carolina,
6 where I enjoyed balmy weather, good food, friendly people, and
7 a sightseeing saunter on the grounds of Fort Moultrie, a
8 Revolutionary fort on Sullivan’s Island, a part of Charleston City
9 proper.

10 Fort Moultrie is now a part of the Fort Sumter National
11 Park. From park signage there, I learned the following:

12 Between 1500 and 1870, an estimated 10 to 12 million
13 Africans were shipped to the Western Hemisphere in the largest
14 forced migration in history. The vast majority were taken to the
15 Caribbean and Brazil.

16 Historians estimate that only 4 to 6% of the survivors
17 were brought to North America between 1619 and 1808. Of
18 these, 40% were landed on Sullivan’s Island in Charleston. That
19 was 200,000 to 360,000 adults and children until the
20 international slave trade was abolished in 1808.

21 English colonists from the Caribbean brought a
22 plantation system to the Carolinas perfected on the sugar island
23 of Barbados. For a time, Africans made up well over half the
24 population of the Carolinas, where, with their uncompensated
25 labor, they underwrote fortunes in so many commodities, most
26 notably rice.

27 Africans brought their knowledge of rice cultivation with
28 them from Africa. Their knowledge and skill tamed the freshwater
29 swamps of the Carolina Low Country to grow a demanding crop
30 that required a balanced flow of water for successful yields. The
31 Africans grew the “white gold” that made the Carolinas rich.

32 The average life expectancy of an enslaved African on
33 the rice plantations was three years. Apparently, that rate of loss
34 was economically justified.

35 To grasp this is to lead us to a rich understanding of the
36 role of labor in profits.

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BIO/COATTAIL:

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LAST ISSUE IN WHICH THIS FILE CAN BE RUN:

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LINKS:

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VIDEO:

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LOGLINE (SOCIAL MEDIA):

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41

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