

2.5 Brazil and the Slave Trade

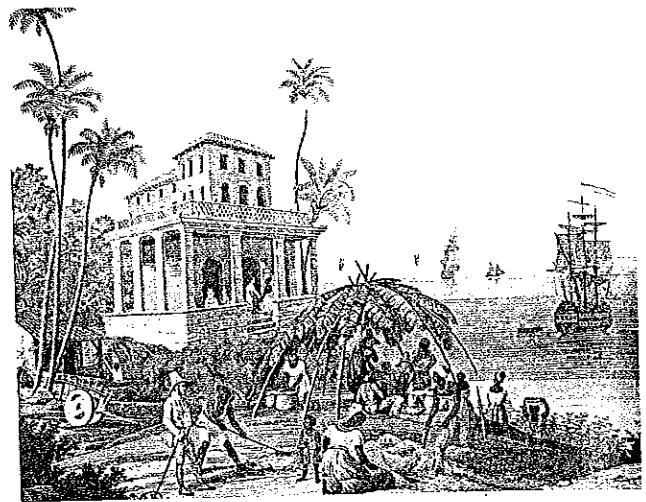
Main Idea Portuguese colonization and the arrival of slaves from Africa influenced the history of Brazil.

In 1500, Portuguese navigator Pedro Álvares Cabral was headed to India with his fleet when he went off course. He landed on the southeastern coast of present-day Brazil. Cabral realized the area lay within the land allowed Portugal by the Treaty of Tordesillas and claimed it.

Sugar and Slaves

Portuguese interest in Brazil was limited until the 1530s. Unlike the Spanish in Peru, the Portuguese did not conquer the native population and quickly take over the land. Instead, Portuguese colonization of Brazil took place over several decades.

Portuguese settlers discovered that these new lands contained natural resources valued in European markets. First, the Portuguese exported brazilwood, which was sought for its red color used to dye fabric. Then colonists realized that sugarcane, which grew abundantly in Brazil, was a more valuable crop. They built plantations and began exporting sugarcane and sugar products to Europe. The Portuguese tried enslaving natives to work the sugar plantations, but overwork



Critical Viewing This 1819 painting shows slaves working on a plantation in Brazil. What details do you notice?

and disease killed many of them. The Portuguese then turned to another source for labor: Africa.

Because of their earlier exploration, the Portuguese knew about the slave markets in Africa. By the mid-1500s, the Portuguese and other European countries were exporting African slaves across the Atlantic to South America and the Caribbean. The Portuguese were able to create a **monopoly**, or complete control, of the slave trade. A continuous trade in slaves began in Brazil in 1560 and lasted well into the 19th century.

1532
Portuguese begin growing sugarcane in Brazil.

1550

1560
Portuguese import African slaves to work sugar plantations.

1695
Gold is discovered in the present-day state of Minas Gerais.

1650

This lighthouse still stands on the site of a colonial trading port in Salvador, Brazil.

Portuguese Wealth

Brazil's abundant natural resources, combined with the African slave labor to extract them, made the Portuguese wealthy. As valuable natural resources like gold and diamonds were discovered, Portuguese demand for slave labor increased. Slaves were brought in to work on sugar and coffee plantations and in gold and diamond mines. Portuguese slave traders imported more than five million slaves from Africa to Brazil.

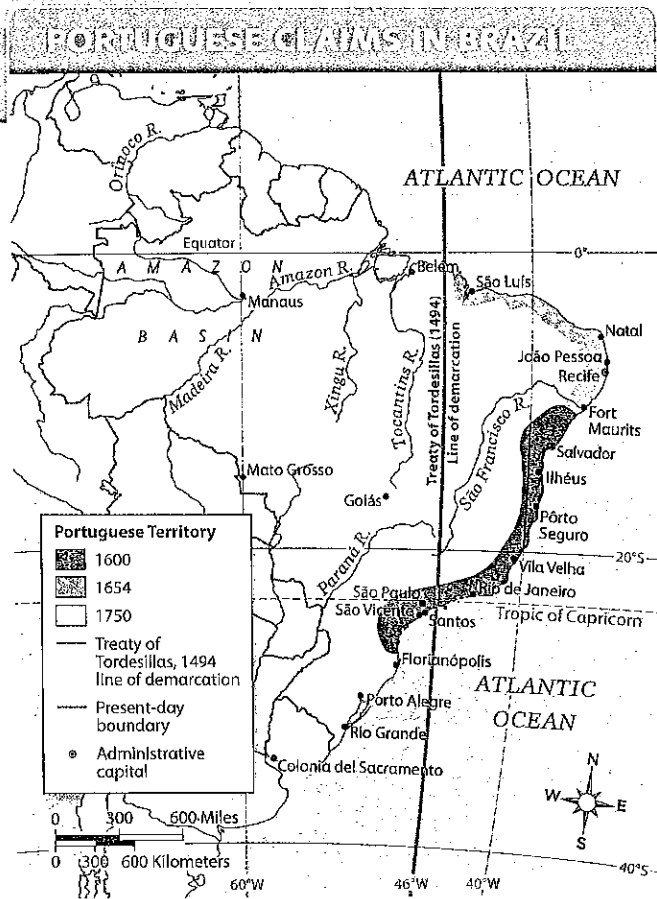
The Portuguese successfully put down **rebellions**, or revolts, against their rule until the early 1800s. Brazil finally declared independence from Portugal in 1822, but not everyone was free. Even though the slave trade had ended in 1850, slavery continued in Brazil for several decades until it was abolished in 1888.

Before You Move On

Monitor Comprehension What influence did the slave trade have on Brazil's history?



1826 Jean Baptiste Debret depicts slaves carrying sacks of coffee in Brazil.



ONGOING ASSESSMENT

READING LAB

- 1. Movement** Why did the Portuguese import slaves from Africa?
- 2. Summarize** In what way did slaves contribute to Portuguese wealth?
- 3. Interpret Maps** According to the map, where in South America did the Portuguese settle? What is the pattern of their settlement?
- 4. Interpret Time Lines** How long did slavery exist in Brazil? What year did slavery end? Use the time line to form your answer.

1840s
Coffee becomes Brazil's top export.

1850

1750

1725
Diamonds are discovered in Minas Gerais.

1822

Brazil declares its independence from Portugal.

1888

The Golden Law abolishes slavery in Brazil.