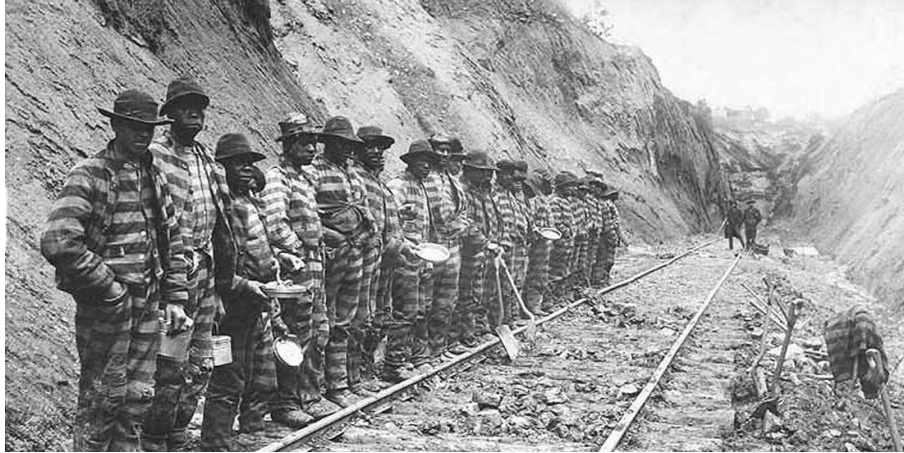

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Convict Leasing - Inhumane Conditions



[Convict leasing in Western North Carolina](#)

OVERVIEW:

After the Civil War, a more modern wave of slavery was implemented by the south. The system built of issues occurring after the war due to many buildings being destroyed, along with most prisons. As time passed by, the southern government realized that they had the power to get rid of their current convicts by leasing them off privately in order to raise funds and promote reconstruction. The leased convicts worked on projects such as railways and on plantations and were promised to have their sentences dropped or reduced, often being lied to. The convict leasing system began in Alabama in 1846 and lasted until July 1st of 1928.

Conditions:

Convict leasing was heavily related to slavery ranging from the conditions that the convicts faced to the circumstances surrounding the system. The term “convicts” was just an updated name to slaves. The contractors and government benefited greatly during this time because the profits and deals made with these new slaves was overwhelming. Employers would invest small percentages and would have little incentive for the laborers making them work for no pay. Once convicts were leased, businesses gained complete control and were free to do as they pleased. Laborers faced harsh and deadly working conditions, examples being fed poorly, and abused. Many convicts were beaten and/or tortured to death which led to some work sites containing secret graveyards with the corpses of these victims. At times, convicts were forced to fight each other to simply please guards and wardens. Victims of convict leasing were also often sexually violated and sometimes even put into cages. By 1873, 25% of all black leased convicts passed away.

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