



Indian Diaspora Council

## Indian Diaspora Council International

Shared heritage, aspirations and interests [www.IndianDiasporaCouncil.org](http://www.IndianDiasporaCouncil.org)

Post Office Box 650523 New York 11365 USA

### PRESS RELEASE

August 19, 2018 (EST-USA)

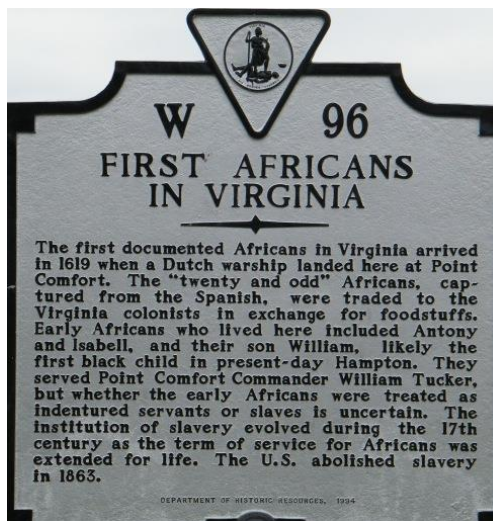
## Observance of 400th Anniversary of Inception of Slavery in America

The **Indian Diaspora Council International (IDC)**, in collaboration with its global membership and affiliates, is honored to join with other organizations, associations, agencies and individuals in observance of the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first arrival of African slaves and the inception of slavery in the USA, examining the many ways the legacy of slavery continues to shape and define life in USA.

“Four hundred years ago, on August 20, 1619, a ship carrying about 20 enslaved Africans arrived in Point Comfort, a coastal port in the British colony of Virginia. Though America did not even exist yet, their arrival marked its foundation, the beginning of the system of slavery on which the country was built”. **Project 1619** - *NY Times*



REMEMBERING THE FIRST AFRICAN LANDING



“In 1619 the first Africans who were captured from Angola were taken to Point Comfort, today’s Fort Monroe in Hampton, Virginia. They were sold for food. Slavery was not legal in the colony when they arrived and would not become legal until 1661. So how were the first 20 and Odd Africans treated? They were treated as indentured servants but without a written contract. Because they did not have a contract their freedom was at the mercy of their plantation owner. Most of the first Africans had to work 15-20 years before their freedom was granted. Once their freedom was granted they were able to start their own homesteads, marry white and Native Americans, purchase the freedom of their family relatives, own land, and enjoy the fruits of freedom. The first 40 years in Virginia was not typical of the next 200 years when slavery became legal.

“Slavery is a stain on America’s soul, but let’s not denigrate the legacy of Africans in America by calling them all slaves. Today the descendants of those first Africans are proud of their heritage. Let’s promote 400 years of achievement. We built this country”. <http://www.project1619.org/>

“Project 1619 aims to reframe the country’s history, understanding 1619 as our true founding, and placing the consequences of slavery and the contributions of black Americans at the very center of the story we tell ourselves about who we are”. <http://www.project1619.org/>

Black slave labor was of economic importance in the export-oriented tobacco plantations of Virginia and Maryland, and the rice and indigo plantations of South Carolina. About 388,000 slaves were imported into the Thirteen Colonies, or 3% of the more than 12 million slaves brought across from Africa. The great majority went to sugar colonies in the Caribbean and to Brazil, where life expectancy was short and the numbers had to be continually replenished.

For more information, please contact Ashook Ramsaran @ [ashookramsaran@gmail.com](mailto:ashookramsaran@gmail.com)

*Indian Diaspora Council International (IDC), established in 1997, is an international non-profit organization with global affiliates and membership in 21 countries with the objective to embrace, engage, and enhance the shared heritage, aspirations, and interests of persons of Indian origin with optimum inclusivity.*