

Primary Sources Speak: Part 4— Indentured Servants in Colonial America

*Dr. Donald Roberts
Pittsburgh Gifted Center*

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Overview

The history of the United States has been the story of immigrants coming to our shores from many parts of the world. The voluntary immigrants came, and continue to come, for a variety of reasons (primarily religious, political and economic) while the involuntary ones in colonial America came because of physical force exerted upon them. Both the willing immigrants from Europe, Asia, and elsewhere, as well as the involuntary African slaves are included in special sections of the U.S. history textbooks used in the city schools. They also are imbedded in the entire historical narrative of our nation.

In addition to these groups, there is a special category or subset of voluntary immigrants who were forced by circumstances to cross the ocean under a legal contract of servitude. These future indentured servants living in abject poverty in England and, to a lesser extent, in other northern European countries took a desperate chance to get to the New World. The lure of new opportunities had a magnetic appeal. They voluntarily agreed to terms that required submission to a master for a specified period of time (usually four to seven years) in return for free passage to the English colonies.

The United States history books record basic information about indentured servants, but provide few details. Who were they, where were they from exactly, and why did they think that crossing 3,000 dangerous miles of ocean to an un-

known land would be better than what they had? Students will have a better understanding of the colonial period of American history if they have some answers to these questions. They also will know more about the rise of slave labor when they realize that indentured servitude was replaced by slavery. When, why and how indentured servitude transitioned into slavery are all-important questions to be explored in any American history course. High school and middle school American history teachers may find it helpful to use the lessons in this curriculum to supplement the standard coverage of the colonial labor force offered in school textbooks.

The primary sources in this study of indentured servants include: 1) documents that provide information on where the Indentured servants came from and why they chose to come to the English colonies; 2) a revealing look at the horrors of the ocean voyage to America by someone who experienced it (Gottlieb Mittelberger); 3) an examination of the experiences of an indentured servant who wrote a despairing letter home (Richard Frethorne); 4) a detailed reading of advertisements for fugitive indentured servants and slaves; and 5) a focused look at some Virginia laws that provided the legal basis for the racism (Virginia slavery Legislation, 1640-1680) that would lead to the emergence of slavery and the decline of indentured servitude. Also, an important primary source (“Two Fruitful Sisters, Virginia and Maryland, 1656”) is used as well to get a contemporary account of indentured servitude. In addition to these sources, students will get information from some secondary sources in which historians share their insight on this group of laborers who supported the social fabric of colonial America.

Rationale

I am a middle school teacher and I teach at a special education center, the Pittsburgh Gifted Center. This curriculum is being written for both myself and for other middle school teachers, but high school teachers may easily adapt the lessons using primary sources into the eleventh grade United States history curriculum. This Pittsburgh Teachers Institute curriculum might even be used by Communications teachers who want students to do research papers using primary sources. Teachers may want to extract specific lessons from the curriculum to illustrate a particular point or to provide more information on a topic being covered in their class. For example, the heart wrenching description of the 3,000 mile ocean voyage to America experienced by Gottlieb Mittelberger could be used to help students get a real feel for the period. He was traveling in an 18th century ship and with the cheapest accommodations. Students often lack the historical imagination to create a mental image of things they have never experienced. Gottlieb makes clear the horrors of ocean travel in the 18th century. The trip was really a test of survival against almost impossible odds. The fact is that many indentured servants never made it to America because they died during the trip.

Why they did not is revealed in Gottlieb Mittelberger's journal. Students reading the primary source Gottlieb left behind will know more about what life was like for indentured servants on their way to America in the 18th century. They also will have a greater appreciation for the sacrifices made and the hard times endured over the centuries by our American ancestors.

Currently, I teach a primary sources course at the Pittsburgh Gifted Center. It is comprised of parts of previous curriculums I have written for the Immigration and Migration seminars. The course, "What Really Happened?" is named to attract students who have innate curiosity about the past. The current curriculum on indentured servants will become part of this course. In fact, I now have enough materials to make it a two-semester course. Each semester I have students for approximately 17 one hour classes because students come to the Gifted Center only once per week. Even if I were to double the number of classes, I have much more than I can use. Other middle school teachers, and high school teachers as well, could easily pick and choose from these curriculums to select immigration or migration lessons to expand or enhance coverage in their textbooks.

Objectives

The Pittsburgh Teachers Institute has offered four seminars on immigration and migration, and I have participated in each. The various curriculums I have written are similarly titled as "Primary Sources Speak." A subtitle indicating the particular topic pursued follows that general title. While the historical period and subject focus varies in these four curriculums, they all give additional coverage to the movement of people. It is, however, the use of primary source materials that is the focal point of each curriculum. Secondary sources written by noted historians are used and certainly have their place, but they are interpretations of primary sources. Students already get that in their textbooks. They need opportunities to touch the past in a direct way. They need a chance to interact with the words written or spoken by actors in the historical drama they are studying. They need to visualize the period. Finally, they need fledgling opportunities to gain experience in interpreting the past for themselves. Nothing enables them to do that better than primary sources.

The three previous topics have included the westward migration of white settlers into the Louisiana Purchase Land, the movement of Plains and Western Indians after Lewis and Clark, and a case study documenting the immigration of a religious sect (the Harmonists) to Pennsylvania. Now, I am adding a totally different group, the indentured servants, to my four-year study of the flow of people to America. These laborers came for a somewhat brief period of time at the beginning of the colonial period. Indentured servitude flourished for about one hundred years, and during that time indentured servants made a significant contribu-

tion to the prosperity of colonial America. Then, indentured servitude was gradually replaced by a more onerous system of labor, slavery. Textbook coverage of the institution of slavery is more comprehensive than that of indentured servitude. I want to provide more information on this transitional labor system so students will have a more comprehensive view of the colonial period and the conditions that gave rise to slavery.

Strategies

Students are very familiar with secondary sources. They use textbooks everyday that are secondary sources, but typically give little attention to the primary sources embedded within those textbooks. Students often rely upon someone else interpreting the past for them. They need to appreciate the importance of these primary sources as the original documents that later generations interpret. They also need to know that both famous and ordinary people create primary sources. Sure, the U.S. Constitution and the Declaration of Independence are primary sources, but so too are letters, diary entries, and government generated forms completed by people much like themselves. To accomplish this I have created two strategic handout activities that promote an understanding of primary sources and how they differ from secondary sources

The first handout in Appendix A “How Will Everyone Know About Me When I am Famous” is an activity that asks students to imagine themselves as famous, but misunderstood, people in the future. They are asked to list primary sources created about them that will set the record straight. I have successfully used this activity in the first three curriculums created for the immigration/migration seminars. I think it is appropriate to use it again. While teachers might locate these curriculums and extract this activity, it will be easier if I include it with this curriculum. It is a one-page handout. A second activity in Appendix A is devoted to spelling out the differences between a primary and a secondary source. This handout attempts to make students realize that they constantly interact with both primary and secondary sources at school and at home. It should cause them to look more analytically at their Social Studies book as well as materials they use when doing research in any class. Each time a student uses a primary source in this curriculum such as indentured servant Gottlieb Mittelberger’s account of the ocean journey to America, or Richard Frethorne’s desperate letter to his parents detailing the miseries of his indentured servitude, they should experience this with fresh eyes. They become historians interpreting the past using the words of the past as their guide.

Classroom Activities

Students need to have some basic information on indentured servitude in order to make sense of what they discover in the primary sources located in the appendices. American historians specializing in the colonial period have uncovered a great deal about indentured servants and the transition from indentured servitude to slavery, but middle school students have not been exposed to the results of that research. Unfortunately, information on these topics is cursory, at best, in American History textbooks. For that reason I have summarized information from scholarly secondary sources on two major topics: 1) The History of Indentured Servitude and 2) The Transition from Indentured Servitude to Slavery. Teachers may want to learn the information in the two summaries below and present that information to their classes in the form of a lecture. Students could then take notes from key points written on the chalkboard. A better alternative might be to duplicate the two summaries and present them as informational handouts followed by the worksheets found in Appendix A (History of Indentured Servitude) and Appendix D (Transition ... to Slavery).

Summary # 1: The History of Indentured Servitude

Indentured servants are mentioned in history books, but today few people know much about them. Poor people who wanted to come to America in the colonial period, but who could not afford the cost of the ocean voyage, would sign a contract or agreement with a ship captain or an agent. The contract would list what the person would have to do instead of paying for his passage to America. For example, he might agree to work for a certain number of years (usually four to seven) and receive no wages during that time. The ship captain or agent would agree to give him a bushel of seed corn, a suit of clothing, some land or money when he had completed his years of work. This final payment was called "Freedom Dues." If a servant arrived without a written contract, local courts would determine their time of service according to the 'custom of the country.' This was determined by the age of the servant. Servants over twenty had to serve four years while younger servants between sixteen and twenty had to work for six to eight years. Children under the age of sixteen were required to work as indentured servants until reaching the age of twenty-one. They, too, got "freedom dues." A Maryland law of 1640 provided the following for many years of hard work without a salary.

"one good Cloth suite of Keisy or broad cloth a Shift of white linen one new pair of stockins and Shoes two hoes one axe 3 barrells of Corne and fifty acres of land...women Servants a Years Provision of Corne and a like proportion of Cloths and Land." (1) K. Morgan, 8-9.

The name, indentured servant, may seem strange, but its meaning becomes clear when you think of the word, indent. The contract they signed was copied twice on the same paper. Then the paper was ripped in half with the worker and the captain each receiving a copy. The ragged ripped edge would only fit exactly together with the other half of the ripped paper. That was proof that the two pieces of paper were parts of the original contract. That way, the original terms such as the number of years to be worked and the freedom due could not be changed. At least, that is the way the term started.

Soon, some other groups became indentured servants. The two most common were immigrants who had some of the required money for ship passage (redemptioners) and convicts who were given the sentence of labor in America as an indentured servant or a death sentence if they remained in England. Redemptioners were often people who came to the port with some money for passage, but used some of it while waiting days or weeks for a ship to take them to the colonies. They agreed to pay what they owed for the ticket within a couple of days of arrival. The Redemptioners depended upon finding relatives or friends in the colonies who would pay the balance. If that didn't happen, they had to work for several years as indentured servants. German Redemptioners, as a group, came later than the others and usually had a marketable skill. Their work experience was more profitable and less harsh, but the trip across the ocean was often frightening. People imprisoned for debts were also routinely sent as indentured servants. Sometimes parishes would indenture orphans and send them to the colonies so the parish would not have to support them. It was a practical way to end their responsibility toward poor children who had no relatives to support them.

The life of an indentured servant was very hard. If the poor people in England had known just how awful it could be, most likely they would not have signed the indenture contract. They knew very little because it was the 17th century, and America was 3,000 miles from England. They relied upon rumors that it was a land of milk and honey where a person could get a second change in life. Shipping agents also lied to them by describing the colonies in very flattering terms. The cost of transporting a person to the colonies has been estimated to be 10 pds. While the sale price of an indentured servant often was 30 pds. Or more. An average profit of about 66 % was the motivation for the lies that were told and printed in pamphlets circulated in England and Western Europe to get people to sign on as indentured servants. Also, Virginia and Maryland passed colonial laws that established the "Headright System." This gave 50 acres of public land to anyone who paid the cost of transporting a servant to their colonies. That contributed to the settlement of the colonies as well as to the growth of large estates. These reasons that people had for wanting to leave England for the English colonies in North America may be called the "pull" factors.

There also were significant “push ’ factors attracting them to the colonies. In the 17th century many farmers were being displaced from their traditional farmlands as the upper classes enclosed their lands with fences. Poor farmers without title to land could not use the pastures they had once used for grazing sheep and cattle. At the peak of the flow of indentured servants to America during the third quarter of the 17th century, there were a series of ten years of crop failures in England. There also were political upheavals including the English Civil War. Political and economic problems both contributed to the willingness of people to sign on for a voyage to a new life in America.

The number of headrights issued in a particular year is used to document the number of indentured servants arriving each year. Historians who have studied this have come to some conclusions about the indentured servants. Most were young unmarried males under the age of 28. Some estimates put the number of all indentured servants going to colonial America in the 17th century as high as one half to two thirds of all immigrants. Others estimate that 40 % of all immigrants at that time were indentured servants. While most were unskilled farm laborers, some were either skilled or semiskilled craftsmen. The first indentured servant, Robert Coopy, arrived in Virginia in 1619. Indentures were still being signed in the early 18th century, but the peak years were late in the 17th century. While some indentured servants went to New England, the Chesapeake Bay area (Maryland and Virginia) was the focal point. By the early 1700s African slaves had replaced indentured servants as the most important source of colonial laborers. (2) Bigham, 28-31 and Kolchin, 82-94.

Summary # 2: The Transition from Indentured Servitude to Slavery

The southern colonies quickly came to rely upon plantation agriculture (raising a cash crop on large tracts of land with a cheap labor source). The climate was ideal with a long growing season, and the soil was rich. Also, there was a ready market for their cash crops in the northern colonies and the Mother Country. The one factor that could limit success was the difficulty of finding workers to do the hard agricultural labor. Free laborers in colonial America owned and worked their own land. They were not available in sufficient numbers to work for wages on plantation, nor were they inclined to do so. Eventually, slaves imported from Africa would become the cheap labor source. Before slavery was widely adopted in the late 17th century, however, two other sources of labor were tried unsuccessfully: Native Americans and white indentured servants from Europe.

Initially, there were an estimated one million Indians living east of the Mississippi River when the first permanent English colony was established in 1607. Estimates of the number of Native American living in Virginia at that time vary from 14,000 to 170,000. Whatever the real number happened to be, the fact is that

there were many Indians living on lands adjacent to the newly established colonial plantations. Each group (Indians and the English colonists) had something the other wanted. The Indians wanted the cloth, metal pots and pans, and various manufactured goods that the colonists had while the colonists wanted their labor. While that might seem to us to be the basis for Native Americans going to work for the plantation masters, that did not happen on a long-term basis.

The three main reasons why it did not work out are: 1) the cultural differences between the two groups; 2) mistrust that led to armed conflict; and the hatred that resulted from such encounters; and 3) the presence of European diseases. Culturally, the Native Americans viewed work much differently than the Europeans. Traditionally, Indian women did the agricultural work, and the men did the hunting and gathering. Indian men were not accustomed to working in the fields. They resisted such work as unmanly. They had their own beliefs about land use and held land in common while the European view of private property made no sense to them. A piece of paper in the form of a deed meant a great deal to Englishmen, but Indians were accustomed to sharing hunting grounds and agricultural fields with tribesmen. Neither side understood the other, and each believed that their way of life was superior. The fact that the Indians knew the terrain made it very easy for them to run away from plantations, and very difficult to catch.

The English viewed Indian land as available to them because they saw Indians as uncivilized savages. They believed that the Indians did not have a right to the land because they did not use it properly. This, of course, led to armed conflicts as Indians resisted the invasion of their lands, and colonists went on raiding parties to get their land. There were several significant Indian uprisings. The March 1622 attack by the Powhattans in Virginia resulted in the death of 347 colonials and was followed by English counterattacks. In 1644 the Powhattans again rose up against the English settlers with loss of lives on both sides. A peace treaty was signed in 1646 and an uneasy peace followed until Bacon's Rebellion in 1676 where the Indians joined with rebels in attacking the colonial government. Conflicts also occurred in New England (the Pequot War of 1636-37, and King Phillip's War of 1675-76). All of these conflicts underscored the fact that the English could not successfully force Indians to become slaves on their plantations and farms.

Epidemics of deadly tuberculosis, pneumonia, influenza, smallpox and other diseases spread quickly among the Native Americans who had no built-up immunity. The English would get sick, but recover. The Indians usually did not. These epidemics occurred from time-to-time and reduced the Native American population significantly. While Native Americans were present in large enough numbers to potentially do the agricultural work, it did not work out for the English. Indians

got sick and died from imported diseases, or they ran away and hid in the land they knew so well.

Indentured servants, primarily white Europeans, were tried as a labor source, but they did not work out as a long-term solution to the labor needs of Colonial America. In the mid-1660 they no longer came in sufficient numbers to meet the labor needs in the Chesapeake region (Virginia and Maryland). The declining birth rate in England meant that there were fewer workers competing for jobs. When that happened, wages rose in England. The Great Fire in London in 1666 created jobs for workmen who were hired to rebuild most of the city. They did not have to emigrate to the American colonies to get work. In addition, the Glorious Revolution of 1688 resulted in a long span of political stability in the Mother Country. Workers could stay at home in England and enjoy more political and economic stability than they had had for generations. In the early 1700s the English economy began to boom due to the Industrial Revolution. More and more factories were being built in the Mother Country so more and more workers were able to get jobs in England. There was less reason to emigrate just when the agricultural labor needs were dramatically increasing on colonial plantations. Colonial plantation owners needed another source of labor.

Africans were brought in increasing numbers to the colonies to work in the fields. After the Stuart Restoration to the English throne in 1660, the slave trade grew rapidly. Approximately 60,000 slaves were transported from Africa on British ships between 1662 and 1670. It has been estimated that slaves represented 7 % of the population of Maryland and Virginia in 1680, and 22 % in 1700. In the next century the number of slaves put on English slave ships increased sixfold. While the majority of slaves were taken to the Caribbean, the English colonies in North America were the most important secondary market. South Carolina became the first British colony in North America to have a Black majority in its population in the early 1700s. Two British companies of slave traders, the Company of Royal Adventurers to Africa and the Royal African Company, transported tens of thousands of slaves to North America in the late 1600s. Then, the monopoly they held in the slave trade was opened to private merchants in London, Bristol and Liverpool. Soon, many different slave ships were crossing the Middle Passage. (3) K. Morgan, 26-31.

Some Africans had been defined legally as indentured servants in the early days of the Virginia colony. Gradually, laws in Virginia, Maryland and elsewhere changed the terms of servitude for those who were non-Christians and then for those with a different skin color. Servitude changed from a limited number of years to a lifetime with the children inheriting the status of their slave parents. Racism embedded in colonial laws forever changed indentured servitude for

Africans to perpetual slavery. These slaves then replaced the white European indentured servants of the 17th Century.

The work history of Africans in the American colonial period is interesting. In 1619 some Africans arrived in Jamestown as indentured servants. For economic reasons it was more advantageous for planters to have indentured servants (Black or White) rather than slaves. Slaves cost more and the mortality (death rate) during the first five years in Virginia in the early 17th century was 50 %. Indentured servants seemed to be a better investment. Then, during the second half of the 17th century, life expectancy increased. At the same time, tobacco production expanded. More field workers were needed at a time when everyone was living longer. Now, it became more profitable to buy a slave for his/her life as well as the life of any children born to that slave.

Another reason for favoring African slaves over white indentured servants was skin color. Run-away white indentured servants could blend in easily with the European population while African slaves could not. It was more difficult to catch a run-away white indentured servant. Masters also feared the thousands of white indentured servants who completed their indenture each year. These freed men were a discontented lot who might challenge their former masters. In fact, many joined in Bacon's Rebellion and fought the forces of the royal governor of Virginia in 1676.

There was a very definite trend toward restricting the rights that Blacks initially had in 17th century Virginia. Black indentured servants in the early 1600s were allowed to own property and to marry, and were freed after the terms of their indenture were satisfied. Some were allowed to testify against whites in court and could have white servants. In one Virginia county black slaves successfully sued for their freedom because they could prove they had been baptized. From the master's point of view having a white indentured servant instead of an African slave did have one advantage. These servants were only to work for a set number of years. If they were caught after running away, years could be added to their contract. Since slaves were slaves for life, no additional time could be added. Colonial laws, however, did something to help out the masters on this point. There was no punishment for killing a runaway slave. Slaves also could be dismembered. Toes could be chopped off to make it difficult for them to run away again.

Laws were passed to prevent a possible union of the poor white indentured servants and the African slave against their masters. These colonial laws officially established racism in laws governing slaves. For example, a Black was punished with 30 lashes if he "lifted his hand in opposition to any Christian." That meant that whites could bully blacks knowing that the black would be severely punished if he retaliated.

In summary, the labor needs in the American colonial South were great. At first, the plantation masters tried unsuccessfully to use Native Americans. Then, they used white indentured servants who worked under a contract specifying the conditions of their employment. This worked for a while, but eventually African slaves replaced them when life expectancy increased and racist laws drove a wedge between poor whites and African slaves. The plantation system of agriculture was extremely profitable growing such cash crops as tobacco, rice, indigo and cotton. All of these profits depended upon having a cheap source of labor. The African slave who was purchased for life along with the lives of all of his descendants made the system work. (4) E.S. Morgan, and *D.B. Davis & S.Mintz*, 57.

The classroom activities described in the Classroom Activities section are found in the various appendices that accompany this curriculum. Appendices A and B should be considered together. They have the preliminary activities that will help students when they first begin to interpret any primary source. Appendix A (Introductory Activities) has already been described in broad terms. It contains three items: “How Will Everyone know About Me...”; “Primary and Secondary Sources”; and a worksheet that goes with the informational handout, “Indentured Servitude.” The purpose of the worksheet is to make sure that students have read the summarized secondary source material closely. This will give them the necessary background knowledge to help them analyze the primary sources.

Appendix B (Searching for Information in Primary Sources) contains a handout that is to be used with each primary source related to indentured servitude and slavery. Basically, it asks the journalistic questions of who, what, when, where, why and how. Each primary source will be looked at as a unique document, but students need to be methodical in their examination. Students need to know what primary sources are, how they can be used to increase our knowledge of the past, and why they are regarded as valuable tools in historical research. To accomplish this, students will be required to answer basic questions about each of the primary source they examine. They will be given a primary source analysis sheet. They will answer such basic questions as who created it, when was it created, where was it created, why was it created, and how was it created. Then, they will search for any hidden meanings that are embedded in the document. After they have completed their examination of the document, they will be better able to focus on the content of that specific primary source. **This handout should be used with each primary source in the curriculum.** Another worksheet will be used with each document to pull out the information that is specific to that primary source. It encourages students to learn the specific information that is embedded in each individual primary source.

Once the content of the first informational handout (Indentured Servitude) is discussed and the questions/ activities are completed, students will be presented with edited versions of original primary sources (Appendix C). These primary sources illuminate the lives of those who became indentured servants and the conditions of their employment. The primary sources also indirectly reflect upon how repressive colonial society was for poor people. When students read and digest the contents of the primary sources, they may very well reflect upon how lucky they are to have been born in 20th century America. They will be asked to read portions of the primary sources aloud to get the feel of the language used and the emotions being expressed. In fact, primary sources should always be read aloud to the class when they are presented for the first time. Phonetically spelled words, odd grammar, faulty punctuation, and decidedly unusual syntax are all more understandable when read aloud. Then, students either working alone or with a partner will examine the primary source to find answers to both factual and “reading between the lines” type questions.

The first primary source students will encounter in Appendix C is Gottlieb Mittelberger’s personal account of his trip across the Atlantic Ocean. He was an indentured servant who traveled from Holland to England and then to Pennsylvania. Students will absorb the shocking meaning of his words and use information in that primary source to complete some individual and group activities. Next, students will read portions of Richard Frethorne’s 1623 letter from Virginia to his father and mother back in England. If nothing else makes them aware of the differences between life in the 17th and 21 centuries, this will. The despair and anguish experienced by this indentured servant will dramatize the horrors of the poor and helpless in this time period.

Appendix D begins with a worksheet that should accompany the second informational handout (Transition from Indentured Servitude to Slavery). John Hammond’s 1656 essay, “Leah and Rachel, or The Two Fruitful Sisters, Virginia and Mary-land” follow this. This essay admits that the early days in the colonies were difficult, but makes a forceful argument that things have changed for the better by the mid-1600s. His essay is propaganda claiming that indentured servants lived a better life in the colonies than they would have in England. The positive working conditions for men and women in the colonies sound ideal and may have influenced poor Europeans to sign on as indentured servants. A worksheet accompanies this primary source.

Then, there are four advertisements for run-away indentured servants published in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* between 1729 and 1760. One representative advertisement has been included for each decade from 1730 to 1760. An interesting, but cruel Virginia law of 1691 is included with these notices for fugitives. It gave legal justification for the killing of fugitive slaves. Students will learn a

great deal about both fugitive indentured servants and slaves from the way they were described in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*. The poor quality of their clothing, their physical description, and the reward offered for their capture all paint a picture of desperate people. All highlight the plight of poor, defenseless workers in the colonial period. Reading these published advertisements also will enable students to see connections between indentured servitude and slavery. The fourth thing in this appendix is a set of four Virginia slave laws enacted between 1640 and 1680. These laws provided the legal basis for the evolving system of slavery. Racist laws in the seventeenth century that provided for the transition to slavery will stimulate students to consider the inevitability of civil war in our nation.

Appendix E contains seven different activities that the teacher may choose to use to supplement the work done on the primary sources. The variety of open-ended or culminating activities include such things as writing a dialogue, creating a brochure with a biased view of the indentured servants experience in the English colonies, writing letters home from indentured servants, writing and then acting in a play, creating a storyboard showing Richard Frethorne's experiences in Virginia, interpreting the advertisements for fugitive indentured servants and slaves, writing and delivering a summary of the transition from indentured servitude to slavery. They all call upon the creative abilities of students who have learned a great deal about indentured servants.

End Notes

1. Morgan, Kenneth. *Slavery and Servitude in Colonial North America: A Short History*. New York: New York University Press, 2001. pp. 8-9.
2. Bigham, Barbara, "Colonists in Bondage: Indentured Servants in America," reprinted in *Annual Editions: American History*, Vol. 1, 14th ed. Guilford, Conn.: Dushkin Publishing Group, 1997, pp. 28-31. Kolchin, Peter. *American Slavery 1619-1877*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1993. pp. 82-94.
3. Morgan, Kenneth. *Slavery and Servitude in Colonial North America: A Short History*. New York: New York University Press, 2001. pp. 26-31.
4. Morgan, Edmund S. *American Slavery—American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc. pp. 295-315.

Annotated Bibliography for Teachers

Ballagh, James Curtis, *White Servitude in the Colony of Virginia* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995).

This is regarded as an excellent early work on the topic of indentured servitude. It was originally published in 1895 and other more recent monographs have supplanted it. In particular, see Edmund S. Morgan's *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia*.

Emmer, P.C., ed. *Colonialism and Migration: Indentured Labour Before and After Slavery*. Comparative Studies in Overseas History, No. 7. Boston: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1986.

This volume takes a comparative look at free (contract) and non-free (slave) labor around the world. The article, "Markets for Migrants: English Indentured Servitude and Emigration in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," by Henry A. Gemery is particularly useful.

Gaison, David W. *White Servitude in Colonial America: An Economic Analysis* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

This is a scholarly account that evaluates the economic reasons supporting indentured servitude as a labor system during the 17th century.

Graebner, William and Leonard Richards. *The American Record: Images of the Nation's Past*. Vol. 1. New York: McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., 2001.

Chapter 2, Jamestown, contains an interpretive essay written by Edmund S. Morgan. "The Labor Problem at Jamestown, 1607-1618," gives the background for the rise of indentured servitude and ultimately, slavery. This provides teachers with information that is useful in explaining the rise of indentured servitude and slavery.

Hammond, John. *Leah and Rachel, or The Two Fruitful Sisters Virginia and Maryland*
London: Printed by Mabb, 1656.

This account is biased in favor of encouraging poor people to sign indenture papers and board ships bound for colonial America. It is a primary source, but the teacher needs to explain propaganda.

Haynie, W. Preston, ed. *Northumberland County Virginia Records of Indentured Servants, 1650-1795* (Heritage Books, Inc., 1996).

This is an excellent reference book for primary sources on indentured servants because it is a collection of records in one Virginia county where plantation agriculture thrived.

Hening, William Waller, *Statutes at Large; Being a Collection of all the Laws of Virginia* (Richmond, VA Samuel Pleasants, 1809-23), Vol. II.

This is not for everyone, but would be very useful to anyone who needs to find Virginia laws that perpetuated slavery.

Kolchin, Peter. *American Slavery 1619-1877* New York: Hill and Wang, 1993.

This is a comprehensive, scholarly treatment of the rise of slavery in America. Kolchin focuses upon American slavery but puts it into a world context. Statistics on the growth of slavery in America are included.

Morgan, Edmund S. *American Slavery—American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co. 1975.

Morgan is a recognized authority on colonial Virginia. The last section, Book IV, “Slavery and Freedom” gives a very readable account of the transition from indentured servitude to slavery.

Morgan, Kenneth. *Slavery and Servitude in Colonial North America: A Short History*. New York: New York University Press..2001.

This book is a must for anyone interested in a well-written account of colonial labor history. The nineteen page bibliography is particularly useful.

Palmer, Colin A. *The Worlds of Unfree Labour: From Indentured Servitude to Slavery*. Vol. 16, *An Expanding World: The European Impact on World History, 1450-1800*. Brookfield, Vermont: Ashgate Publishing Co., 1998.

The approach taken in the various scholarly articles is to transcend nationalistic boundaries in favor of a broad presentation of the subject. Europe, North America, Central America and South America receive equal coverage.

Smith, Abbot Emerson, *Colonists in Bondage: White Servitude and Convict Labor in America, 1607-1776*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina, 1947.

Although this was written in the early 20th century, the author has relevant facts and figures on indentured servants, particularly convicts who chose indentured servitude over prison. The twenty page Bibliographical Note is a valuable compilation of the early research on this topic.

Annotated Bibliography for Students

Bigham, Barbara, "Colonists in Bondage: Indentured Servants in America," *Early American Life* (October 1979) reprinted in *Annual Editions: American History*, Vol. 1. 14th ed. (Guilford, Connecticut: Dushkin Publishing Group, 1997), pp. 28-31.

Bigham presents a clear summary of the origin and evolution of indentured servitude in colonial America. It is concise and answers many basic questions about indentured servitude in four pages.

Davis, David Brion & Steven Mintz. *The Boisterous Sea of Liberty: A Documentary History of America From Discovery Through the Civil War*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Part 2, "European Colonization North of Mexico," has two sections that are extremely helpful to anyone studying indentured servitude and the shift to slavery. They are titled, "Indentured Servitude" and "The Shift to Slavery."

Hawke, David Freeman, "The Indentured Servant," *Everyday Life in Early America*. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1989.

Chapter 8, "Red, White, and Black," has brief, but very informative summaries titled, "The Indian, The indentured Servant, and The Slave." This paperback is ideal for students who will learn a great deal in a few pages.

Marcus, Robert D. *America Firsthand: From Settlement to Reconstruction*. Vol. 1., 3rd ed. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995.

It contains forty documents that focus upon diverse viewpoints. It includes men and women, African Americans, Native Americans and others who have influenced the course of American history. "Part II: From Colonies to Republic" contains documents on indentured servants, the African slave trade, and a host of other topics.

Tindall, George Brown and David S. Shi. *America: A Narrative History*, Vol. 1, 5th ed., New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1999, pp. 115-129.

This is an excellent secondary source that provides an easy-to-read account of American history through Reconstruction. The section “Society and Economy in the Southern Colonies” includes information on indentured servants and slavery.

Annotated Bibliography for the Class

Binder, Frederick M. & David M. Reimers, *The Way We Lived: Essays and Documents in American Social History*, 1607-1877, Vol. 1. Lexington, MA: DC Heath & Co., 1992.

Chapter 2, “Conflicting Values in Early America” contains an essay on early 17th century Virginia. It is supported by two primary sources on colonial Virginia.

Paul F. Boller, Jr. and Ronald Story, *A More Perfect Union: Documents in U.S. History*, Vol. 1, 2nd ed., (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1988), pp. 13-15.

The second document in Chapter 1, “The Underside of Privilege: Virginia Slavery Legislation, 1630-1691” is a concise compilation of the most significant laws that established slavery in colonial America.

Daniels, Roger. *Coming to America: A History of Immigration and Ethnicity in American Life*. 2nd ed. New York: Visual Education Corp., 2002.

This is a good beginning place for any study of immigration and ethnicity in America. Part 1: Colonial America has general information as well as statistics on European and African immigrants.

Frethorne, Richard, “Letter to His Father and Mother, March 20, April 2 and 3, 1623” in Susan M. Kingsbury, ed. *The Records of the Virginia Company of London*, Vol. IV (Washington, D.C. Government Printing Office, 1935) pp. 58-60.

This letter is a rare example of a first hand account by an indentured servant in the early 1600s. It is widely quoted in historical accounts. It contains passages that were edited from the version in this curriculum unit.

Mittelberger, Gottlieb, *Journey to Pennsylvania in the Year 1750 and Return to Germany in the Year 1754* (Philadelphia: J.J. McVey, 1898), pp. 19-20, 22, 24.

Mittleberger was a young German who came to America as a redemptioner. He wrote this book about his experiences when he returned to Germany. His description of the ocean voyage to America is brutal in its description of the horrors of the trip. This description along with Richard Frethorne's letter home is also found in Robert D. Marcus and David Burner's, *America Firsthand* (New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1989).

Phillips, U.B. "Wanted Runaway Servants," "Wanted Runaway Slaves," in William Graebner and Leonard Richards, eds. *The American Record: Images of the Nation's Past* Vol 1, 4th ed. (Boston: McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 2001), pp. 99-111.

These brief, but connected, essays provide useful information on the different treatment of fugitives according to their status as laborers (servant or slave).

Appendix A: Introductory Activities

Part One: Primary Sources and ME: Or,
"How Will Anyone Know About Me When I Become Famous?"

Name _____ Class Pe-
riod _____ Date _____

Scenario: Imagine that you become famous as an adult. Maybe, you will become President of the United States, the discoverer of a cure for cancer, or a pop music star, or Future generations will want to know about you, but many of the secondary sources (articles in the *Inquirer*, etc. and tell-all books) may not be accurate. Finally, a first rate writer and winner of the Pulitzer Prize decides to set the record straight in an accurate biography of your life. The author needs to do research using primary sources that record the real story of your life. To do that he/she needs public documents and private records.

Your Task

Decide what made you famous (what you did to become famous). Then, make a list of primary sources that could help this biographer write an accurate story. These sources could be public records of when and where you were born as well as your parents' names (a birth certificate), other public records or

documents, newspaper interviews, etc. List at least ten primary sources that would shed some light on your life.

Complete this statement: I will become famous because I

Ten Primary Sources:

1. _____ 2. _____
3. _____ 4. _____
5. _____ 6. _____
7. _____ 8. _____
9. _____ 10. _____

Final Question: Even if you don't become famous, the primary sources that record some of the events of your life could be of interest to historians of the 21st Century. Why?

Part Two: Sources: Primary and Secondary

Name _____ Class Period _____ Date _____

Primary and secondary sources are both important tools for historians and students who interpret the past. A **primary source** is a book (like an autobiography), person (an oral interview), or document (like a public record) supplying first-hand information. A **secondary source** is an interpretation of the original book, person or document by someone trying to explain what it means.

Your history book is a secondary source, but it contains primary sources such as quoted parts of a diary, letter, or newspaper article written by people who witnessed what happened, when it happened, and perhaps, why it happened. The U.S.

Constitution and other documents in your Social Studies book are primary sources.

Please answer the following questions.

1. Name **at least two** other primary sources found in your Social Studies book.

A. _____

B. _____

2. List **at least two** secondary sources that you use in school or that you or your family may use at home.

A. _____

B. _____

3. European indentured servants traveling to the English colonies either created primary sources or had primary sources created about them. List **at least two** primary sources they may have created or had created about them.

A. _____

B. _____

4. Indentured Servants also created primary sources during their time as indentured servants. List **at least two** primary sources that indentured servants may have created that would help us know more about their lives and their experiences as indentured servants. Use your imagination.

A. _____

B. _____

Part Three: Worksheet on Indentured Servitude

Name _____ **Group** _____ **Date** _____

Directions: Read the description of indentured servitude and answer the ten questions that follow.

Questions:

1. How is the word “indent” related to the term, Indentured Servant?
2. What were Freedom Dues and give some examples?
3. In addition to the most typical indentured servant (a poor person who signed a contract to work for a number of years in return for passage to the colonies), list the two most common types of indentured servants.
4. Why were many poor orphans sent to America as indentured servants?
5. What kind of rumors were circulated that influenced people to sign on as indentured servants? Why would people lie to get people to sign on as indentured servants?
6. What was the Headright System, and how is it connected to indentured servants?
7. Why did the flow of indentured servants from England decline at the time when the labor demands were greatest in the southern colonies?
8. Tell the difference between the “push” and the “pull” factors that influenced the decision to go to the colonies as an indentured servant.
9. Describe the indentured servants who came to America (young or old, mostly male or female, skilled or unskilled, large numbers or few in number).
10. By the early 1700s, what group of people was used to replace the indentured servants?

Appendix B: Searching for Information in Primary Sources

The Historian as a Detective

Name _____ Class Period _____ Date _____

Directions: When you examine a primary source, you are really acting like an historical detective looking for information about past events. Primary sources are full of information for historical researchers. The problem is that the language used may be hard to understand. It helps if you are looking for answers to specific questions.

Find answers to the questions below. Some are easy to find (like who is the primary source about). Sometimes, though, it is about more than one person. It may be about a whole group of people in addition to that one person (all indentured servants, all slaves, or even all poor people in the 17th century). Other questions aren't as easy. The question may ask you to "read between the lines" to discover the attitude or opinion of the person (s) in the document.

*The Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How of Primary Sources

1. Is this primary source mostly about one person? ____ If yes, who? _____
2. When approximately was this primary source created? _____
3. Where was the primary source created (written)? _____
4. Why was this primary source created? (In other words, is it a personal diary or letter, a public document like a law; a legal document such as a will; a property deed; or something else?)

5. Does this primary source tell you anything about a larger group of people? If yes, which group or groups did you get information about?

6. Were any strong opinions expressed? (yes or no) _____ If yes, on what topic or topics were strong opinions expressed?

7. Give at least one example from the primary source to explain your answer to number 6.

8. Does this person or group of people have any strong opinions about indentured servants or slaves? (yes or not) _____
If yes, what opinions were held?

9. Do you think that the people who expressed opinions within this primary source would ever change their minds ? _____ Explain your answer.

10. These documents were written about 300 to 400 years ago. Give one opinion expressed in the primary source that you either agree or disagree with.

*Since this is a generic worksheet that will be used with all primary sources related to the use of indentured servants and slaves in America, it is possible that you will not be able to find an answer to all ten questions on each worksheet.

Appendix C: Indentured Servant Narratives

Primary Source # 1: Indentured Servant from Holland

Background Information: Gottlieb Mittelberger

Gottlieb Mittelberger is representative of the indentured servants who came to America from the continent of Europe. He agreed to indentured servitude in 1750. His trip from Holland to England was the beginning of his trouble. It only got worse on the longer voyage from England to America. He served as a school-teacher and church organist in Philadelphia for three years. That tells us something else about indentured servants. They did not all toil in the fields or do duty as house servants. He returned to Germany in 1754 and later wrote a book about his experiences in America as an indentured servant. His account was published in Germany and later translated into English by Carl Theo. Eben when it was published in Philadelphia in 1898. That translation was used in the primary source below. For the complete story of his experience traveling to America, see *Gottlieb Mittelberger's Journey to Pennsylvania in the Year 1750 and Return to Germany in the Year 1754. Translated from the German by Carl Theo. Eben (Philadelphia, John Jos. McVey, 1898), pp. 19-29.*

On the Misfortune of Indentured Servants

Both in Rotterdam and in Amsterdam the people are packed densely, like herring ...in the large sea-vessels. One person receives a place of scarcely 2 feet wide and 6 feet length in the bedstead while many a ship carries four to six hundred souls... .On account of contrary winds it takes the ship sometimes 2,3 and 4 weeks to make the trip from Holland to...England...Everything is examined there and the custom-duties paid, whence it comes that the ship ride there 8, 10 to 14 days and even longer at anchor, till they have taken on their full cargoes. During that time every one is compelled to spend his last remaining money and to consume his little stock of provisions which have been reserved for the sea... .

The real misery begins with the long voyage. For from there the ships...must often sail 8, 9, 10 to 12 weeks before they reach Philadelphia. But even with the best winds the voyage lasts 7 weeks.

But during the voyage there is on board these ships terrible misery, stench, fumes, horror, vomiting, many kinds of sea-sickness, fever, dysentery, headache, heat, constipation, boils, scurvy, cancer, mouth-rot, and the like, all of which come from old and sharply salted food and meat, also from very bad and foul water, so that many die miserably.

Add to this want of provisions (food), hunger, thirst, frost, heat, dampness, anxiety, want, afflictions and lamentations, together with other trouble, as...lice abound so frightfully, especially on sick people, that they can be scraped off the body. The misery reaches the climax when a gale rages for 2 or 3 nights and days, so that every one believes that the ship will go to the bottom with all human beings on board. In such a visitation the people cry and pray most piteously.

When in such a gale the sea rages and surges, so that the waves rise often like high mountains one above the other, and often tumble over the ship, so that one fears to go down with the ship; when the ship is constantly tossed from side to side by the storm and waves, so that no one can either walk, or sit, or lie, and the closely packed people in the berths are thereby tumbled over each other, both the sick and the well... .

Among the healthy, impatience sometimes grows so great and cruel that one curses the other, or himself and the day of his birth, and sometimes come near killing each other...One always reproaches the other with having persuaded him to undertake the journey. Frequently children cry out against their parents, husbands against their wives and wives against their husbands, brothers and sisters, friends and acquaintances against each other. But most against the soul-traffickers.

Many sigh and cry: "Oh, that I were at home again, and if I had to lie in my pig-sty!" Or they say, "O God, if I only had a piece of good bread, or a good fresh drop of water."...Many hundred people necessarily die and perish in such misery.

No one can have an idea of the sufferings which women in confinement have to bear with their innocent children on board these ships. Few in this class escape with their lives; many a mother is cast into the water with her child as soon as she is dead. One day, just as we had a heavy gale, a woman in our ship, who was to give birth and could not give birth under the circumstances. Was pushed through a loop-hole (port-hole) in the ship and dropped into the sea, because she was far in the rear of the ship and could not be brought forward.

Children from 1 to 7 years rarely survive the voyage, I witnessed...misery in no less than 32 children in our ship, all of whom were thrown into the sea. Their parents grieve all the more since their children find no resting-place in the earth, but are devoured by the monsters of the sea.

...The water which is served on the ships is often very black, thick and full of worms, so that one cannot drink it without loathing, even with the greatest thirst. Toward the end we were compelled to eat the ship's biscuit ...though in a

whole biscuit there was scarcely a piece the size of a dollar that had not been full of red worms and spiders' nests...

When the ships have landed at Philadelphia after their long voyage, no one is permitted to leave them except those who pay for their passage or can give good security; the others, who cannot pay, must remain on board the ships till they are purchased, and are released from the ships by their purchasers. The sick always fare the worst, for the healthy are naturally preferred and purchased first; and so the sick and wretched must often remain on board in front of the city for 2 or 3 weeks, and frequently die, whereas many a one, if he could pay his debt and were permitted to leave the ship immediately, might recover and remain alive.

...Every day Englishmen, Dutchmen and High-German people come from the city of Philadelphia and other places ... and go on board... and select among the healthy persons ... and bargain with them how long they will serve for their passage money, which most of them are still in debt for. When they have come to an agreement, it happens that adult persons bind themselves in writing to serve 3, 4, 5 and 6 years for the amount due by them, according to their age and strength. But very young people, from 10 to 15 years, must serve till they are 21 years of age.

Many parents must sell and trade away their children like so many head of cattle; for if their children take the debt upon themselves, the parents can leave the ship free and unrestrained; but as the parents often do not know where and to what people their children are going, it often happens that such parents and children, after leaving the ship do not see each other again for many years, perhaps no more in all their lives.

It often happens that whole families, husband, wife, and children are separated by being sold to different purchasers, especially when they have not paid any part of their passage money. When a husband or wife has died at sea, when the ship has made more than half of her trip, the survivor must pay or serve not only for himself or herself, but also for the deceased.

When both parents have died over half-way at sea, their children, especially when they are young and have nothing to pawn or to pay, must stand for their own and their parents' passage, and serve till they are 21 years old. When one has served his or her term, he or she is entitled to a new suit of clothes at parting; and if it has been so stipulate, a man gets in addition a horse, ...a cow.

...If some one in this country runs away from his master, who has treated him harshly, he cannot go far. Good provision has been made for such cases, so

that a runaway is soon recovered. He who detains or returns a deserter receives a good reward.

If such a runaway has been away from his master one day, he must serve for it as a punishment a week, for a week a month, and for a month half a year.

Worksheet: Gottlieb Mittleberger, Indentured Servant from Holland

Name _____ Group _____ Date _____

Directions: Find the answers to these questions in Gottlieb's description of his trip to America as an Indentured Servant.

1. When Gottlieb Mittleberger traveled from Holland to the colony of Pennsylvania, trips to America took several weeks. Give the approximate number of weeks that it might take to reach Philadelphia (from _____ to _____ weeks).
2. List at least five physical ailments that passengers on his ship suffered while traveling to America.
3. Describe the physical conditions aboard the ship during a gale (storm), and tell how passengers reacted emotionally to their sufferings aboard the ship..
4. How were children treated aboard the ship, including babies born to women in confinement (giving birth)?
5. When the ship landed in Philadelphia, who was permitted to get off the ship and who was not?
6. Why did "the sick always fare the worst"?
7. Why do you think that the very young people, ten to fifteen years old, had to serve longer as indentured servants than did the adults?
8. What did parents have to do with their children so the parents "could leave the ship free and unrestrained"?
9. What did the wife, husband, or children of indentured servants have to do if an adult family member died on the trip to America?
10. How was the term of service of an indentured servant changed if he/she ran away and then got caught?

Primary Source #2: An Indentured Servant's Letter Home, 1623

Background Information: Richard Frethorne

Richard Frethorne was one of the earliest indentured servants to come to the colony of Virginia. The first came in 1619. He wrote this letter to his parents in 1623. The letter, in fact, is a series of short letters, much like diary or journal entries. You will notice that he signed the letter three times. He was writing from Martin's Hundred, the name of a specific place in Virginia. The original letter is almost impossible to read because of different grammar, punctuation and spelling. Historians have translated it into modern English, and you will read their version of his letter. What you are about to read is quoted widely as one of the only surviving letters from an indentured servant in the early 1600s. Most surviving documents were written by the leaders of the colony so his letter is unique because he was a poor, miserable servant. No one knows what happened to Richard Frethorne. He may have died of starvation or disease shortly after he wrote this letter, or his father may have sent him some goods that he was able to trade to raise money to get free of his indenture contract. Richard Frethorne is only known for this letter. Nothing else is known.

Loving and kind father and mother:

...this is to let you understand that I your child am in a most heavy case by reason of the nature of the country... And when we are sick there is nothing to comfort us; for since I came out of the ship I never ate anything but peas and loblollie (water gruel). As for deer and venison I never saw any since I came into this land. There is indeed some fowl, but we are not allowed to go and get it... A mouthful of bread for a penny loaf must serve for four men. ...When people cry out day and night—Oh! that they were in England without their limbs—and would not care to lose any limb to be in England again, yea though they beg from door to door. ...And there was some five or six of the late year's twenty (total Indentured Servants who came the previous year)...and yet we are but 32 (Englishmen) to fight against 3,000 (Indians) if they should come. And the nearest help that we have is ten miles (from) us, and when the rogues (Indians) overcame this place last they slew (killed) 80 persons. ...

And I have nothing to comfort me, nor is there nothing to be gotten here but sickness and death. ...But I have nothing at all—no, not a shirt to my back but two rags (2), nor no clothes but one poor suit, nor but one pair of shoes, but one pair of stockings, but one cap,...My cloak is stolen by one of my own fellows, and to his dying hour (he would not tell me what he did with it; but some of my fellows saw him have butter and beef out of a ship, which my cloak I doubt (not)

paid for. So that I have not a penny, nor a penny worth, to help me to either spice or sugar or strong waters, without the which one cannot live here. ...But I am not half a quarter so strong as I was in England, and all is for want of victuals (food), for I do protest unto you that I have eaten more in (one) day at home that I have allowed me here for a week. You have given more than my day's allowance to a beggar at the door. ...

(Goodman Jackson, a gunsmith in Jamestown befriended Richard Frethorne) And he (Goodman Jackson) much marveled that you would send me a servant to the Company;, you must have a care how you pack it in ballels; and you ust put cooper's chips between every cheese, or else the heat of the hold will rot them. he saith I had been better knocked on the head. And indeed I so find it now, to my great grief and misery; and (I) saith that if you love me you will redeem me suddenly, for which I do entreat and beg. And if you cannot get the merchants to redeem me for some little money, for for God's sake get a gathering, or entreat some good folks to lay out some little sum of money in meal and cheese and butter and beef. Any eating meat will yield great profit. Oil and vinegar is very good, but father, there is great loss in leaking. But for God's sake send beef and cheese and butter, or the more of one sort and none of another. ...But iif you send cheese. ...I will send it (the profits) over (to his father), and beg the profit to redeem me; and if I die before it come, I have entreated Goodman Jackson to send you the worth of it, who hath promised he will. ...

Good father, do not forget me, but have mercy and pity my miserable case. I know if you did but see me, you would weep to see me; for I hath but one suit, (But though it is a strange one, it is very well guarded.) Wherefore, for God's sake, pity me. I pray you to remember my love to all my friends and kindred. I hope all my brothers and sisters are in good health, and as for my part...the answer to this letter will be life or death to me. Therefore, good father, send as soon as you can... .

Richard Frethorne
Martin's Hundred

The names of them that be dead of the company (that) came over with us to serve under our Lieutenants:

John Flower	George Goulding
John Thomas	Jos. Johnson
Thos. Howes	our lieutenant, his father and brother
John Butcher	Thos. Giblin
John Sanderford	George Banum
Rich. Smith	a little Dutchman

John Olive one woman
Thos. Peirsman one maid
William Cerrell one child

All these died out of my master's house, since I came; and we came in but at Christmas, and this is the 20th day of March. And the sailors say that there is two-thirds of the 150 dead already. ...

Therefore if you love or respect me as your child, release me from this bondage and save my life. ...

Your loving son,
Richard Frethorne

...But what shall it be when we shall go a month or two and never see a bit of bread, as my master doth say we must do? And he said he is not able to keep us all. Then, we shall be turned up to the land and eat barks of trees or molds of the ground; therefore with weeping tears I beg of you to help me. Oh, that you did see my daily and hourly sighs, groans, and tears, and (the) thumps that I afford mine own breast, (beating myself upon the chest)...I thought no head had been able to hold so much water as hath and doth daily flow from mine eyes (crying).

But this is certain: I never felt the want of father and mother till now... .

I pray you talk with this honest man (the person bringing the letter to his parents). He will tell you more than now in my haste I can set down.

Your loving son,
Richard Frethorne

Virginia, 3rd April, 1623

Worksheet: Richard Frethorne's Letter to his Father

Name _____ Group _____ Date _____

Directions: Use the primary source on Richard Frethorne to find the answers.

1. Summarize the food available to the indentured servants once they got off the ship in the English colony (Virginia).
2. What do you think Richard Frethorne meant when he said, "When people cry out day and night, Oh! that they were in England without their limbs (arms and legs)—and would not care to lose any limb to be in England, yea, though they beg from door to door"?
3. What criticism does Richard make of his father by telling him what Goodman Jackson said?
4. What does the indentured servant, Richard Frethorne, want his father to do to redeem him (pay his master the price he was sold for)?
5. Pick one description that Richard gave to his parents that really shows how bad things were for indentured servants. Copy the quote you picked to show how miserable things were.

Appendix D: The Transition from Indentured Servitude to Slavery

Secondary Source # 1: Transition from Indentured Servitude to Slavery

Name _____ Group _____ Date _____

Directions: Read the informational handout (Transition...to Slavery). Then, write answers to the following questions.

1. Define plantation agriculture.
2. Give three reasons why plantation agriculture was established in the southern colonies.
3. List the three sources of laborers that were used by southern plantation owners.
4. Give the estimates of the Native American population living in America when the Europeans first settled Virginia.
5. Give three explanations for why the Indians did not become a permanent source of laborers for colonial planters.
6. Why did indentured servants not become a permanent source of labor in colonial America?
7. In the first half of the 17th century (early 1600s), why did planters prefer indentured servants to slaves?
8. Why did slaves become preferred over indentured servants in the second half of the 17th century?
9. Tell how runaway slaves could be punished in ways that indentured servants were not?
10. Give an example of a racist law in colonial times.

Primary Source # 2: Just How Bad Was Indentured Servitude?

Background Information: Writers in England sometimes described daily life in the colonies. The famous writer Daniel Defoe (1661? –1731) wrote an unflattering description of the settlers of Virginia. He divided the population into convicts who came to Virginia rather than be hanged for crimes in England, and people who were sold as servants, but were treated as slaves. John Hammond, on the other hand, agreed with the negative view for the earliest years of English settlement, but wrote that things were much improved for indentured servants by the second half of the 1600s. He wrote what you are about to read in 1653. It may have influenced some Europeans to discount the stories they heard of the brutality of life in the English colonies for indentured servants. Students should form their own opinions based upon what they know of indentured servitude.

Leah and Rachel, or, The Two Fruitful Sisters, Virginia and Mary-land

At the first settling and many years after, it (Virginia and Maryland) deserved most of those aspersions (negative remarks). Then were Jails emptied, youths seduced, infamous women... , the provisions all brought out of England, and that embezzled by the Trustees (for they durst neither hunt fowl, nor Fish, for fear of the Indian, which they stood in awe of) their labour was almost perpetual, their allowance of victual (food) small, few or no cattle, no use of horses nor oxen to draw or carry (which labours men supplied themselves) all of which caused a mortality (death) no civil courts of justice...complaints were repaid with stripes (beatings)...in a word all and the worst that tyranny could inflict... .

And having laid down the former state of Virginia...I come to my main subject, its present condition of Happiness... .

The usual allowance for servants is...at the expiration (end of their indenture contract)...a year's provision of corn, double apparel, tools necessary, and land according to the custom of the Country, which is an old delusion, for there is no land customarily due to the servant, but to the Master, and therefore that servant is unwise that will not dash out that custom in his covenant (indenture contract) and make that due of land absolutely his own... .

When ye go aboard, expect the ship somewhat troubled and in a hurly-burly, until ye clear the lands end; ...and things put to rights, which many times discourages the Passengers, and makes them wish the Voyage unattempted; but this is but for a short season, and washes off when at Sea, where the time is pleasantly passed away... .

But when ye arrive and are settled, the labour servants are put to, is not so hard nor of such continuance as Husbandmen (farm workers) nor Handicraftsmen (artisans) are kept in England, I said little or nothing is done in winter time, none ever work before sun rising nor after sun set, in the summer they rest, sleep or exercise themselves...in the heat of the day, Saturday afternoon is always their own, the old Holidays are observed, and the Sabbath (Sunday) spent in good exercises.

The women are not (as is reported) put into the ground (the fields) to work, but occupy such domestic employments and housewifery as in England, this is dressing victuals (preparing food), right up (clean) the house, milking, employed about dairies, washing, sewing &c, and both men and women have times of recreation, as much or more than in any part of the world besides, yet some wenches (women) that are nastily, beastly and not fit to be so employed are put into the ground (assigned field work), for reason tells us, they must not...be transported then maintained for nothing... .

Those Servants that will be industrious may in their time of service gain a competent estate before their Freedoms, which is usually done by many, and they gain esteem and assistance that appear so industrious. There is no Master almost but will allow his Servant a parcel of clear ground to cut some Tobacco in for himself, which he may husband (farm) at those idle times he hath allowed him and not prejudice, but rejoice his Master to see it, he may lay out for commodities (buy things), and in Summer sell them again with advantage (for a profit) and get a Pig or two, which anybody almost will give him...and with one years increase of them may purchase a Cow Calf or two, and by that time he is for himself; he may have Cattle, Hogs and Tobacco of his own, and come to live gallantly; but this must be gained (as I have said) by Industry (hard work) and affability (pleasing behavior), not by sloth (laziness) nor churlish (oppositional) behavior.

And whereas it is rumoured that Servants have no lodgings (place to sleep) other than on boards, or by the Fire side, it is contrary to reason to believe it: First, as we are Christians; next as people living under a law, which compels as well the Master as the Servant to perform his duty; nor can true labour be either expected or exacted without sufficient clothing, diet, and lodging; all which their Indentures (which must inviolably be observed) and the Justice of the Country requires.
...

Be sure to have your contract (indenture) in writing and under hand and seal (legally recorded), for if ye go over (to America) upon promise made to do this or that, or to be free, it signifies nothing.

The above was taken from Jhn Hammond, *Leah and Rachel, or The Two Fruitful Sisters Virginia and Mary-land* (London: Printed by Mabb, 1656) quoted

in David B. Davis & Steven Mintz, *The Boisterous Sea of Liberty: A Documentary History of America from Discovery through the Civil War*, New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 54-56.

Questions on the Informational Handout, (Leah and Rachel...)

Name _____ Group _____ Date _____

Directions: Read the informational handout (Leah and Rachel...). Then, write answers to the following questions.

1. According to the author, John Hammond, what was wrong with life in Virginia and Maryland in the early days?
2. What three things did an indentured servant get at the end of his indenture? What didn't he get?
3. According to the author, what was the trip across the ocean like?
4. The author wrote that the work that servants did wasn't as hard as it was in England. Explain.
5. The author said that most women did certain kinds of work. Explain.
6. The author said that industrious (hard working) servants could accumulate a lot by the time they got their freedom. Explain.
7. What reasons did the author give for saying that servants were well treated?
8. What advise did the author give to anyone who was coming over to America as an indentured servant?

Primary Source # 3: Fugitive Notices

Background Information: Fugitive Indentured Servants

Primary sources created by indentured servants are few and far between. More rare still are written records created by fugitive indentured servants. There is a simple explanation for that: literacy was exceptional in the general population during the American colonial period, and little or no care was taken to preserve written records that may have existed. While a diary entry or letter could give us a detailed look at the daily life of a fugitive indentured servant, we can still find out about these fugitives from another source: runaway notices printed in newspapers. These advertisements were written to inform colonists about how to identify runaway servants. Many of the following types of basic information were usually included: the owner's name and residence followed by his occupation, how much of a reward was being offered. Then, there was information about the fugitive: the name, sex and approximate age of the runaway, his/her nationality, and a detailed list of identifying clothing. Sometimes, a special occupational skill or talent is mentioned. Occasionally, a negative remark is made about the character of a fugitive. Sometimes there is a remark about a fugitive having scars from a physical beating or unhealed wounds. White indentured servants were not typically beaten. Beatings were much more common among slaves. Extreme physical mistreatment of white indentured servants was against the law. Planters owned a slave's body while they only owned the time (usually four to seven years) of a white indentured servant.

An historian, Daniel Meaders, looked at all the printed advertisements for runaway indentured servants in Pennsylvania that appeared in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* from 1729 until 1760. Then, he categorized the statistics on 2004 fugitives. He found that the typical fugitive indentured servant (86%) was a young man between the ages of 18 and 32. Nearly 1/3 were of Irish nationality with the next highest groups coming from England and the Netherlands. *See Daniel Meaders, *Eighteenth-Century White slaves, Fugitive Notices, Vol.!. Pennsylvania, 1729-1760*. (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1993), pp. 21, 90, 249, 503.

Below you will find some examples of authentic notices of runaway indentured servants. You will also find a colonial law (example #5) which governed the way that slaves were to be treated when they defied the law and became runaways. There also is a runaway notice for a fugitive slave. Compare this (example 6) with what was typically said in an advertisement for a runaway white indentured servant. After you have read the six examples, answer the questions that follow.

Example # 1: 12/14/31

Run away on the 28th past, the two following Servsnt Men, viz. From John Fruin, Baker, one named Peter Humphries, about 26 years of age, middle stature, well set, spreading knees, and goes tenderly on his feet, thick lips, and has a tooth out before towards the left side. Had on a castor hat, a lightish natural wig, striped homespun jacket, leather breeches, white frock, black stockins, good shoes, and took with him 2 speckled shirts, 3 white shirts, and 5 pairs of stockins, and was seen with a small bundle at his back. From William Biddle, one named Charles Calahan, aged about 22 years, a short well set fellow, sandy complexion, has lost one or two of his upper foreteeth, short curl'd hair, and has on a grey kersey great coat, white broadcloth close bodied coat, corded dimmitty jacket, black breeches, and white stockins. Tis suppos'd there are more gone with them, and that they have counterfeit passes. Whoever shall apprehend and secure the said servants, so that their masters may have them again, shall have Forty Shillings Reward for each, and reasonable charges paid, by John Fruin, William Biddle.

Example # 2: 3/27/40

Run away about five Weeks ago, from Charles Moor of this City, Hatter, a Servant Woman named Catherine Roach, aged 22 Years; had on when she went away, a red, blue and white Callico petticoat, a green Shalloon Mantle, a speckled Apron, and a good Pair of Shoes; she can speak both Spanish and Portugueze, and is a Roman-Catholick: She has been seen at Well's Fargo, enquiring the Way to New-York, and worked in that Neighborhood pretending she was free. Whoever takes up and secures the said Servant so that he may have her gain, shall have Thirty Shillings Reward and reasonable Charges paid by Charles Moor.

Example # 3: 8/16/50

Four pistols Reward. Run away on the 13th inst. From the subscriber, living in Chester, in Chester County, Pennsylvania, an Irish servant man, named James Ward, of a middle stature, about 23 years of age, dark complexion, down look, sullen countenance, can hardly look a man in the face, his beard and eye-brows thick and black, his hair cut off, and has fine linen caps; he talks good English, being brought into the country when young and served 6 years to John Hannama, of the county aforesaid, and thro' bad economy and misdemeanors, again became a servant, he has the indenture of his first servitude with him, by which it is supposed he expects to pass as a free man, he is fond of drink, and values himself for fighting, wrestling, and driving a team; his cloathing, a home-made cloth jacket, the common whitish colour wore by such in the country, with brass buttons, a striped Bengall jacket, buckskin breeches, and a pair of white fustian ditto, patch'd with the same on the right knee, with shaloon puffs, a check shirt, and

some white ones, a pair of blue worsted stockings, some white thread ditto, and calf-skin shoes, half soal'd, has a lump on one of his shins, about the tying of the garter, below the knee, occasioned by a cut of an axe. Whoever takes up and secures said servant, so that his master may have him again, shall have Four Pistoles reward, and reasonable charges, paid by John Hanly.
N.B. All masters of vessels, are charged at their peril, not to carry him off.

Example # 4: 11/6/60

Lancaster, November 3, 1760. Run away last Night, from the Subscriber, in Manor Township, Lancaster County, an Irish woman, named Susannah Jackson, but possibly may change her name: she had with her when she went away, a female Child, about two Years old, very much pitted with the Small-Pox; said Servant is marked on her left Arm, M.H. and had on when she went away, a red quilted Petticoat, a Snuff colored Worsted Gown, good Shoes and Stockings. Whoever takes up and secures said Servant so that her Master may have her again, shall have Twenty Shillings Reward, and reasonable Charges paid by John Miller.

Example #5: Colonial Virginia law of 1691

It is hereby enacted that upon intelligence of any such Negroes, mulattoes, or other slaves lying out (escaping), two of their majesties' justices of the peace of that county...shall be empowered and commanded...to issue out their warrants directed to the sheriff of the same county to apprehend such negroes, mulattoes, and other slaves, which said sheriff is hereby likewise required...to raise such and so many forces from time to time as he shall think convenient and necessary for the effectual apprehending such negroes, mulattoes and other slaves, and in case any negroes, mulattoes or other slave or slaves lying out (escaping)...shall resist, run away, or refuse to deliver and surrender him or themselves to any person or persons that shall be by lawful authority employed to apprehend and take such negroes, mulattoes or other slaves that in such cases it shall and may be lawful for such person and persons to kill and destroy such Negroes, mulattoes, and other slave or slaves by gun or any other ways whatsoever. *Boller and Story, *A More Perfect Union*, Vol. 1, 2nd ed. "Virginia Slavery Legislation, 1630-1691, p. 15.

Example #6: Rosewell, August 7, 1793.

(At the beginning of the advertisement there is a woodcut illustration of an African slave running away from a devil with a pitchfork.) Run-away from the subscriber in Amelia county, about the eighteenth day of May last, a Negro Man Slave, named Anthony, about 6 feet and an inch high, formerly the property of Mr. Nelson Berekeley, of Hanover, and purchased by the subscriber of Mr. Mi-

chael Hartfield, of New-Kent county, where he has lately been seen. I will give Three Guineas reward to any person who will apprehend the said slave and deliver him to me, or Two Guineas to any person who shall secure him in any jail, so that I get him again. Charles Hudson, Amerlia, June 21, 1793. (This notice appeared in the Virginia Gazette and General Advertiser and was reproduced in Tindall and Shi, *America: A Narrative History*, 5th Ed. Vol. 1 (W.W. Norton: New York City, 1999), p.120.

Primary Source # 4: Virginia Slave Legislation

(1640) Robert Sweet to do penance in church according to laws of England for getting a Negro woman with child and the woman whipt.

(1661) Be it enacted That in case any English servant shall run away in company with any Negroes who are incapable of making satisfaction by addition of time, Be it enacted that the English so running away in company with them shall serve for the time of the said Negroes absence as they are to do for their own by a former act.

(1669) ...Be it enacted and declared by this grand assembly, if any slave resist his master (or other by his master's order correcting him) and by the extremity of the correction shall chance to die, that his death shall not be accompted Felony, but the master (or that other person appointed by the master to punish him) be acquit from molestation, since it cannot be presumed that prepensed malice (which alone makes murder Felony) should induce any man to destroy his own estate (property).

(1680) It is hereby enacted...it shall not be lawful for any Negro or other slave to carry or arm himself with any club, staff, gun, sword, or any other weapon of defence or offence, nor to go to depart from his master's ground without a certificate from his master, mistress or overseer, and such permission not to be granted but upon particular and necessary occasions; and every Negro or slave so offending not having a certificate as aforesaid shall be sent to the next constable, who is hereby enjoined and required to give the said Negro twenty lashes on his bare back well laid on, and so sent home to his said master, mistress, or overseer. And it is further enacted by the authority aforesaid that if any Negro or other slave shall presume to lift up his hand in opposition against any Christian, shall for every such offense, upon due proof made thereof by the oath of the party before a magistrate, have and receive thirty lashes on his bare back well laid on.

Boller and Story, eds. *A More Perfect Union: Documents in U.S. History*, 2nd ed. Vol. 1 "Virginia Slavery Legislation, 1630-1691," (Houghton Mifflin Co.: Bos-

ton, 1988), pp. 13-15, taken from William Hening, ed. *The Laws of Virginia, 1619-1792* (Samuel Pleasants: Richmond, Va. 1809-1823).

Questions on the Fugitive Indentured Servants and Slaves

Name _____ Group _____ Date _____

Directions: Read the “Fugitive Notices” and find answers for the following questions.

1. Why are there few written records created by fugitive indentured servants and slaves?
2. List at least five things that were usually in an advertisement for a fugitive indentured Servant.
3. Describe the typical fugitive indentured servant in Pennsylvania in the early 700s.
4. Read the descriptions of Peter Humphries and Charles Calahan (Notice dated 12/14/31). To the best of your ability draw these two young men according to the description given. Use a separate piece of paper.
5. Why do you think that Catherine Roach (Notice dated 3/27/40) was able to pretend that she was free?
6. Read the description of James Ward (Notice dated 8/16/60). Based upon this description, what was James personality like? Do you think it was an accurate description of him? Explain.
7. Use your imagination. Why do you think Susannah Jackson (Notice dated 11/6/60) had a two year old with her? The child was “very much pitted with the Small-Pox.” Explain.
8. Read Example # 5. What were slave catchers given the legal right to do to runaway slaves?
9. Read Example # 6. What is not in this advertisement for a runaway slave that is typically found in the advertisements for fugitive indentured servants? What does it mean?
10. Think about the notices you have read. How was the treatment of white indentured servants and African slaves alike? How was it different?

Appendix E: Open-Ended and Culminating Activities

Teachers: Please note that these suggested activities may be used while working on specific activities within the unit, or later as culminating activities. Also, they may be done as individual projects or with a partner.

1. Write a dialogue in which one person is a ship captain and the other is a poor person who wants to come to America as an indentured servant. Use information in the Classroom Activities section of the curriculum unit.
2. Create a brochure (11" by 18" white paper, folded into three sections. Title it, "Indentured Servitude: The Chance of a Lifetime." Then, write and draw things that give a rosy view of what it would be like to be an indentured servant in the English colonies. You will be creating propaganda so don't include negative information about the life of an indentured servant. Use information given in "Leah and Rachel, or The Two Fruitful Sisters, Virginia and Mary-Land."
3. Create a primary source by writing a letter home describing life as an indentured servant. Refer to Richard Frethorne's letter home.
4. Rewrite Gottlieb Mittleberger's account, "On the Misfortunes of Indentured Servants," as a play. One person should be the narrator, Gottlieb Mittleberger while others would play the roles of fellow passengers suffering through a terrific storm on the high seas, discussing the poor quantity and quality of the food, and the agony of being sold upon arrival in Philadelphia.
5. Make a storyboard showing key points made by Richard Frethorne in his letter to his father. He begged for his father to send him things to sell so he could buy his freedom. Show his desperation in the drawings and captions you make.
6. Pick one of the four examples of fugitive indentured servant advertisements in Appendix D. Draw the person (s) in the advertisements based upon the physical description and what clothing they might have been wearing.
7. Use information given in the informational handout, "The Transition from Indentured Servitude to Slavery," to write a paragraph that summarizes, in your own words, why slavery replaced indentured servitude. Start with the topic sentence, "Slavery replaced indentured servitude because...".

Standards

Pittsburgh Public School Content Standards

Citizenship Standards:

All students demonstrate an understanding of major events, cultures, groups and individuals in the historical development of Pennsylvania, the United States and other nations, and describe themes and patterns of historical development. (Number 1)

All students demonstrate their skills of communicating, negotiating and cooperating with others. (Number 7)

All students demonstrate that they can work effectively with others. (Number 8)

Communication Standards:

All students use effective research and information management skills, including locating primary and secondary sources of information with traditional and emerging library technologies (Number 1)

All students respond orally and in writing to information and ideas gained by reading narrative and informational texts and use the information and ideas to make decisions and solve problems. (Number 3)

All students write for a variety of purposes, including to narrate, inform, and persuade, in all subject areas. (Number 4)

All students analyze and make critical judgments about all forms of communication separating fact from opinion, recognizing propaganda, stereotypes and statements of bias, recognizing inconsistencies and judging the validity of evidence. (Number 5)

All students compose and make oral presentations for each academic area of study that are designed to persuade, inform or describe. (Number 8)