

## “Slaves for life, and Servants for a time”

Servitude in British America:  
 Five European Perspectives,  
 1705-1750

In the 1600s most “bonded” laborers in the British mainland colonies were not black Africans but white Europeans, mostly poor men and women from England who contracted to work for several years in the colonies in return for free passage to America and basic clothing and provisions. As “indentured servants,” they had few freedoms while in service to their “masters”; but when their contracts were fulfilled after four to seven years, they were free. No such “contract” existed for enslaved Africans, of course, whose numbers escalated in the 1700s as British America craved more laborers. Presented here are perspectives on both forms of colonial servitude from five white men — two southern slaveholders, two European clergymen (one English, one German), and an English indentured servant.

### “the care their laws take” A planter’s view, 1705

In *The History and Present State of Virginia*, the influential planter Robert Beverley strove to clarify the legal distinctions between slaves and servants, as well as defend their treatment under the law. How does he portray the lives of enslaved and indentured people? To whom does he direct his explanations? What influence does he hope to achieve?

Their Servants they distinguish by the Names of Slaves for Life, and Servants for a time.

Slaves are the Negroes, and their Posterity [children], following the condition of the Mother, according to the Maxim, *partus*

*sequitur ventrem*.<sup>1</sup> They are call'd Slaves, in Respect of the Time of their Servitude, because it is for Life. Servants are those which serve only for a few Years, according to the time of their Indenture or the Custom of the Country [colony]. The Custom of the Country takes place upon such as have no Inden-

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<sup>1</sup> In 1662 Virginia legislated the doctrine of *partus sequitur ventrem*, which assigned a child's status as free or slave according to the status of the mother.

tures. The Law in this Case is that if such Servants be under nineteen Years of Age, they must be brought into Court to have their Age adjudged; And from the Age they are judg'd to be of, they must serve until they reach four and twenty; But if they be adjudged upwards of nineteen, they are then only to be Servants for the Term of five Years.

The Male-Servants, and Slaves of both Sexes, are employed together in tilling and manuring the Ground, in sowing and planting Tobacco, Corn, &c. [etc.]. Some Distinction indeed is made between them in their Clothes and Food, but the Work of both is no other than what the Overseers, the Freemen, and the Planters themselves do.

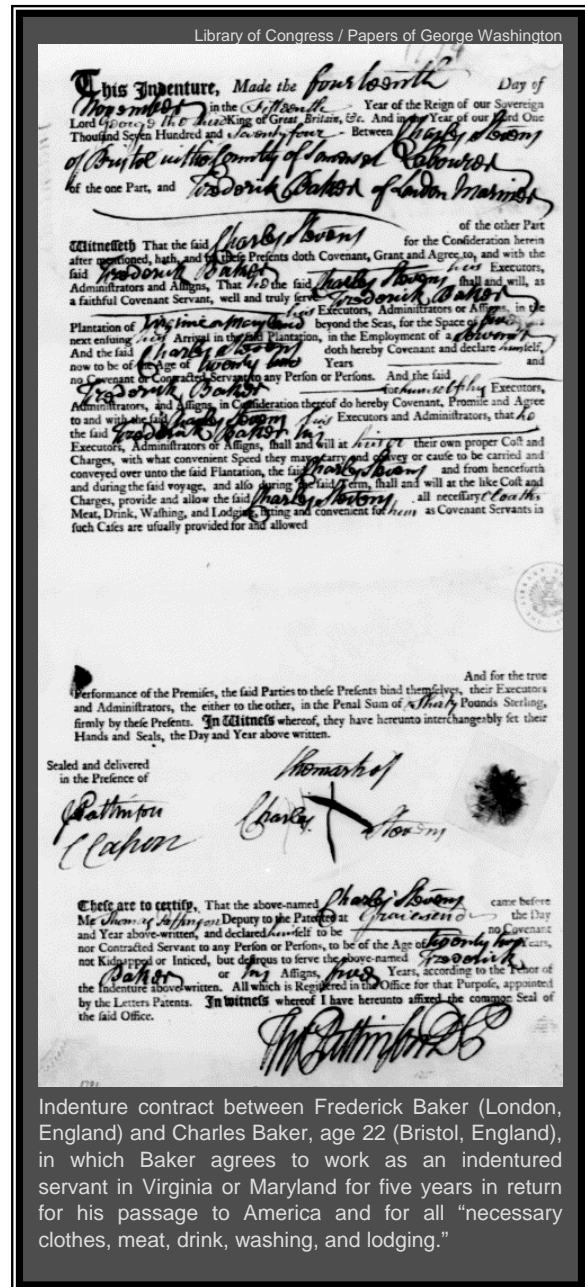
Sufficient Distinction is also made between the Female-Servants, and Slaves; for a white Woman is rarely or never put to work in the Ground if she be good for anything else; and to discourage all Planters from using any Women so, their Law imposes Taxes upon Female-Servants working in the Ground while it suffers [allows] all other white Women to be absolutely exempted; Whereas on the other hand, it is a common thing to work a Woman Slave out of Doors; nor does the Law make any Distinction in her Taxes, whether her Work be Abroad [outside] or at Home.

Because I have heard how strangely cruel and severe the Service of this Country [use of slaves and servants in Virginia] is presented in some Parts of *England*, I can't forbear affirming that the Work of their Servants and Slaves is no other than what every common Freeman does. Neither is any Servant requir'd to do more in a Day than his Overseer. And I can assure you with great Truth that generally their Slaves are not worked near so hard, nor so many Hours in a Day, as the Husbandmen and Day-laborers in *England*. An Overseer is a Man that, having served his time, has acquired the Skill and Character of an experienced Planter, and is therefore entrusted with the Direction of the Servants and Slaves.

But to complete this account of Servants, I shall give you a short Relation [account] of the Care their Laws take, that they be used as tenderly as possible.

### *By the Laws of their Country.*

1. All Servants whatsoever have their Complaints heard without Fee or Reward; but if the Master be found Faulty, the charge of the Complaint is cast upon him, otherwise the Business is done *ex Officio*.
2. Any Justice of Peace may receive the Complaint of a Servant, and order everything relating thereto, till the next County-Court, where it will be finally determin'd.
3. All Masters are under the Correction and Censure of the County-Courts, to provide for their Servants good and wholesome Diet, Clothing, and Lodging.



4. They are always to appear upon the first notice given of the Complaint of their Servants, otherwise to forfeit the Service of them, until they do appear.
5. All Servants' Complaints are to be receiv'd at any time in Court, without Process, and shall not be delay'd for want of Form [documents]; but the Merits of the Complaint must be immediately inquir'd into by the Justices; and if the Master cause any delay therein, the Court may remove such Servants, if they see Cause, until the Master will come to Trial.
6. If a Master shall at any time disobey an Order of Court made upon any Complaint of a Servant, the Court is empower'd to remove such Servant forthwith to another Master who will be kinder, giving to the former Master the Produce only (after Fees deducted) of what such Servants shall be sold for by Public Outcry.
7. If a Master should be so cruel as to use his Servant ill, that is fal[le]n sick or lame in his Service, and thereby render'd unfit for Labor, he must be remov'd by the Church-Wardens out of the way of such Cruelty and boarded in some good Planter's House, till the time of his Freedom, the Charge of which must be laid before the next County-Court, which has Power to levy the same from time to time upon the Goods and Chattels [personal property] of the Master; After which, the Charge of such Boarding is to come upon the Parish in general.
8. All hired Servants are entitled to these Privileges.
9. No Master or a Servant can make a new Bargain for Service, or other Matter with his Servant, without the privity [equal relationship in the contract] and consent of a Justice of Peace, to prevent the Master's Overreaching or scaring such Servant into an unreasonable Compliance.
10. The property of all Money and Goods sent over thither to Servants, or carry'd in with them, is reserv'd to themselves and remains entirely at their Disposal.
11. Each Servant at his Freedom receives of his Master fifteen Bushels of Corn (which is sufficient for whole Year)<sup>2</sup> two new Suits of Clothes, both Linen and Woolen,<sup>3</sup> and then becomes as free in all Respects, and as much entitled to the Liberties and Privileges of the Country as any other of the Inhabitants or Natives are.<sup>4</sup>
12. Each Servant has then also a Right to take up fifty Acres of Land, where he can find any unpatented; But that is no great Privilege, for any one may have as good a right for a piece of Eight.<sup>5</sup>

This is what the Laws prescribe in Favor of Servants, by which you may find that the Cruelties and Severities imputed to that Country [Virginia] are an unjust Reflection. For no People more abhor the thoughts of such Usage than the *Virginians*, nor take more Precaution to prevent it.



<sup>2</sup> In 1722 edition: "ten bushels of corn (which is sufficient for almost a Year)."

<sup>3</sup> In 1722 edition: "and a Gun 20 s[hillings], value."

<sup>4</sup> In 1722 edition: "if such Servants were not Aliens."

<sup>5</sup> In 1722 edition: the last clause of this sentence ("But that is . . . piece of Eight") is omitted.

## *“The laws of the country doth protect them.” A planter’s view, 1712<sup>6</sup>*

In a 1712 pamphlet entitled *Profitable Advice for Rich and Poor*, South Carolina planter John Norris urged poor Englishmen to “reap Profit and Delight” in the colony by establishing small farms and thereby gaining autonomous subsistence. Norris employs a Question-and-Answer format (not unusual in promotional literature of the period) in which an English farmer, Simon Question, directs inquiries to a Carolina planter, James Freeman, who has returned to England for a visit. (In these excerpts the titles *English Farmer* and *Carolina Planter* are substituted for clarity.) Here Norris discusses European servants and slaves (both African and Native American). To whom does Norris direct his explanations? What influence does he hope to achieve?

**English Farmer.** *What are these Slaves you speak of? And why are there so call’d? What Slavery are they oblig’d unto? And in what Manner are they kept by their Masters?*

**Carolina Planter.** Those we call *Slaves* are a sort of Black People, here commonly call’d *Blackmoor’s*, some few kept here in *England* by Gentry [wealthy landowners] for their Pleasure, but are there [in Carolina] bought by the Inhabitants from the Merchants Trading to *Guinea* and other Places, where they are first brought from; but their proper Names are *Negroes*. There, People are bought to Employ them in any sort of Labour, either in Town or Country, in whatever their Masters, or Owners, have occasion to be done — the Townsman for his Business, and the Country Farmer, which we call there Planters, about their Husbandry, or Houswifery Business, as Servants are here requir’d to do for their Masters or Mistresses.

When these People are thus bought, their Masters, or Owners, have then as good a Right and Title to them during their Lives as a Man has here to a Horse or Ox, after he has bought them: And there is a Necessity for these Slaves, because very few Servants are there to be procured to perform the Business of the Country. There is also another sort of People we buy for Slaves, call’d *Indians*, bred on the Continent, but far distant from us, belonging to the *French* and *Spanish* Territories in *America*; they are a sort of Red Dun, or Tan’d Skin’d People, who are also Sold us by Merchants, or Traders, that deal with several Nations of our Native *Indians*, from whom they first buy these People, whom we then make Slaves of, as of the *Negroes*; and they are call’d Slaves, not because their Labour is more Slavish or Servile than Servants’ Labour is here, nor oftentimes so hard to perform as the Labour requir’d from Servants in this Country, but ’tis, because they are never Free-Men, or Women, during their Life, nor their Children after them, who are under the same Circumstances of Servitude as their Parents are, during their Lives also.

**English Farmer.** *But do not English People, and others, when they come first into the Country, become Slaves There, as it is generally said they do in other English Plantations in America?*

**Carolina Planter.** No; there is, of a Truth, no such Thing as *Christian Slaves*, made of People coming from any part of the Queen’s Dominions; for that which is generally talk’d, of Peoples being made Slaves, is no more but this, When any Men or Women that are desirous to Transport themselves thither, and are not of Ability to pay their own Passage over, they are generally oblig’d, by Indentures, before their Departure hence, to serve in that Country, as Servants or Apprentices do here, for the Term of Four Years, to commence from the Time of their Arrival and no longer, their Masters or Mistresses, in the meantime, giving them sufficient Clothing and other Necessaries, or Paying them sufficient Wages so to do; and at the Four Years’ End they are then become free from their Service, and no Man can longer detain them, they being then at Liberty to follow what lawful Business they please to undertake to their own Advantage and Satisfaction.

**English Farmer.** *But I suppose the Labour, both of Men and Women Servants, is generally more servile and laborious than here in England, whether for Husbandry or Huswifery Business as the Country affords?*

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<sup>6</sup> John Norris, *Profitable Advice for Rich and Poor in a Dialogue, or Discourse between James Freeman, a Carolina Planter, and Simon Question, a West-Country Farmer. Containing a Description, or True Relation, of South Carolina, An English Plantation, or Colony, in America . . .*, 1712; in Jack P. Greene, ed., *Selling a New World: Two Colonial South Carolina Promotional Pamphlets* (University of South Carolina Press, 1989); permission pending.

**Carolina Planter.** Their Labour there is not, in Reality, as hard as it generally is in *England* for Men nor women; neither, as I mention'd before, do our Slaves undergo the Hardships that many Thousand Servants and poor Labourers do in *England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland*, which those that comes from these Places as Servants doth find by common Experience.

...

**English Farmer.** *But, I suppose, Servants, and Slaves are not permitted by their Masters to spend Time Daily thus in Refreshing themselves; they are probably, obliged to follow their Labour both in Wet and Heat; and I guess a Servant, if he contradicts his Master's pleasure therein, must expect Correction or Punishment for any Neglect or Misdemeanor?*

**Carolina Planter.** But it is no Master's Interest to oblige Servants, nor Slaves to Toil and Labour so as to destroy their Health, which will thereby prevent the performing of their Daily Labour. If a Man in the Summer begins his Labour early in the Morning, as is usual, for the benefit of cool Working, and end late in the Evening, he may well spare time in the middle of the Day to Refresh himself. And as for Servants receiving from their Masters undeserved Correction, the Laws of the Country doth protect them, as here; and if on sufficient Complaint and Proof to the Governor or Magistrates that they are Abused, they shall be by them set free to the remainder of their Time they have to Serve: But, nevertheless, Servants are not Tolerated nor Allow'd, by Law or Custom, to commit willful and voluntary Offenses against their Masters, either in Word or Deed, to their Prejudice.

...

**English Farmer.** *What? Is Servants and Slaves so scarce as not to be hir'd for the Country Planter's Conveniency to manage their Plantations to the best Advantage?*

**Carolina Planter.** 'Tis very rare that any Freeman will hire himself to Labour after his Term of Four Years are expir'd, by reason they can employ themselves very advantageously in their own Business and on their own Land by Planting of Corn and Rice, as aforesaid; and 'tis also very seldom that any Man will hire out his Slaves to others, but will employ them in following Plantation Business for himself, their Labour being well paid for in their Crops: Or otherwise if they make Tar and Pitch; the Planter needing not fear to get Sale for his Goods, for Merchants Shipping from *England* and elsewhere is seldom wanting [lacking] at *Charles Town* to carry off the Commodities of the Country, which generally sells at very good Prices for the Planters' Gain and Advantage.

**English Farmer.** *But how shall a Man, when first free of his Time, employ himself on his own Land, unless he hire himself a considerable Time at Yearly Wages, or otherwise, to get Money to purchase Land, Implements of Husbandry, and some Stock to begin with?*

**Carolina Planter.** When a Servant hath serv'd his time, he may, on Request to the proper Officer, have land assign'd him from the Lords Proprietors as an Encouragement to People to resort thither, only paying a small Yearly Rent, and then, if he is an industrious labouring Man, he may be credited by the Town's Merchants or Shop-keepers for necessary Implements for his present Use, and likewise with his Neighbours for a little Stock to being withal, and then by his Care and Industry in a few Years, especially if his Hogs thrive well, he'll be able to enlarge his Stock of Cattle and purchase more Land and also, by Degrees, purchase Slaves to work with him in his Plantation.

**English Farmer.** *What Price may a Man purchase a Slave for at the best Hand? And what Sorts of Money is current for Payment, and what Value is it in Proportion to Money here in England?*

**Carolina Planter.** An *Indian* Man or Woman may cost 18 or 20 Pound, but a good *Negro* is worth twice that Sum, we have passing as currant [currency] amongst us the *Spanish Money*, Pieces of differing Value according to its Weight, . . .

**English Farmer.** *I see it hazardous for a Man to give so much Money for a Slave, and that Slave may soon die, then all his Money is lost.*

**Carolina Planter.** Is it not so here, If a Man purchase Cattle or Horses, how can he be assur'd of their Lives? Yet we have a greater Encouragement to buy Slaves, for with good Management and Success, a Man's Slave will, by his Labour, pay for his first Cost in about four Years at most, besides his Maintenance, so, the Remainder of his Life, you have his Labour as free Gain (we esteem their Eating and Wearing as little, for that rises on the Plantation and is little cost out of Pocket). When they are employ'd chiefly on planting Rice, and it proves well, a Slave's Year's Work may be worth the Master 25 or 30 Pounds a Year of the Crops of Rice that their Slaves doth plant, hoe, and manage for them as aforesaid.



### “Not at their own Liberty.” An English clergyman’s view, 1724

After spending several years in Virginia, the Anglican minister Rev. Hugh Jones returned to England and in 1724, because he saw that “few People in England . . . have correct Notions of the true State of the Plantations,” published a detailed overview of the colony entitled *The Present State of Virginia*. Here he describes the “Negroes” and the “white servants” shipped into Virginia. To whom does Jones direct his descriptions? What impression of bondage does he give? What influence does he hope to achieve?

The *Negroes* are very numerous, some Gentlemen having Hundreds of them of all Sorts, to whom they bring great Profit, for the Sake of which they are obliged to keep them well, and not overwork, starve, or famish them, besides other Inducements to favour them; which is done in a *great degree*, to such especially that are laborious, careful, and honest; tho’ indeed some Masters, careless of their own Interest or Reputation, are too cruel and negligent.

The *Negroes* are not only increased by fresh Supplies from *Africa* and the *West India* Islands, but also are very prolific among themselves; and they that are born there talk *good English*, and affect our Language, Habits, and Customs; and tho’ they be naturally of a barbarous and cruel Tempter, yet are they kept under by severe Discipline upon Occasion, and by good Laws are prevented from running away, injuring the *English*, or neglecting their Business.

Their Work (or Chimerical hard Slavery) is not very laborious; their greatest Hardship consisting in that they and their Posterity are not at their own Liberty or Disposal, but are the Property of their Owners; and when they are free, they know not how to provide so well for themselves generally; neither did they live so plentifully nor (many of them) so easily in their own Country, where they are made Slaves to one another, or taken Captive by their Enemies.

The Children belong to the Master of the Woman that bears them; and such as are born of a *Negroe* and an *European* are called *Molattoes*; but such as are born of an *Indian* and *Negroe* are called *Mustees*.

Their Work is to take Care of the [live] *Stock*, and plant *Corn, Tobacco, Fruits, &c.* [etc.] which is not harder than *Thrashing, Hedging, or Ditching*; besides, tho' they are out in the violent heat, wherein they delight, yet in wet or cold Weather there is little Occasion for their working in the Fields, in which few will let them be abroad, lest by this means they might get sick or die, which would prove a great Loss to their Owners, a good *Negroe* being sometimes worth three (nay four) Score Pounds Sterling, if he be a Tradesman; so that upon this (if upon no other Account) they are obliged not to overwork them, but to clothe and feed them sufficiently, and take Care of their Health.

...

The Ships that transport these things [commodities listed earlier] often call at *Ireland* to victual [get provisions], and bring over frequently white Servants, which are of three Kinds.

1. Such as come upon certain Wages by Agreement for a certain time.
2. Such as come bound by Indenture, commonly call'd *Kids*, who are usually to serve four or five Years; and
3. Those Convicts or Felons that are transported, whose Room they had much rather have then their Company; for abundance of them do great Mischiefs, commit Robbery and Murder, and spoil Servants, that were before very good: But they frequently there meet with the End they deserved at Home, though indeed some of them prove indifferent good. Their being sent thither to work as Slaves for Punishment, is but a mere Notion, for few of them ever lived so well and so easy before, especially if they are good for anything. These are to serve seven and sometimes fourteen Years, and they and Servants by Indentures have an Allowance of Corn and Clothes, when they are out of their time [have fulfilled their contracts], that they may be therewith supported, till they can be provided with Services or otherwise settled.

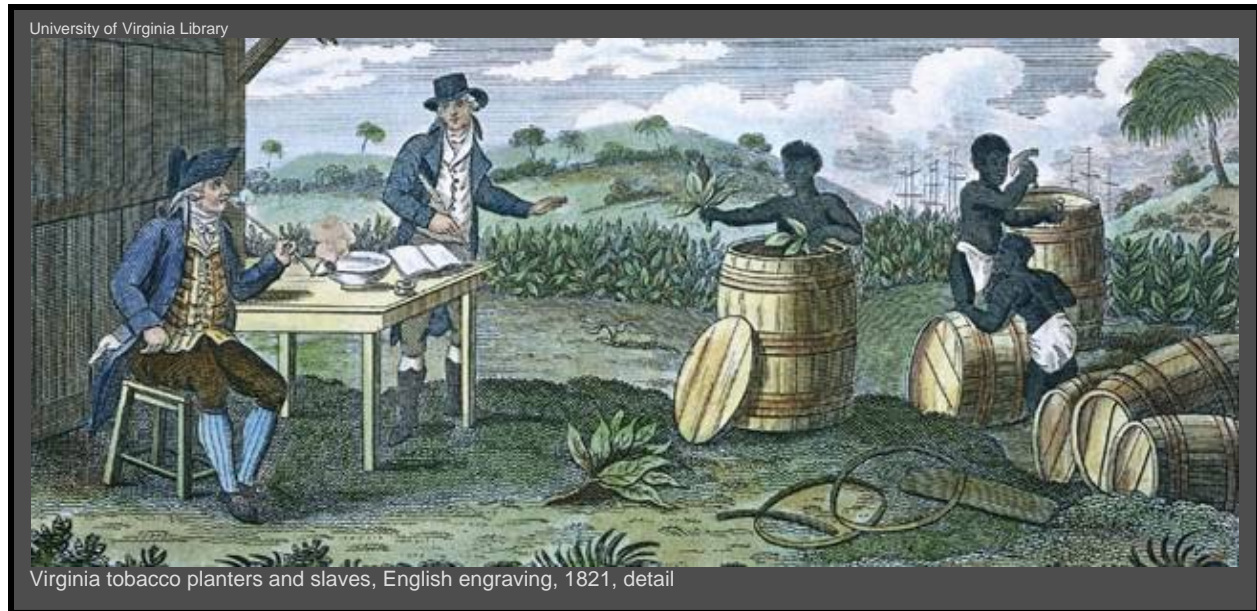
With these three Sorts of Servants are they supplied from *England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland*, among which they that have a Mind to it may serve their Time with Ease and Satisfaction to themselves and their Masters, especially if they fall into good Hands.

...

... But for the generality [most part], the Servants and inferior Sort of People who have either been sent over to *Virginia* or have transported themselves thither, have been and are the poorest, idlest, and worst of Mankind, the *Refuse of Great Britain and Ireland*, and the *Outcast of the People*.

These Servants are but an insignificant Number when compared with the vast Shoals of *Negroes* who are employed as Slaves there to do the hardest and most Part of the Work; the most laborious of which is the felling of Trees and the like, to which kind of Slavery (if it must be so called) our Wood-Cutters in *England* are exposed; only with this Difference, that the *Negroes* eat wholesomer Bread and better Pork with more Plenty and Ease; and when they are Sick, their Owners' Interest and Purse are deeply engaged in their Recovery, who likewise are obliged to take all the Care imaginable of the Children of their Slaves for their own great Profit; so that the *Negroes*, though they work moderately, yet live plentifully, have no Families to provide for, no Danger of Beggary, no Care for *the Morrow*.

But to me it seems to be more Prudence and Charity for our own Poor and Vagabonds to be there employed and provided for, than for us to maintain and use such great Numbers of *Africans*. If we can do better without them, certainly we should forbear importing so many (though this may interfere with the Interest of some), since it would advance the Good of the Publick; and that we may be without them is plain, since we have Rogues and Idlers enough of our own to do the same Work, to which if they were compelled by mild Methods, it would ease the Publick of a great deal of Charge, Trouble, and Loss, and would highly tend to the Advancement of the temporal and spiritual Happiness of our Poor, and be very instrumental in the Suppression of Theft and Villainy, and for the Reformation of the most Profligate. Thousands of poor, honest, unfortunate People of all Trades and Occupations might be there employed for the Support of themselves and Interest of Trade, that can find neither Work nor Maintenance for themselves and Families at Home; and such as had rather stroll or steal here, might be confined by mild Force to moderate Labour there, sufficient to support themselves and benefit their Employers.



## “*The Condition is very bad.*” An indentured servant’s view, 1743<sup>7</sup>

At age 20, William Moraley left England after a brief apprenticeship in the law and journeyed to America as an indentured servant. Frustrated by his experiences, he completed his last indenture, travelled through the middle colonies, and returned to England in 1734, publishing his memoir, *The Infortunate*, nine years later. To whom does Moraley direct his descriptions? What influence does he hope to achieve? What impressions does he give of slavery and indentured servitude? How do they compare with those of the elite white men English like Robert Beverley, John Norris, and Hugh Jones?

At the first Peopling [of] these Colonies, there was a Necessity of employing a great Number of Hands, for the clearing the Land, being over-grown with Wood for some Hundred of Miles; to which Intent, the first Settlers, not being sufficient of themselves to improve those Lands, were not only obliged to purchase a great Number of *English* Servants to assist them, to whom they granted great Immunities, and at the Expiration of their Servitude, Land was given to encourage them to continue there; but were likewise obliged to purchase Multitudes of Negro Slaves from *Africa*, by which Means they are become the richest Farmers in the World, paying no Rent, nor giving Wages either to purchased Servants or Negro Slaves; so that instead of finding the Planter Rack-rented, as the *English* Farmer, you will taste of their Liberality, they living in Affluence and Plenty.

The Condition of the Negroes is very bad, by reason of the Severity of the Laws, there being no Laws made in Favour of these unhappy Wretches: For the least Trespass, they undergo the severest Punishment; but their Masters make them some amends by suffering [allowing] them to marry, which makes them easier and often prevents their running away. The Consequence of their marrying is this, all their Posterity are Slaves without redemption; and it is in vain to attempt an Escape, tho’ they often endeavour it; for the Laws against them are so severe, that being caught after running away, they are unmercifully whipped; and if they die under the Discipline, their Masters suffer no Punishment, there being no Law against murdering them. So if one Man kills another’s Slave, he is only obliged to pay his Value to the Master, besides Damages that may accrue for the Loss of him in his Business.

The Masters generally allow them a Piece of Ground, with Materials for improving it. The Time of working for themselves is *Sundays*, when they raise on their own Account divers Sorts of Corn and Grain, and sell it in the Markets. They buy with the Money Clothes for themselves and Wives; as for the Children, they belong to the Wive’s Master, who bring them up; so the Negro need fear no Expense, his

<sup>7</sup> *The Infortunate: The Voyage and Adventures of William Moraley, An Indentured Servant*, eds. Susan E. Klepp and Billy G. Smith (Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992, 2d. ed., 2005). Selections courtesy of Pennsylvania State University Press.



Business being to get them for his Master's use, who is as tender of them as his own Children. On *Sundays* in the evening they converse with their Wives, and drink Rum, or Bumbo, and smoke Tobacco, and the next Morning return to their Master's Labour.

They are seldom made free, for fear of being burdensome to the Provinces, there being a Law that no Master shall manumise [emancipate] them unless he gives Security they shall not be thrown upon the Province, by settling Land on them for their Support. . . .

The Condition of bought Servants is very hard, notwithstanding their indentures are made in *England*, wherein it is expressly stipulated that they shall have at their Arrival all the Necessaries specified in those Indentures, to be given 'em by their future Masters, such as Clothes, Meat, and Drink; yet upon Complaint made to a Magistrate against the Master for Nonperformance, the Master is generally heard before the Servant, and it is ten to one if he does not get his Licks for his Pains, as I have experienced upon the like Occasion, to my Cost.

If they endeavor to escape, which is next to impossible, there being a Reward for taking up any Person who travels without a Pass, which is extended all over the *British Colonies*, their Masters immediately issue out a Reward for the apprehending them, from Thirty Shillings to Five Pound, as they think proper, and this generally brings them back again. Printed and Written Advertisements are also set up against the Trees and public Places in the Town, besides those in the Newspapers. Notwithstanding these Difficulties, they are perpetually running away, but seldom escape; for a hot Pursuit being made, brings them back, when a Justice settles the Expenses, and the Servant is obliged to serve a longer time.

*“Some are treated hardly better than Negroes.”*

An immigrant German clergyman's view, 1750<sup>8</sup>

In 1750 Rev. Johann Martin Bolzius, a leader of the Ebenezer settlement of German Lutherans in Georgia, published a pamphlet to inform other Germans of the promise and realities of emigrating to Georgia or Carolina, heralding the “opportunity to enjoy with us the good of this land and the complete freedom of the English.” Also presented in a Q&A format, Bolzius answers sixty-seven questions posed by a supporter of the settlement, published as *Reliable Answer to Some Submitted Questions Concerning the Land Carolina [and] . . . the Colony of Georgia*. Who is his audience? What impressions of slavery and indentured servitude does he strive to give? Why is he so matter-of-fact?

**11<sup>th</sup> Question.** How many Negroes are necessary for the cultivation of a well-appointed plantation of about 1,000 acres?

*Answer.* . . . On new land a Negro can work 6 to 10 acres, and plant Indian corn, beans, pumpkins, rice, and potatoes on it. On old land, however, he has his hands full with 6 acres. From this, one can easily compute how many Negroes are required for 1,000 acres. But it is not advisable to start with many at a time. Those who tried to take, as it were, overly big steps in Carolina have fallen and have ruined themselves and others. The fewer Negroes at the start, the better.

**12<sup>th</sup> Question.** How many white servants or people are necessary to keep the blacks in order, or, more exactly, what is the ratio of whites to the black servants in a household?

*Answer.* In Carolina a law was made that every planter shall keep a white man as an overseer for 10 Negroes, but this law, like many others, is *quasi Campana sine Pistillo* [like a bell without a clapper] for quite a few have perhaps 100 and more Negroes and no white person except their own family, but install the most loyal Negroes as Negro drivers and beaters. That is how it comes about that in Carolina the Negroes outnumber the white inhabitants possibly 30 times. This dangerous disorder has been prevented in our colony [Georgia] by a beneficent law requiring at all times one white man or servant for 4 Negroes on every plantation, which is all the more necessary because we are situated so close to the Spaniards.

<sup>8</sup> Rev. Johann Martin Bolzius, *Reliable Answer to Some Submitted Questions Concerning the Land Carolina in which Answer, However, Regard is Also Paid at the Same Time to the Condition of the Colony of Georgia*; eds., Klaus G. Loewald, Beverly Starika, and Paul S. Taylor, *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Series, 14:2 (April 1957), pp. 218-261. Reproduced by permission of *The William and Mary Quarterly*.

**13<sup>th</sup> Question.** Whether there are many instances of Negroes murdering their masters, and whether in this case they have the opportunity to flee inland and to escape punishment with the help of the Indians, and whether for such cases the government has established good regulations.

*Answer.* To answer this question piecemeal: 1.) In Carolina the instances of Negroes murdering, scorching, and burning their own masters or overseers are not rare; 2.) As long as our colony is not filled with Negroes, the deserters in Carolina, if they want to cross Georgia towards Augustine [in Spanish Florida], cannot easily remain hidden. Generally, however, they escape by water, past Frederica to St. Augustine, where they receive their freedom, be it war or peace. Many just run into the woods, get along miserably, are secretly looked after by the other Negroes and occupy themselves with theft; 3.) The Indians have a natural antipathy towards the Negroes, therefore do not help them, and are likely to report them when meeting them in the woods; 4.) in this regard there are good precautions in Carolina against running away and rebellion. For instance, no Negro may go from one plantation to another unless he has written permission from his master. The land is constantly patrolled, and also on Sundays one goes to church with swords, guns, and pistols, etc. The agitators of rebellion are punished in a very harsh and nearly inhuman way (which is generally not the way of the English), for example, slowly roasted at the fire.

**14<sup>th</sup> Question.** Whether one is allowed to give them their liberty because of good behavior, and whether they then enjoy the rights of the whites.

*Answer.* Those Negroes who have served the country well are bought and freed by the government, receive their own land, and enjoy the English rights. If a private party wants to release a Negro he must have the consent of the governor or get him out of the colony. For the free Negroes abuse their freedom, and it is feared they seduce [influence] others.

**15<sup>th</sup> Question.** Whether white servants may marry Negresses, & vice versa, white servant girls may marry Negroes, and how the freedom of the children of such a marriage is determined.

*Answer.* Such mixings or marriages are not allowed by the laws; but just as all manner of terrible abominations are rampant in Carolina, I have learned of 2 white women, one French and one German, who have secretly disgraced themselves with Negroes and have borne black children. However, an abomination more common and all too common in Carolina is that white men live in sin with Negresses and father half-black children who walk around in large numbers to the shame of the Christian name. They are perpetual slaves just like their mothers. . . .

**16<sup>th</sup> Question.** Whether everybody may keep as many Negroes as he pleases, or whether the number is limited according to the possession of land.

*Answer.* In Carolina as well as Georgia everyone may keep as many Negroes as he can, and their number is not limited according to the possession of land.

**17<sup>th</sup> Question.** Whether the upkeep of the Negroes is costly, with a request for an estimate of how much it amounts to, adding a little report about their clothing and native way of life, as well as about their marriages among themselves, and yet other things concerning these people.

*Answer.* The upkeep of the Negroes is cut very sparse. Year in and year out they receive nothing but Indian or Welsh or Turkish corn, which however is much better than in Europe, healthier and tastier. This corn they must crack themselves in iron mills. Very few receive salt for it, so they cook it in water without salt and lard. . . . If they have benevolent masters, or prove themselves loyal, they may receive a little meat a few times a year. They love to eat meat, and sometimes roast mice or steal meat. Some have permission to catch fish on Sundays. But in Carolina many have to plant their own food and also have to earn their few clothes by Sunday work. They plant their tobacco on Sundays, and thus buy something for themselves, their wives, and children. They love their families dearly and none runs away from the other. The separation of families is forbidden in our colony as something unnatural and barbaric; also Sunday work. . . .

**18<sup>th</sup> Question.** Whether the natives of the land also enter service for wages with the Europeans, whether they are useful also for day-by-day work in the fields, and whether in this case they can be trusted.

*Answer.* . . . [Indians] do not enter service for any European, consider themselves to be noblemen, and work, slavery. They only go hunting, bring meat and hides to their wives, the former for cooking, and the hides to be prepared for sale. The women also have to plant Indian corn, beans, pumpkins, and potatoes or sweet roots similar to potatoes, and are kept by the men like slaves. . .

**19<sup>th</sup> Question.** How is the situation regarding the white servants?

*Answer.* Poor people from Europe who cannot pay their passage to the ships' captains are sold for 3 or 4 years, and must serve. In Carolina some are treated hardly better than Negroes. In our colony [Georgia] they are treated better. However, they rarely do well, but become lazy and run away if they can. They consider it unjust to serve [even] so few years for their passage money. Boys under 14 years must serve up to the 21<sup>st</sup> year of their age, and girls up to the 18<sup>th</sup> year. After that the boys receive 50 acres free.

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*RAN away, last January, from Mr. Charles Chifwell, of Hanover County, a Servant Man, nam'd William Marr, an Irishman, aged about 30, of a middle Stature, and a brown Complexion. He wore a Kersey Coat, with Metall Buttons. He cross'd over Potomack, on the Ice, below Ockoquan, and hath been seen in Maryland.*

*Whoever will secure the said Servant, or gives Notice of him to his Master, or to Mr. Walter Mactarlane, Post-Master, at Annapolis, so that his Master may have him again, shall have Twenty Shillings Reward, besides what the Law allows.*

Charles Chifwell.

Ad for a runaway servant, *Virginia Gazette*, 18 March 1737

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*RAN away from the Subscriber at Bowler's Ferry in Richmond County, on the Seventeenth of last April, a Negro Man Slave, named Harry; he is a lumpy, well-made Fellow, is burnt in the Hand, and has a Piece of one of his Ears cut off: He had on, when he went away, a Grey Manks Cloth Waistcoat and 2s tiches, and a Canvas Shirt. Whoever takes up the said Slave, and secures him so that I may have him again, shall have a Pistole Reward, besides what the Law allows, paid by*

Edgcomb Suggit.

Ad for a runaway slave, *Virginia Gazette*, 11 May 1739 [Pistole: Spanish gold coin]