

**AP United States History**  
**Period Two– Colonization and Settlement (1607-1754)**  
**Topics: Slavery and Indentured Servitude**

Let's use the documents to enhance our understanding of two of the colonial systems of labor– slavery and indentured servitude through the use of maps, graphs, charts and primary source materials. Following our review of the documents and the readings in your textbook, we will have a series of discussion questions to answer and review for the lesson.

**Indentured Servitude:**

**Account 1: Elizabeth Sprigs, 1756**

Maryland, Sept'r 22'd 1756

Honored Father

My being for ever banished from your sight, will I hope pardon the Boldness I now take of troubling you with these, my long silence has been purely owing to my undutifullness to you, and well knowing I had offended in the highest Degree, put a tie to my tongue and pen, for fear I should be extinct from your good Graces and add a further Trouble to you, but too well knowing your care and tenderness for me so long as I retain'd my Duty to you, induced me once again to endeavor if possible, to kindle up that flame again. O Dear Father, believe what I am going to relate the words of truth and sincerity, and Balance my former bad Conduct my sufferings here, and then I am sure you'll pity your Destress Daughter, What we unfortunat English People suffer here is beyond the probability of you in England to Conceive, let it suffice that I one of the unhappy Number, am toiling almost Day and Night, and very often in the Horses drudgery, with only this comfort that you Bitch you do not halfe enough, and then tied up and whipp'd to that Degree that you'd not serve an Animal, scarce any thing but Indian Corn and Salt to eat and that even begrudged nay many Negroes are better used, almost naked no shoes nor stockings to wear, and the comfort after slaving during Masters pleasure, what rest we can get is to rap ourselves up in a Blanket and ly upon the Ground, this is the deplorable Condition your poor Betty endures, and now I beg if you have any Bowels of Compassion left show it by sending me some Relief, Clothing is the principal thing wanting, which if you should condiscend to, may easily send them to me by any of the ships bound to Baltimore Town Patapsco River Maryland, and give me leave to conclude in Duty to you and Uncles and Aunts, and

Respect to all Friends

Honored Father

Your undutifull and Disobedient Child

Elizabeth Sprigs

**Account 2: John Hammond, 1656**

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 at those many idle times he hath allowed him and not prejudice, but rejoice his Master to see it, which in time of Shipping he may lay out for commodities, and in Summer sell them again with advantage and get a Pig or two, which any body almost will give him, and his Master suffer him to keep them with his own, which will be no charge to his Master, 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 and affability, not by sloth nor churlish behavior.

And whereas it is rumoured that Servants have no lodging other then 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.

**John Hammond, Leah and Rachel, or, The Two Fruitful Sisters Virginia and Mary-land: Their Present Condition, Impartially Stated and Related, 1656**

**Slavery:**

**Account 3: Olaudah Equiano, 1789**

I was not long suffered to indulge my grief; I was soon put down under the decks, and there I received such a salutation in my nostrils as I had never experienced in my life; so that with the loathsomeness of the stench, and crying together, I became so sick and low that I was not able to eat, nor had I the least desire to taste any thing. I now wished for the last friend, Death, to relieve me; but soon, to my grief, two of the white men offered me eatables; and, on my refusing to eat, one of them held me fast by the hands, and laid me across, I think, the windlass, and tied my feet, while the other flogged me severely. I had never experienced any thing of this kind before; and although not being used to the water, I naturally feared that element the first time I saw it; yet, nevertheless, could I have got over the nettings, I would have jumped over the side; but I could not; and, besides, the crew used to watch us very closely who were not chained down to the decks, lest we should leap into the water; and I have seen some of these poor African prisoners most severely cut for attempting to do so, and hourly whipped for not eating. This indeed was often the case with myself. In a little time after, amongst the poor chained men, I found some of my own nation, which in a small degree gave ease to my mind. I inquired of them what was to be done with us? they gave me to understand we were to be carried to these white people's country to work for them.

**Account 4: Venture Smith, 1798**

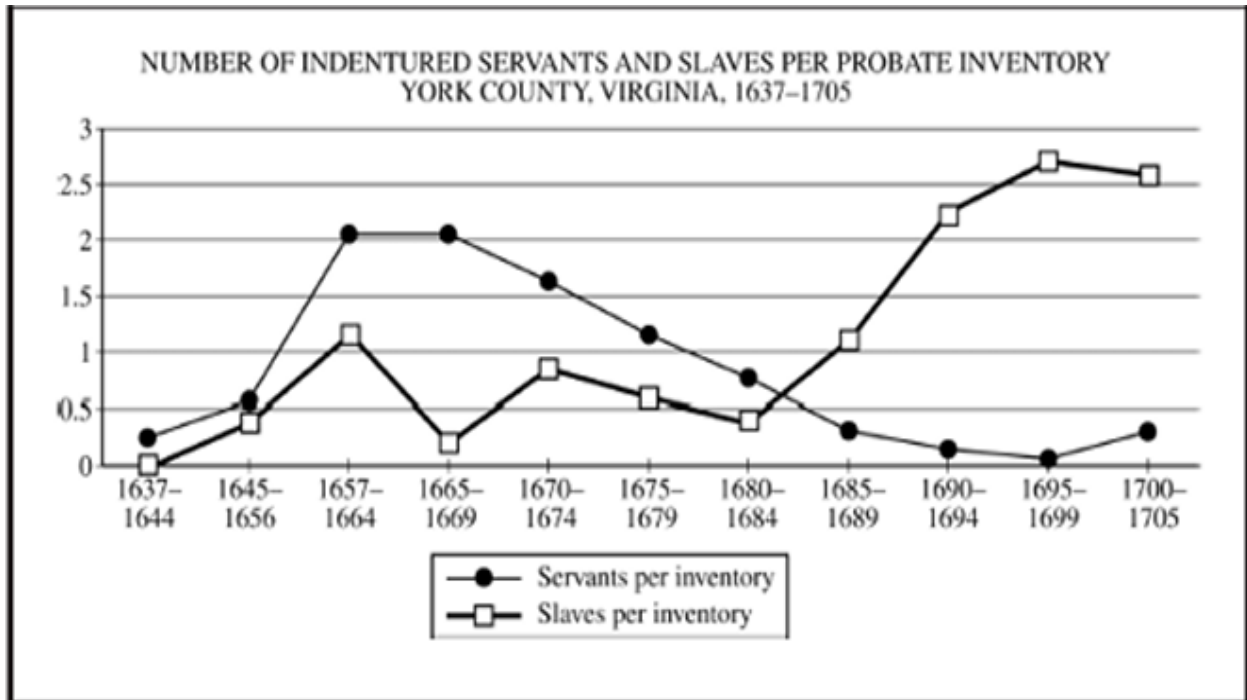
After many proofs of my faithfulness and honesty, my master began to put great confidence in me. My behavior to him had as yet been submissive and obedient. I then began to have hard tasks imposed on me. Some of these were to pound four bushels of ears of corn every night in a barrel for the poultry, or be rigorously punished. At other seasons of the year I had to card wool until a very late hour. These tasks I had to perform when I was about nine years old. Some time after I had another difficulty and oppression which was greater than any I had ever experienced since I came into this country. This was to serve two masters. James Mumford, my master's son, when his father had gone from home in the morning, and given me a stint to perform that day, would order me to do *this* and *that* business different from what my master directed me. One day in particular, the authority which my master's son had set up, had like to have produced melancholy effects. For my master having set me off my business to perform that day and then left me to perform it, his son came up to me in the course of the day, big with authority, and commanded me very arrogantly to quit my present business and go directly about what he should order me. I replied to him that my master had given me so much to perform that day, and that I must therefore faithfully complete it in that time. He then broke out into a great rage, snatched a pitchfork and went to lay me over the head therewith; but I as soon got another and defended myself with it, or otherwise he might have murdered me in his outrage. He immediately called some people who were within hearing at work for him, and ordered them to take his hair rope and come and bind me with it. They all tried to bind me but in vain, tho' there were three assistants in number. My upstart master then desisted, put his pocket handkerchief before his eyes and went home with a design to tell his mother of the struggle with young VENTURE. He told her that their young VENTURE had become so stubborn that he could not controul him, and asked her what he should do with him. In the mean time I recovered my temper, voluntarily caused myself to be bound by the same men who tried in vain before, and carried before my young master, that he might do what he pleased with me. He took me to a gallows made for the purpose of hanging cattle on, and suspended me on it. Afterwards he ordered one of his hands to go to the peach orchard and cut him three dozen of whips to punish me with. These were brought to him, and that was all that was done with them, as I was released and went to work after hanging on the gallows about an hour.

## **The Importance of Bacon's Rebellion**

"[We must defend ourselves] against all Indians in general, for that they were all Enemies." This was the unequivocal view of Nathaniel Bacon, a young, wealthy Englishman who had recently settled in the backcountry of Virginia. The opinion that all Indians were enemies was also shared by many other Virginians, especially those who lived in the interior. It was not the view, however, of the governor of the colony, William Berkeley. Berkeley was not opposed to fighting Indians who were considered enemies, but attacking friendly Indians, he thought, could lead to what everyone wanted to avoid: a war with "all the Indians against us." Berkeley also didn't trust Bacon's intentions, believing that the upstart's true aim was to stir up trouble among settlers, who were already discontent with the colony's government. Bacon attracted a large following who, like him, wanted to kill or drive out every Indian in Virginia. In 1675, when Berkeley denied Bacon a commission (the authority to lead soldiers), Bacon took it upon himself to lead his followers in a crusade against the "enemy." They marched to a fort held by a friendly tribe, the Occaneechees, and convinced them to capture warriors from an unfriendly tribe. The Occaneechees returned with captives. Bacon's men killed the captives. They then turned to their "allies" and opened fire. Berkeley declared Bacon a rebel and charged him with treason. Just to be safe, the next time Bacon returned to Jamestown, he brought along fifty armed men. Bacon was still arrested, but Berkeley pardoned him instead of sentencing him to death, the usual punishment for treason. Still without the commission he felt he deserved, Bacon returned to Jamestown later the same month, but this time accompanied by five hundred men. Berkeley was forced to give Bacon the commission, only to later declare that it was void. Bacon, in the meantime, had continued his fight against Indians. When he learned of the Governor's declaration, he headed back to Jamestown. The governor immediately fled, along with a few of his supporters, to Virginia's eastern shore. Each leader tried to muster support. Each promised freedom to slaves and servants who would join their cause. But Bacon's following was much greater than Berkeley's. In September of 1676, Bacon and his men set Jamestown on fire. The rebellion ended after British authorities sent a royal force to assist in quelling the uprising and arresting scores of committed rebels, white and black. When Bacon suddenly died in October, probably of dysentery, Bacon's Rebellion fizzled out.

Bacon's Rebellion demonstrated that poor whites and poor blacks could be united in a cause. This was a great fear of the ruling class -- what would prevent the poor from uniting to fight them? This fear hastened the transition to racial slavery.

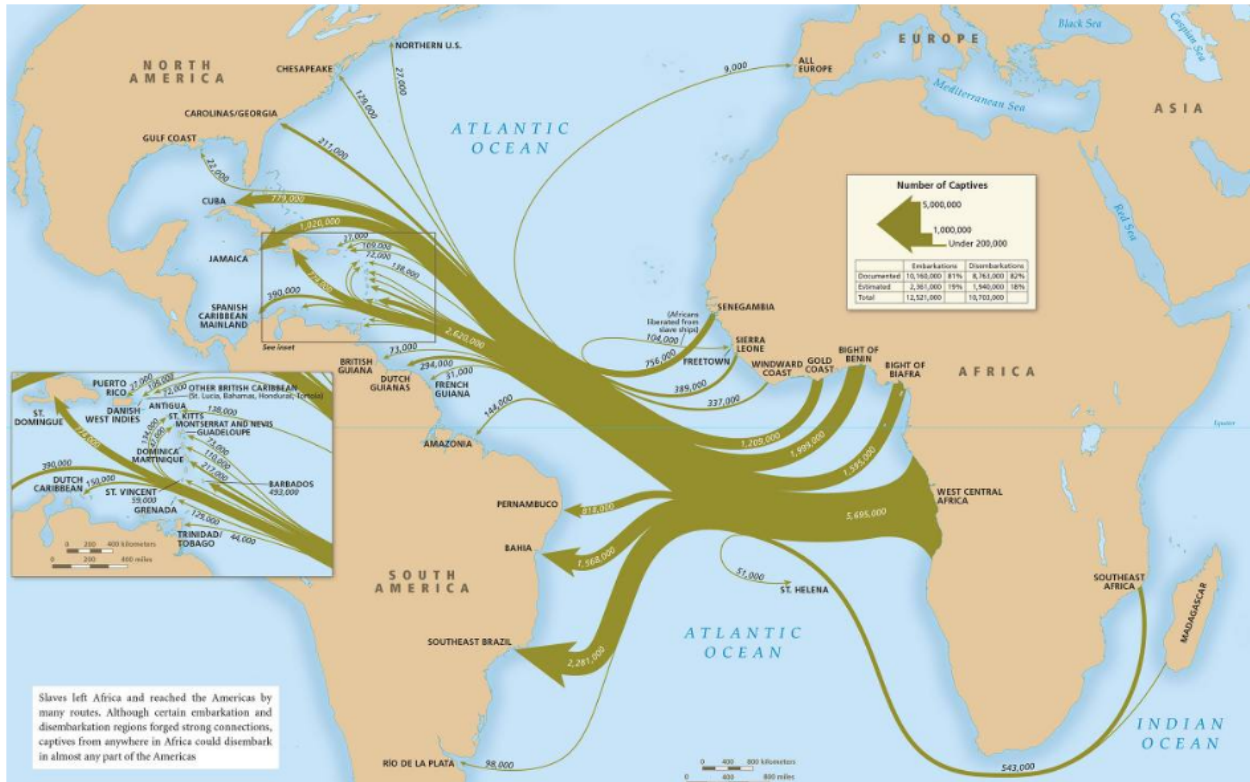
**Graph One– The Growth of Indentured Servitude vs. Slavery**



**Graph Two: Slavery in the Americas**



# Map of the Transatlantic Slave Trade



Slaves left Africa and reached the Americas by many routes. Although certain embarkation and disembarkation regions forged strong connections, captives from anywhere in Africa could disembark in almost any part of the Americas

Map of slave-trade voyages across the Atlantic. (Emory Center for Digital Scholarship, Mellon Foundation)