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VIRGINIA COMPANY'S GRIM REPUTATION

**EVIDENCE FROM BROADSIDES, LETTERS,
AND PERSONAL ACCOUNTS**



INDENTURED SERVANTS HOPED FOR A NEW LAND OF OPPORTUNITY

If they survived the voyage with seasickness, fever, boils, scurvy, bad food and water, they would now face graver challenges; harsh working conditions, disease, starvations, beatings and Indian raid killings to fulfill the terms of their contracts.

FROM 1618-1775, SOME 200,000 TO 300,000 INDENTURED SERVANTS WERE EXPORTED TO THE BRITISH COLONIES FROM BRITAIN, IRELAND, AND SCOTLAND

the Ship JUSTITIA, with about one Hundred healthy
S E R V A N T S,
Men, Women, and Boys, among which are many Tradesmen, viz. Blacksmiths, Shoemakers, Tailors, House Carpenters and Joiners, a Cooper, a Bricklayer and Plasterer, a Painter, a Watchmaker and Glazier, several Silversmiths, Weavers, a Jeweller, and many others.
The Sale will commence on *Thursday the 2d of April*, at *Leeds Town*, on *Rappahannock River*. A reasonable Credit will be allowed, giving Bond, with approved Security, to **THOMAS HODGE**.
I have an assorted Cargo of GOODS from *London*, suitable for the Season (about two Thousand Pounds Sterling worth) which I will lump off, on reasonable Terms, at a Credit with good Security.

Men, Women, Boys

Eventually even toddlers were sent to the colonies.

HANOVER TOWN, May 12, 1774.
JUST arrived in *York River*, the *Brilliant*, Captain *Miller*, from *London*, with a Cargo of choice healthy INDENTED SERVANTS, the Sale of which will begin at *Richmond Town* on *Wednesday the 25th of May*, among whom are the following Tradesmen, viz. Blacksmiths, Brasiers, Edgetool Makers, Bricklayers and Plasterers, Shoemakers, Stone Masons, Carpenters, Joiners and Cabinet Makers, Cloth Weavers, Stocking Weavers, Barbers and Puke makers, Gardeners, Farmers, Labourers and Husbandmen, Book-keepers and Schoolmasters, Tailors, Silk Dyers, Bakers, Painters, Leather Dressers, Sawyers, Butchers, a Steward, Groom, Surgeon, &c. I will sell them very cheap, for ready Money, or Tobacco; and for those on Credit, Bond and Security will be required.
(1) **THOMAS SMITH.**

Indentured for Sale

Merchants entered into indentures with poor English and Irish people.

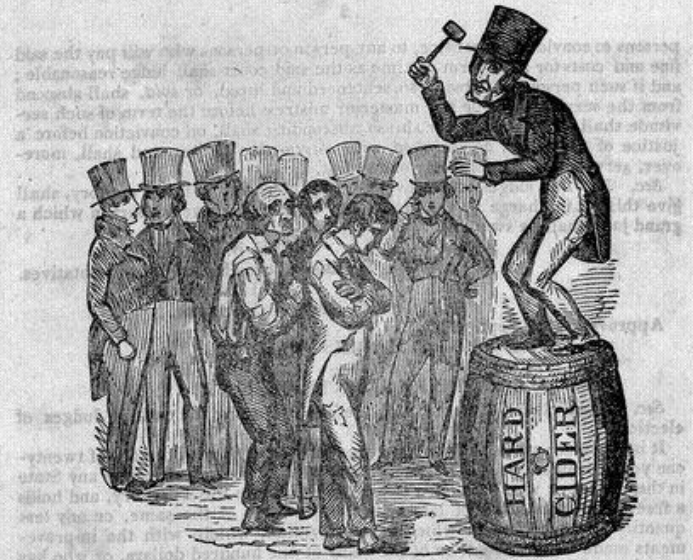
ONE CENT REWARD.
RUNAWAY from the Subscriber, about the 1st of April, an indentured servant girl named **BETSEY CUDNEY**, aged 12 or 13 years. All persons are hereby forbid harbouring, trusting or employing her under the full penalties of the law.
Whoever will return said runaway, will receive the above reward, but no charges paid.
INCREASE MILLER.
South Salem, May 10. 1832. 5013

Runaway Ads

Harsh working conditions and high death rates caused servants to seek freedom.

WHITE SLAVERY!!!

- ▶ The luckless poor were shipped to the British Colonies.
- ▶ White Slavery was the cheapest way to acquire manpower.
- ▶ Thousands died while in bondage in the British Colonies.
- ▶ Convicts were one of the largest groups sent to the colonies.
- ▶ Children, and other impoverished were sent to the colonies.
- ▶ Only around 40% of Indentured servants (also known as bond slaves) completed their contracts.
- ▶ By early 18th century, servitude was replaced by black slavery.



From the Globe.

WHITE SLAVERY!! OR SELLING WHITE MEN FOR DEBT!

June 27, 1840.

We have received from Indianapolis a certified copy, under the 'broad seal' of the State of Indiana, of the 11th, 30th, and 31st sections of the act of 1807, approved by General Harrison, providing for the sale of white men and women in certain cases; and also the third section of an act regulating elections, approved in like manner, requiring a property qualification in voters for Representatives, &c. The copy is in the following words, viz:

AN ACT RESPECTING CRIMES AND PUNISHMENTS.

SEC. 11. If any person shall unlawfully assault or threaten another in any menacing manner, or shall strike or wound another, he shall, upon conviction thereof, be fined in a sum not exceeding one hundred dollars; and the court before whom such conviction shall be had, may, in their discretion, cause the offender to enter into recognizance with surety for the peace and good behaviour, for a term not exceeding one year.

Sec. 30. When any person or persons shall, on conviction of any crime or breach of any penal law, be sentenced to pay a fine or fines, with or without the costs of prosecution, it shall and may be lawful for the court, before whom such conviction shall be had, to order the sheriff to sell or hire the person or

COMPARISON OF INDENTURED SERVANT LETTERS TO FAMILY AT HOME

RICHARD FRETHORNE, (LETTER MARCH 20, 1623)

- *...the country...causeth much sickness, as the scurvy & bloody flux...which maketh the body very poor & weak
- *...there is nothing to comfort us...I never ate anything but peas & loblollie (water gruel)
- *...we must work hard both early & late for a mess of water gruel and a mouthful of bread & beef
- *...we live in fear of the enemy every hour...for we are in great danger...our plantation is very weak
- *...I have eaten more in one day at home than I have allowed me here for one week
- *...Good father, do not forget me, but have mercy and pity on my miserable case...the answer will be life or death of me

(Frethorne died before February 16, 1624. He was one of the survivors of the Indian Massacre at Martyns Hundred.)

ELIZABETH SPRIGS, (LETTER SEPTEMBER 22, 1756)

- *...pardon the Boldness I now take of troubling you with these, my long silence...believe what I relate the words of truth
- *...What we unfortunate English people suffer here is beyond the probability of you in England to conceive
- *...am tolling almost Day and Night...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...even begrudged nay many Negroes are better used
- *...almost naked no shoes nor stockings to wear...slaving during Masters pleasure
- *...what rest we can get is to rap ourselves up in a Blanket and ly on the Ground, this is the deplorable Condition your poor Betty endures
- *...now I beg if you have any Bowels of Compassion left show it by sending me some Relief, clothing is the principal thing wanting



THE GREAT MASSACRE IN THE VIRGINIA COMPANY, MARCH 22, 1622

**START OF THE SECOND ANGLO-
POWHATAN WAR, 1622-1632**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE GREAT MASSACRE

- English colonists brought smallpox and other diseases to the Powhatans.
- Colonists wanted more planting of tobacco and to expand the company.
- The company expansion affected the Indians' traditional culture.
- Opechancanough, brother of Chief Powhatan, lead the sneak attack.
- The Indian raid killed 347 English colonists in the Virginia Company.
- Martyns Hundred was also attacked, of the 140 colonists, 80 were killed.
- The Virginians retaliated, burning Indian villages, killed many more Indians.
- England dissolved the Virginia Company and placed it under the king's control as a royal Virginia Colony in 1624.

JOHN SMITH'S ACCOUNT ON THE "GREAT MASSACRE"

- ▶ John Smith left the Virginia Company in 1609, he was not present during the "great massacre."
- ▶ The early trial of the settlement led to two worlds that collided.
- ▶ His book, *the Generall Historie of Virginia New England & the Summer Isles*, published in 1624, is considered a treasure-trove of information on the Virginia Company.
- ▶ Smith writes in detail about the brutality of the "great massacre."
- ▶ Smith was at first open-minded about the Indians, but later referred to them as "salvages" in his book.



THE PENNSYLVANIA GAZETTE, MAY 9, 1751

“FELONS AND RATTLESNAKES” BY BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

- ▶ The colonies were in desperate need of a replacement workforce, so convicts were sent to them.
- ▶ Franklin wanted a law to prevent the importation of convicts from Great Britain to the colonies.
- ▶ Franklin asked how a Mother Country could have so little interest in the welfare of her children.
- ▶ In this anecdote, Franklin questions how felons/convicts could help the colonists.
- ▶ He writes that a rattlesnake is venomous creature and perhaps should be transported to Britain.
- ▶ The exporting of felons, human serpents, should be traded for rattlesnakes.
- ▶ A Rattlesnake gives warning before he attempts his mischief, which the convict does not.

EVALUATING SOURCES

- In this PowerPoint, which sources are the most interesting?
- Which sources seemed most reliable?
- What makes one source more trustworthy than another one?
- What is the difference between a primary and secondary source?
- What is the criteria that a historian should use?
- Would circumstances or a bias affect a person's trustworthiness?
- Is the human memory reliable?
- How would a historian enhance his memory of events as a primary source?