

LESSON F

WHY DID DELAWAREANS USE SLAVES?

Standards: History Standard Three: Students will interpret historical data.

History Standard Four: Students will develop historical knowledge of major events and phenomena in world, United States and Delaware history.

Objective: The students will compare slaves and indentured servants.

Materials: 1) Copy of "Gottlieb Mittelberger: On the Misfortune of Indentured Servants".
2) *Lesson E, Delaware Public Archives, Court Record, RG 4000 (Image Gallery)*
3) *Lesson F, Delaware Public Archives, Apprentice Indenture, Series Number 2555.32*
4) Worksheet comparing slaves and indentured servants.
5) *Lesson F, Delaware Public Archives, Worksheet (Image Gallery)*

Procedures: 1) Read aloud "Gottlieb Mittelberger: On the Misfortune of Indentured Servants." Discuss the article with the class. Think-pair-share: Ask students - Would you make the voyage from Europe to the New World? Why or why not?

2) Ask students: Why did Delawareans need these indentured servants to come to America? (They needed workers - especially in the tobacco fields.) Project the Court Record from Tobacco Road, Lesson E. Review the importance of tobacco in the colonial economy at the time [late 17th century - mid-18th century]. This information can be found in the background information for the Tobacco Road lesson and the tobacco production section of this lesson.

3) Pass out the indenture of John Price to John Booth. Allow the students several minutes to familiarize themselves with the document. Although this indenture does not concern tobacco farming, it does represent the type of indentured servant agreement that was in effect throughout the eighteenth century. Read the document aloud.

Afterward, point out details of interest such as length of indenture, activities the apprentice was not allowed to partake in, etc..

- 4) Ask students: Since there was a shortage of indentured servants, where would Delawareans get their labor? (Slaves!) [Review this lesson's background for more complete information.]

- 5) Hand out the worksheet with two columns - one column headed by the words "Indentured Servant" and the other column headed by "Slave". The "Indentured Servant" column will already be completed. Have students work with a partner to complete the slave column.

- 6) Display the overhead of the same worksheet or copy the worksheet on the chalkboard. Work through each listed item for "Indentured Servant". Ask for student responses concerning the slave column. After the students have orally presented their opinions for each numbered item, fill in the correct answer. Instruct students to correct any errors on their papers. See answer key for this lesson.

- 7) To summarize learning, play a thumbs up/thumbs down game. Have students turn over or put away their worksheets. Read each of the ten notes from the worksheet in random order. Have students put a thumb up if the statement describes an indentured servant. If the statement describes a slave, students will put a thumb down.

TRANSCRIPTION OF DOCUMENT

This indenture made the 24th March in the year of our Lord one Thousand Seven Hundred Seventy Nine witnesseth that John Price son of James Price Deceased. Hath of his own free and voluntary will by and with the consent of Joseph Enos and Jane his wife bound and placed himself apprentice unto John Booth of the Town and County of Newcastle Blacksmith to be Taught the Trade of a Blacksmith which he the said John Booth now useth, and with him as an apprentice to dwell Continue and serve him from the day of the date hereof unto the full end and term of four years and a half from thence next ensuing, and fully to be complet and ended. During which term of four years and a half the said apprentice his said master will and faithfully shall serve, his secrets keep, his lawfull commands everywhere gladly do. Hurt to his said master he shall not do nor wilfully suffer to be done by others, but of the same to his power shall forthwith give notice to his said master the goods of his said master he shall not imbezel or waste, nor them lend without his consent, at cards, dice, or any other unlawfull games he shall not play, Taverns or alehouses he shall not frequent

BACKGROUND

Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth century, many of the immigrants who came to America were extremely poor with little hope for the future. These people saw America as a fresh start in the world. However, this fresh start came with a price. Without the financial means to pay for the long voyage to America, many people volunteered for a labor system known as indentured servitude. In this system, a person would come to the colonies with the knowledge that a farmer or other established individual in America would pay for their travel expenses once they had arrived. In return for having his/her fare paid, the new immigrant would have to work a set amount of years for the person who paid for their voyage. The time of servitude could range anywhere from four to fifteen years. Once their time was completed the indentured servant was free. However, indentured servants suffered the same problems as other colonists - including harsh living conditions and a high mortality rate because of disease.

Although thousands of people were being recruited in England to come to America as indentured servants, the system was unable to provide the large quantity of workers needed to farm the ever-growing number of tobacco fields. To keep up with England's demand for more tobacco, many more workers would be needed in America. Who would make up for this labor shortage? The answer was slaves.

Tobacco production and slavery went hand in hand for many English colonists. Since tobacco farming was extremely labor intensive (see Tobacco Production article) there was the constant need for people to work the crop. Unlike the set amount of time for indentured servants, slaves were the lifetime property of the owner. In addition, the offspring of the slaves were also the property of the slaveowner - thus adding to his wealth and his workforce.

TOBACCO PRODUCTION

Tobacco production started in late winter or early spring when the tobacco seed was planted in a special seedbed. In mid-spring the seedlings were transplanted to the fields. For each individual seedling, the soil was pulverized and placed in a circle with the loose soil built into a small hill. The seedling were then placed within the hill and watered. To care for these plants the workers would hoe the plants daily and tend them by hand. The top flower bud of the tobacco plant would be pinched off to force the plant's growth into the leaves. At the end of the summer, the mature tobacco leaves were cut and the curing process began. The leaves were hung in barns to give them a dry, but pliable, texture that was necessary to survive the trip across the Atlantic Ocean. To ship the product, the cured tobacco leaves were tightly packed into wooden casks known as hogsheads. These containers could weigh more than 1,000 pounds when full. With the hogsheads ready for shipping, they were either rolled overland or carried by small boat to riverfront landings. From there the tobacco was loaded on ships bound for England.

DOCUMENT BACKGROUND

This document is a New Castle County Apprentice Indenture from the year 1779. It is part of the New Castle County Recorder of Deeds, Apprentice Indenture Collection, 1746 - 1827 (Series Number 2555.32). In this indenture, John Price was placing himself as an apprentice to John Booth. A blacksmith by trade, Booth was responsible for

teaching his occupation to Price. Both parties to the agreement had certain responsibilities to fulfill. Unfortunately, the fate of these individuals is unknown.

***Why is it called an "indenture"? An indenture gets its name because there were originally two identical documents that were on the same sheet of paper - one above the other. When the two identical documents were completed they were cut in half. However, the cut was completed in a wavy (indented) manner instead of a straight cut. Both parties to the agreement got a copy. If there was the need to authenticate the documents both portions could be put back together like a jigsaw puzzle. ***

**WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A
SLAVE AND AN INDENTURED SERVANT?**

<u>INDENTURED SERVANT</u>	<u>SLAVE</u>
1. European Descent	1. African Descent
2. Worked for a specific amount of time	2. Worked entire life for owner unless he/she freed him
3. Had an agreement with his/her master	3. There was no agreement
4. Children were not part of the agreement	4. Children were also slaves
5. Came to America by choice	5. Forced to come to America

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SLAVE

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

On the Misfortune of Indentured Servants

Gottlieb Mittelberger

Both in Rotterdam and in Amsterdam the people are packed densely, like herrings so to say, in the large sea-vessels. One person receives a place of scarcely 2 feet width and 6 feet length in the bedstead, while many a ship carries four to six hundred souls; not to mention the innumerable implements, tools, provisions, water-barrels and other things which likewise occupy much space.

On account of contrary winds it takes the ships sometimes 2, 3, and 4 weeks to make the trip from Holland to England. But when the wind is good, they get there in 8 days or even sooner. Everything is examined there and the custom-duties paid, whence it comes that the ships ride there 8, 10 to 14 days and even longer at anchor, till they have taken in 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 had been reserved for the sea; so that most passengers, finding themselves on the ocean where they would be in greater need of them, must greatly suffer from hunger and want. Many suffer want already on the water between Holland and Old England.

When the ships have for the last time weighed their anchors near the city of Kaupp (Cowes) in Old England, the real misery begins with the long voyage. For from there the ships, unless they have good wind, must often sail 8, 9, 10 to 12 weeks before they reach Philadelphia. But even with the best wind 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, hunger, thirst, frost, heat, dampness, anxiety, want, afflictions and lamentations, together with other trouble, as . . . the 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 closely packed people in the berths are thereby tumbled over each other, both the sick and the well - it will be readily understood that many of these people, none of whom had been prepared for hardships, suffer so terribly from them that they do not survive it.

I myself had to pass through a severe illness at sea, and I best know how I felt at the time. These poor people often long for consolation, and I often entertained and comforted them with swinging, praying and exhorting; and whenever it was possible and the winds and waves permitted it, I kept daily prayer-meetings with them on deck. Besides, I baptized five children in distress, because we had no ordained minister on board. I also held divine service every Sunday by reading sermons to the people; and when the dead were sunk in the water, I commended them and our souls to the mercy of God.

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. Misery and malice join each other, so that they cheat and rob one another. 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 people whimper, sigh and cry piteously for their homes; most of them get home-sick. Many hundred people necessarily die and perish in such misery, and must be cast into the sea, which drives their relatives, or those who persuaded them to undertake the journey, to such despair that it is almost impossible to pacify and console them.

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 of 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. The parents grieve all the more since their children find no resting-place in the earth, but are devoured by the monsters of the sea.

That most of the people get sick is not surprising, because, in addition to all other trials and hardships, warm food is served only three times a week, the rations being very poor and very little. Such meals can hardly be eaten, on account of being so unclean. The water which is served out 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 which had been spoiled long ago; 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.

At length, when, after a long and tedious voyage, the ships come in sight of land, so that the promontories can be seen, which the people were so eager and anxious to see, all creep from below on deck to see the land from afar, and they weep for joy, and pray and sing, thanking and praising God. The sight of the land makes the people on board the ship, especially the sick and the half dead, alive again, so that their hearts leap within them; they shout and rejoice, and are content to bear their misery in patience, in the hope that they may soon reach the land in safety. But alas!

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 until 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.

The sale of human beings in the market on board the ship is carried on thus: Everyday Englishmen, Dutchmen and High-German people come from the city of Philadelphia and other places, in part from a great distance, say 20, 30, or 40 hours away, and go on board the newly arrived ship that has brought and offers for sale passengers from Europe, and select among the healthy persons such as they deem suitable for their business, 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, or 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 until they are 21 years old.

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 parent's passage, and serve until 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 stipulated, a man gets in addition a horse, a woman, a cow.

When a serf has an opportunity to marry in this country, he or she must pay for each year which he or she would have yet to serve, 5 to 6 pounds. But many a one who has thus purchased and paid for his bride, has subsequently repented his bargain, so that he would gladly have returned his exorbitantly dear ware, and lost the money besides.

If some one in this country runs away from his master, who has treated him harshly, he cannot get far. Good provisions 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.

This text is taken from the website

<http://history.cc.ukans.edu/carrie/docs/texts/gottlieb_note.html

The information originated in 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.