

Scarcity and Surplus: How These Two Things Led to Slavery of Africans and the Conditions of Landless Poor

Tip: Make sure you recorded which ones you missed so you know what part of *your* brain to change.

What is here and in the course to help your brain:

First, the facts in the Lesson may be hard to see unless you look at what changed from 1600s to 1700

Second, the facts in the Lesson may be hard to see unless you realize power can be law, violence, or a combination

Third, the facts in the Lesson may be hard to see unless you realize History is real – These people could be you.

Seeing the Numbers to Confirm What Has Happened

If You Need Them, the Questions Asked in the Self-Test

First, the facts in the Lesson may be hard to see unless you look at what changed from 1600s to 1700

Caution: brains have a lot of trouble in noticing change over time so pay attention.

One way to see change over time is to ask yourself what is scarce (hard to get) and what is surplus (easy to get) in different places and time.

- Scarce (hard to get) things go **up in value** in what people are willing to pay or do for them.
- Surplus (easy to get) things go **down in value** – You don't ever want to be surplus so you want to pay attention to this trait of time.

1. In the **early 1600s** in **England**, land (a place to grow food to eat and sell and perhaps to be able to vote since property was required for that privilege) was:

- *a. Scarce
- b. Surplus

2. In the **early 1600s** in **England**, labor (people to work the land or to do other jobs) was:

- a. Scarce
- *b. Surplus

Look at answers 1 and 2 and you know why some English people **left** England.

Then **look at answers 2 and 3 and you know why** they **came** to the **Virginia Colony**. This move occurred with people with money and without:

- If your family had money, they might help a son (like Nathaniel Bacon) go to the new world of the **Virginia Colony**. By paying his own way and for the passage for indentured servants, a richer setter could gain a large amount of free land and perhaps strike it rich.
- If you and your family had nothing and saw no way that could ever change, you might be an indentured servant. You were willing to risk your life for a better future and gladly trade your labor for years for just room and board (survival) for a chance to get to Virginia and—if you survived—to get land as part of what you received when you completed your years of indenture. Getting land meant that you could grow food for yourself and **a family** and, in some places, that you also could vote.

Think about it: Would you take a risk so you and your family might **not** remain poor and hungry **all** of your lives?

3. In the **early 1600s** in the **Virginia Colony**, land was:

- a. Scarce
- *b. Surplus

4. In the **early 1600s** in the **Virginia Colony**, labor was:

- *a. Scarce
- b. Surplus

If you look at answers 3 and 4 and you know how those who write the laws could eventually rig the deal in their favor. (In your own lifetime, you want to notice the law and be an active and attentive citizen.) Look at the people called the planters (the landowners who were the ones to vote in the Virginia assembly and make the colony's laws).

In the **early 1600s in Virginia**, the planters:

- Bought as much land as they could at that cheap price as anyone would do if they were paying attention. The result, however, is that there will be a shortage of land later—a scarcity made worse because many people were still coming to Virginia.

Reminder: The death rate in Virginia was very high, but many still came.

- Paid for the Atlantic passage of English people who were willing to serve for a period of years in return for passage, room and board (a bed and food), and a fresh start at the end of their period of service – with some receiving land at the end of their service.

Reminder: the term is **indentured servant**.

- Paid for Africans when they were brought to Virginia initially in the early 1600s:
 - With some Africans becoming slaves
 - With some Africans (like Anthony Johnson) becoming **indentured servants**Read the primary on Anthony Johnson and the historian's information in the Lesson's primaries.

Caution: The **law** in Virginia about 1660 changes the above and the future—and not just for Africans coming later but for poor whites as well.

Reminders about slavery in general:

- In this era and before, enslaving someone was **legal** (not a crime).
- In this era and before, enslaving people because they lost a war was considered **just** (not a crime).

For example, in this period and before, in wartime capturing people and enslaving them was done by such groups as colonists in New England and in the South, by the Spanish, by Native American tribes of other Native American tribes, and by African tribes of other African tribes.

Do **not** assume that African enslavement of Africans was the same. Differences in slavery of Africans by Africans that are usually covered are:

- Enslavement could occur because you lost a war or you got in debt or you could not stay out of trouble.
- Enslavement did not pass down to children and some were able to earn their way out of slavery.

If you would like more details, please ask.

5. In the **late 1600s** in the **Virginia Colony**, land—if you didn't have it already—was:

- *a. Scarce
- b. Surplus

6. In the **late 1600s** in the **Virginia Colony**, white labor—because there was another source that had no legal rights—was:

- a. Scarce
- *b. Surplus

Look at answers 5 and 6 and you know why some:

- Landless freemen (indentured servants who had completed their term of service) and wanted land but none was left except near the treaty boundary with Virginia colonists and the Native Americans
 - Fought Native Americans
 - Joined Nathaniel Bacon in his rebellion against the English governor William Berkley
- Some planters stopped importing white English servants who might join a rebellion if they did not gain land at the end of their service and began to import African as slaves

Second, the facts in the Lesson may be hard to see unless you realize power can be law, violence, or a combination

- In general, the greatest power is changing the law, especially when it makes violence legal and removes one group from access to the law. Click on the Lesson's Primary Documents from this Era. Read with care 1660–1732 Laws about Slaves and Indentured Servants.
Tips: Laws are usually about stopping things people are doing. Notice what whites were doing as well as blacks. The description for this primary tells you specifics. Look at it.
- In general, violence against the government (armed rebellion) seems rarely to work as planned, even with a legal justification stated. Optional primary. 1676 Bacon's Rebellion: the Declaration.

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Resource:

1. Click on Videos in this Unit
2. Scroll down to the first appearance of the words "Settling the Southern Colonies."
3. At this time, the prompt says to enter your last name and then your birthdate in the format shown. **Favor:** I should know when that prompt changes and modify the instruction here, but if it does change, then please email me so I can fix this.
4. After you do step 4, then the video shows up on the left side and a transcript on the right side.
5. On the transcript side, you can type a search word in the oval box under the word Transcript and click Enter to go to the right spot in the video.

You need to notice what happens to these real people over time:

- In the **first** half of the 1600s, a combination of:
 - African slaves and African **indentured** servants who had not yet finished their years of service
 - "Free blacks," who finished their service (Anthony Johnson, not only a free man, but also a person who gains 250 acres and his own laborers and who successfully sued in court to keep his land)
 - English indentured servants who had not yet finished their years of service**Search Word:** Johnson
- In the **second** half of the 1600s, a combination of:
 - African slaves (Notice there are no more African indentured servants. The colonies wrote slave codes, including codes making it impossible to bring in an African as an indentured servant.)
 - "Free blacks" like Anthony Johnson
 - Landless freemen (English indentured servants who completed their years of service but no land was available)
 - Nathaniel Bacon, a planter who tries to lead a rebellion of landless planters and others**Search Words:** Bacon. Johnson (about what happens when his will tries to leave his land to his son).

Reminder: For slave and indentured servant, see the definitions with the Learning Quizzes.

Seeing the Numbers to Confirm What Has Happened

So in the 1600s who was sweating in the fields and in the 1700s who was sweating in the fields? I have grabbed numbers from multiple textbooks. If you doubt any of them, please tell me and I will show the source of that.

Date	Quantity	Location	Reminders
1650	300 blacks	Virginia	--
1660s	-	Virginia and Maryland	Reminder: Slave codes written
1670	7% of about 50,000	Plantation colonies	-
1676	-	Virginia	Reminder: Bacon's Rebellion
1680s-mid	More black slaves imported than white servants	Plantation colonies	Why? If you do not know, ask.
1600s, end of	14% of the colonies population	Virginia	-
1750	Nearly 50% of population	Virginia	-
1750	Africans outnumber whites 2 to 1	South Carolina	What results? If you do not know, ask.

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