

Title: *Five Years to Life: Labor in Early Colonial Maryland*

Grade Level: 8

Duration: 1 class period

Economic Concepts: economic decision-making, human/natural/capital resources

Maryland Voluntary State Curriculum (VSC)

Economics Standard: Students will develop economic reasoning to understand the historical development and current status of economic principles, institutions, and processes needed to be effective citizens, consumers, and workers participating in local communities, the nation, and the world.

4.A.4.a Analyze the growth, economic costs and economic benefits of the institution of slavery

4.A.4.d Describe the economic opportunities and obstacles faced by different individuals and groups of people during this era.

History Standard: Students will examine significant ideas, beliefs, and themes; organize patterns and events; and analyze how individuals and societies have changed over time in Maryland, the United States, and the world.

5.C.2.b Describe unresolved issues regarding social, economic, and political positions of Native Americans, free blacks, slaves, women, indentured servants, and the poor.

Social Studies Skills and Processes Standard: Students will use reading, writing, and thinking processes and skills to gain knowledge and understanding of political, historical, and current events using chronological and spatial thinking, economic reasoning, and historical interpretation, by framing and evaluating questions from primary and secondary sources.

6.F.1 Interpret information from primary and secondary sources.

Reading Standard: Students will read, comprehend, interpret, analyze, and evaluate informational texts.

2.A.1.a Read, use, and identify the characteristics of primary and secondary sources of academic information

2.A.4.g Synthesize ideas from the text

Objective:

Students will analyze the shift in the labor supply of Maryland's early colonial economy from one that included indentured servants to one that increasingly depended on the labor of slaves.

Vocabulary:

capital resources	indentured servitude	economy of scale	cash crop
human resources	natural resources	slavery	

Materials:

- Resource Sheet #1, "Tobacco Growing"
Resource Sheet #2, "The Forme of Binding a Servant"
Resource Sheet #3, "Servants and Slaves per Probate Inventory"
Resource Sheet #4, "Slaves Imported into Maryland from Africa, 1695-1709"
Resource Sheet #5, "Transformation from Indentured Servitude to Slavery Timeline"
Resource Sheet #6, "Timeline- Answer Key"

Resources:

Kulikoff, Allan. Tobacco & Slaves: The Development of Southern Cultures in the Chesapeake, 1680-1800. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1986.

Menard, R. From Servants to Slaves: The Transformation of the Chesapeake Labor System. Journal of Southern Studies, Winter 1977, pages 355-390.

Middleton, Arthur Pierce. Tobacco Coast: A Maritime History of Chesapeake Bay in the Colonial Era. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989.

Lesson Development:

1. Motivation: Have students **skim** "Tobacco Growing", Resource Sheet #1. Ask:
 - What does this tell us about the production of tobacco? (It is a very labor-intensive crop.)
 - Why do you think that Maryland farmers chose to grow it anyway? (It made a lot of money.)
2. Explain to students that Tobacco was what was known as a "Cash Crop," it was grown solely for the purpose of sale. Explain that it was very labor intensive. One man could work 3 acres of land per year and only raise 1,500 pounds of tobacco. Since there were no economies of scale in tobacco growing, any increase in the area of land under cultivation demanded a proportional increase in labor and capital. This led tobacco farmers to look for workers wherever they could find them.
3. In the early days of the Maryland colony, labor was in the form of indentured servants. Share Resource Sheet #2, "The Forme of Binding a Servant" with the class. Ask: Why would people agree to "sell themselves" to an employer, even if only for a few years? Lead students to the conclusion that conditions in Europe were such that many people felt that the only way to better themselves was to go to the Colonies as indentured servants. (For some, such as the very poor, young women with no marriage prospects, or children with no prospects to inherit family wealth, the reasons were economic. For others, such as convicted criminals, different reasons prevailed.) An indentured servant was a person who agreed to come to Maryland or another colony and work for a few years without pay, usually 4-7 years. In exchange for that promise of servitude, they were given a "free" trip to the colony. During the term of service, their employer had to provide food, clothing, and shelter for the indentured

servant. Upon the fulfillment of the term of contract, they were given “freedom dues”: 50 acres of land, food and a suit of clothing. Over one half of all the settlers who came to Maryland prior to 1700 were indentured servants. Indentured servants included both men and women, both black and white.

4. However, at some point, tobacco farmers began to depend on the labor of enslaved Africans. Explain to students that they will be looking at events in United States and World History to determine when and why the shift from indentured servitude to slavery occurred.
5. Divide the class in half. Give Resource Sheet #3, “Servants and Slaves per Probate Inventory” to one half and Resource Sheet #4, “Slaves Imported into Maryland from Africa, 1695-1709” to the other half. Have students hypothesize when the shift from indentured servitude to slavery took place. Record hypotheses on the board or overhead. Hypotheses will be revisited at the end of the lesson.
6. Distribute Resource Sheet #5, “Transformation from Indentured Servitude to Slavery Timeline.” Break students into groups and assign each group a different event. Each group is to research the event and complete the section of the graphic organizer that corresponds to that event. (Information on the events can be found in textbooks, encyclopedias, and on the web. Advanced students may be able to read excerpts from the books listed in Teacher Resources.)
7. Student groups will share their findings with the class. The teacher should create a “master” graphic organizer as the groups report out. After all groups have reported, have students revisit their hypotheses about when the shift occurred. Ask:
 - Were they correct? When *did* the shift from indentured servitude to slavery take place? (Shift began in 1690’s)
 - What events caused the shift to occur? (Fewer indentured servants available due to creation of new colonies, more desirable conditions in England, and war)
 - What may account for the discrepancy between when the numbers of indentured servants began to decline and when the numbers of slaves increased? (Planters didn’t start buying larger numbers of slaves until they realized they couldn’t obtain indentured servants.)
8. **Assessment:** Have students complete one of the following activities:

Option A: The MD Historical Society is creating an exhibit on the history of African Americans in Maryland. Your job is to create the portion of the exhibit that discusses the transition from indentured servitude to slavery in the colonial economy. Create a visual presentation that portrays that transition. You will want to include a timeline and pictures with captions.

OR

Option B: Write a short essay supporting the following statement.

“An increase in the supply of slaves did not precede and thereby produce the decline in the importation of indentured servants.” (Menard, R. From Servants to Slaves: The Transformation of the Chesapeake Labor System. Journal of Southern Studies, Winter 1977, page 371.).

Tobacco Growing

Growing Tobacco (January through August):

1. Clear land with felling or pole axe
2. Lay or seed beds- 2 or 3 in different locations
 - Lay brush on bed and burn it
 - Brush area with a brush and thoroughly hoe it
3. Sow tobacco seeds sometime between Christmas and March
 - Mix seed with ashes or sand to distribute evenly
 - Rake or tramp seed into soil
 - Cover with a layer of brush to protect from frost and moisture
 - Remove brush layer on warm and sunny days
 - Keep weeded
4. Thin seedlings to about 4" apart after about a month
5. Water if necessary
6. Replant if bed is damaged by frost, too much or too little rain
7. Treat for pest problems
 - Eradicate Tobacco Flea Beetle by dousing with ashes or water infused with sulphur
8. Get fields ready for transplanted seedlings
 - Clear new land
 - Build fences
9. Make hills for plants
 - Place foot down on soil and pull soil up to knee
 - Place hills 3'-4' apart
10. Transplant seedlings when 4"-5" high (usually late April or May)
 - Walk from hill to hill, poking a hole with a finger or stick and placing a seedling in the hole
 - Water if it doesn't rain
11. Weed fields
12. Hill fields
 - Reform hills that may have broken down from transplanting
13. Prime tobacco plants (6-8 weeks after transplanting)
 - Remove 2-4 leaves closest to the ground
14. Top tobacco plants (Same time as priming, or shortly after)
 - Pinch off flower buds at top of plant
15. Sucker tobacco plants (Continuous)
 - Remove the shoots that develop at the junction of leaves and stems
16. Treat for pest problems (Continuous)
 - Remove hornworms by hand and crush underfoot

Harvesting Tobacco (late August through the end of September):

17. Cut tobacco plants

- Plants selected according to ripeness
 - On a dry sunny day, plants grasped by the top of the stalk and cut between the lowest leaf and the ground by a knife or axe
 - Cut plants piled in rows and left to wilt (1 day to 1 week)
 - If rain threatened, it had to be moved undercover and brought outdoors again when dry weather returned
 - Piles had to be turned to prevent sunburn and mold
18. Cure tobacco plants (4-6 weeks)
- Tobacco stalks hung on sticks
 - Sticks arranged and hung in a barn
19. Striking tobacco
- Tobacco leaves removed from stick
20. Sweating (1-2 weeks)
- Struck leaves allowed to “sweat” in piles on the floor
21. Sorting and Prizing (October)
- Leaves stripped from the stalks and sorted by quality
 - Sorted leaves tied into bunches or “hands”
 - Pack (prize) leaves into hogsheads

Source: Percy, David. “The Production of Tobacco Along the Colonial Potomac.” Accokeek Research Report No.1

Resource Sheet #2

THE FORME OF BINDING A SERVANT.
[From *A Relation of Maryland, &c.*, 1635.]

This indenture made the.....day of.....in the.....yeere of our Sovereigne Lord King Charles &c betweene.....of the one party, and.....on the other party, Witnesseth that the said.....doth hereby covenant, promise and grant to and with the said.....his Executors and Assignes, to serve him from the day of the date hereof, vutill his first and next arrivall in Maryland, and after for and during the tearme of.....yeeres, in such service and employment as the said.....or his assignes shall there employ him, according to the custome of the countrey in the like kind. In consideration whereof, the said.....doth promise and grant, to and with the said.....to pay for his passing and to find him with Meat, Drinke, Apparell and Lodging, with other necessaries during the said terme; and at the end of the said terme, to give him one whole yeeres provision of Corne and fifty acres of Land, according to the order of the countrey. In witnesse whereof, the said.....hath hereunto put his hand and scale the day and yeere above written.

Sealed and delivered }
in the presence of }

From "The Forme of Binding a Servant" [Contract of Indenture], from Jerome Hawley and John Lewger, *A Relation of Maryland* (1635), reprinted in John Gilmary Shea, "Introduction" in *A Character of the Province of Maryland*, George Alsop. (New York: William Gowans: 1869), 419

Resource Sheet #3

**Servants and Slaves per Probate Inventory
Lower Western Shore of Maryland
1638-1705**

Date	Number of Inventories	Servants per Inventory	Slaves per Inventory
1638-1642	21	.86	.00
1658-1661	20	1.75	.15
1662-1664	48	.88	.15
1665-1667	58	1.69	.33
1668-1670	54	1.57	.43
1671-1674	92	1.21	.17
1675-1677	210	1.14	.34
1678-1680	91	.97	.57
1681-1684	108	1.21	.80
1685-1687	174	1.06	.45
1688-1690	97	.92	.76
1691-1693	48	.96	2.00
1694-1696	155	.36	.68
1697-1699	262	.48	.81
1700-1702	168	1.28	1.23
1703-1705	142	1.03	2.04

Source: Menard, R. From Servants to Slaves: The Transformation of the Chesapeake Labor System. Journal of Southern Studies, Winter 1977.

Resource Sheet #4

Slaves Imported into Maryland from Africa, 1695-1709

Date	Number of Slaves Imported
1695	160
1696	196
1697	32
1698	477
1699	352
1700	320
1701	64
1702	337
1703	55
1704	200
1705	442
1706	163
1707	357
1708	648

Source: Menard, R. From Servants to Slaves: The Transformation of the Chesapeake Labor System. Journal of Southern Studies, Winter 1977.

Resource Sheet #5
**Transformation from Indentured Servitude to Slavery
 Timeline**

Year(s)	Event	Impact on Availability of Human Resources	
		Indentured Servants	Slaves
1634	Ark & Dove arrive in Maryland, indentured servants on Board		
1663	Establishment of Royal African Company		
1663	Carolina Colony Chartered		
1665	Great Plague in London		
1666	Great Fire in London		
1676	Maryland prohibits the importation of "Jail Birds" (convicts whose sentence was to be transported from England)		

1681	Pennsylvania Colony Chartered		
1689-1697	King William's War (War of the League of Augsburg)		
1698	End of Royal African Company's monopoly on the slave trade		

Resource Sheet #6
Transformation from Indentured Servitude to Slavery
Timeline
Answer Key

Year(s)	Event	Impact on Availability of Human Resources	
		Indentured Servants	Slaves
1634	Ark & Dove arrive in Maryland, indentured servants on Board	New Colony of MD desperately needed settlers, Lord Baltimore offered land to anyone to all settlers, increasing land allotment for those who brought servants	NA
1663	Establishment of Royal African Company	NA	Colonies could only obtain slaves from Royal African Company- Royal African Company focused trade on Caribbean sugar plantations- only brought “left over” slaves to Chesapeake Colonies
1663	Carolina Colony Chartered	<i>Indentured Servants had another “choice” of destination- fewer went to MD</i>	NA
1665	Great Plague in London	<i>Deaths “opened up” jobs for people that might not have been available before- fewer people had to leave London to obtain jobs</i>	NA
1666	Great Fire in London	<i>Rebuilding of London created new jobs- fewer people had to leave London to obtain jobs</i>	NA

1676	Maryland prohibits the importation of “Jail Birds” (convicts whose sentence was to be transported from England)	<i>Since MD wouldn't accept transportees, fewer indentured servants available</i>	NA
1681	Pennsylvania Colony Chartered	<i>Indentured Servants had another “choice” of destination- less went to MD</i>	NA
1689-1697	King William's War (War of the League of Augsburg)	<i>-Men who would have gone to colonies as indentured servants went to war -War made it more dangerous to make trip to the Colonies</i>	NA
1698	End of Royal African Company's monopoly on the slave trade	NA	Planters could obtain slaves from anyone. Made slave prices cheaper.