

Facts about Indentured Servants

- Fact 1 The first Indentured servants in Colonial America were introduced by the Virginia Company in 1619
There were three classes of Indentured servants:
- Fact 2
- Willing Migrants who wanted to start a life in the colonies and agreed to sign contracts
 - Unwilling Migrants who needed to escape religious persecution or were forced to go for other reasons
 - Convicts, Vagabonds, Rogues and Undesirables - these types of Indentured servants chose America, rather than prison
- Fact 3 A staggering 80% of the total British and continental emigration to America prior to the American Revolutionary War were Indentured Servants
- Fact 4 Upon completion of an Indenture contract, the servant would receive "freedom dues," that included items such as land, money, a gun, clothes or food.
- Fact 5 A woman who became pregnant as an Indentured servants often had years tacked on to the end of her service time
- Fact 6 The idea of indentured servitude was born of a need for cheap labor
- Fact 7 Punishments for Indentured Servants were harsher than those for non-servants
- Fact 8 Before slave laws were passed black Africans were initially treated as indentured servants, and given the same opportunities for freedom dues as whites.
- Fact 9 Indentured servants had few rights, they could not vote, they were not allowed to marry or to leave their houses and travel without permission
- Fact 10 They were not allowed to buy or sell anything
- Fact 11 Many indentured servants were put to work in the tobacco fields of Virginia and Maryland - hard work and no pay, but unlike slaves, they were eventually free
- Fact 12 Some were bought and sold when they arrived in the colonies, much in the same manner as slaves.
- Fact 13 An advertisement in the Virginia Gazette read, "Just arrived at Leedstown, the Ship Justitia, with about one Hundred Healthy Servants, Men Women and Boys."
- Fact 14 Some poor people in England sometimes sold themselves into indenture just to survive
- Fact 15 Poor English were offered a trip to North America, along with four to seven years of unpaid work for their masters in exchange for the journey
- Fact 16 The system of indentured servitude was the answer to clearing the streets of the many beggars and homeless in England.
- Fact 17 Indentured servants and slaves had joined in Bacon's Rebellion.
- Fact 18 The failure of the indentured servitude system helped develop the need and use of slaves