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CHILDHOOD, COLONIALISM AND NATION-BUILDING

The role of childhood in the construction of race, class and gender in seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth century Virginia

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A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Anthropology

The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

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by

Autumn Rain Duke Barrett

2004

APPROVAL SHEET

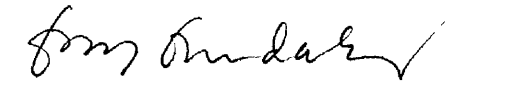
This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for the degree of

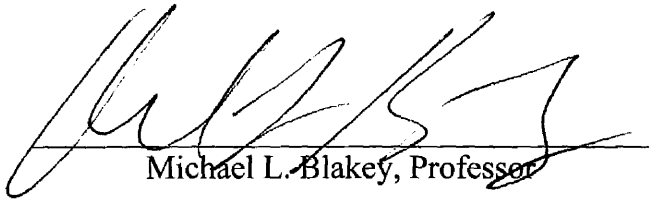
Master of Arts

Autumn Rain Duke Barrett

Approved by the Committee, March 5, 2004



Grey Gundaker, Chair



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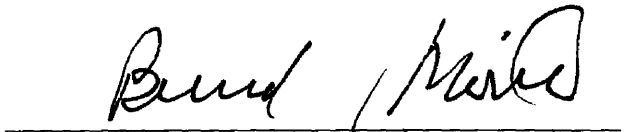

Bernard Moitt, Professor
Virginia Commonwealth University

DEDICATION

I am deeply grateful to my mother, my husband and my friend Shannon for their sustaining love and support.

I dedicate this work to the people whose childhoods I discuss in this thesis. While I could not "hear" their voices as clearly as I would have liked within the records I encountered, I hope that I have represented their lives with the respect that I continue to feel.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Grey Gundaker, my chair, for consistently challenging me with alternative perspectives and vantage points from which to view the past. Professor Gundaker's interdisciplinary knowledge of the history of ideas, and her vigilance in keeping me conscious of meanings and assumptions held within the words I use, has greatly enriched my graduate experience. I wish to express my sincere appreciation to Michael Blakey, for re-introducing me to the works of Frederick Douglass, for guiding my understanding of the intersection of past and present and for helping me to understand and begin to analyze the complex relationships between history, science, ideology and constructions of race. Finally, I am deeply grateful to Bernard Moitt, whose mentorship has directed me through my undergraduate and graduate years. Professor Moitt taught me the importance of understanding past lives as well as past events. Thank you for always requiring a higher standard of me and for believing that I could reach beyond where I was. Each member of my committee has provided me with invaluable guidance, support, encouragement and exemplary models of scholarship.

I would also like to express my gratitude to Kathleen Bragdon, whose course in Documentary Anthropology provided me with the opportunity to develop the initial research and interpretations toward this thesis.

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ABSTRACT

The author employs documentary sources to demonstrate the mechanisms by which childhood served as a site for producing and reproducing hierarchical social categories in Virginia during the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Laws, contracts, correspondence and images show the ways in which sameness and difference were enacted by adults to construct an English Identity, an American identity, and more broadly a "white" identity in relationship with members of the Empire, colony and state who were excluded from these categories. The author argues that adults defined and enacted social distinctions between children and their childhoods according to race, class and gender that created unequal childhoods and unequal access to resources. The author begins with a survey of European conventions of childhood and race, then discusses how the documentary record provides insight into the ways social inequality was constructed, maintained and challenged in daily interactions with and regarding children. Next, the study explores the changing relationships between race, class, gender and childhood in Virginia from the colonial period to early statehood. Finally, an analysis of 164 Virginia indenture documents from 1804 to 1858 demonstrate the routinization of racism within the institutions of child indentureship and slavery, and the material implications for children's lives and futures.

CHILDHOOD, COLONIALISM AND NATION-BUILDING

The role of childhood in the construction of race, class and gender in seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth century Virginia

INTRODUCTION

Approximately twenty Africans, who had been enslaved in Angola and captured from a Portuguese slave ship en route to the Spanish colonies, arrived on the shores of Virginia in August of 1619 on a Dutch frigate with a largely English crew (Thornton 1998: 421). Scholars are unsure whether these Africans in Virginia were enslaved, indentured servants or free upon arrival. However, the accounts of John Rolfe and Captain John Smith indicate that the twenty Africans were promptly employed to work within the new and vulnerable colony of Virginia (Duke 1995: vii). In the fall of this same year, one hundred children from "the streets of London" arrived on Virginia's shores to provide labor and contribute to the colony's stability (Smith 1965[1947]:148).

Each of these groups of people arriving and living in the colony of Virginia inhabited social spaces and categories whose definitions and boundaries would shift, as the colony of Virginia grew more populous and later became a state within the nascent nation of the United States of America. Among these categories were those pertaining to person-hood such as "child," and to social hierarchy such as "servant," "apprentice," and "slave." All of these categories emerged and developed in racialized terms in Virginia during the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In this thesis I employ documentary sources to demonstrate the mechanisms by which childhood served as a site for producing and reproducing hierarchical social categories in the English metropole,

among the inhabitants of the colony of Virginia, and for the nascent identity of Virginians as Americans. Studying past lives and the processes by which social categories are constructed, maintained and transformed offers insight into how humans create social inequality and how these hierarchies influence access to resources.

Social categories or roles are not innate to the person, but socially ascribed and enacted. A planter may have viewed a child as his "slave" and "property" but her mother valued her as her "daughter" and "child" and the child experienced her life within and between each of these and many other roles. Therefore, to understand how childhood served in creating and negotiating social categories and how it was experienced by actual children in seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth century Virginia, the moments in which social categories were expressed, defined, reinforced or challenged must be explored.

Stanley J. Tambiah characterizes the colonial legacy as a process that simultaneously wrought homogeneity through "standardization" and "particularity" through the codification of difference (Tambiah 1989). Within the colony and state of Virginia, the process of homogenizing and dividing is evident within the colonial and post-revolutionary documentary record. Laws, contracts, correspondence and images demonstrate the mechanisms by which sameness and difference were enacted to construct an English identity, an American identity, and more broadly a "white" identity in relationship with members of the Empire, colony and state who were excluded from these categories. Childhood, conceptualized as an interstitial and formative period in life history, served as such a site.

To explore childhood in Virginia I will first survey concepts of childhood and race according to European conventions. Next, I will discuss how the documentary record may be interpreted to understand how social inequality was created, reinforced and challenged in everyday interactions with children and on behalf of children. Then, I focus on the relationship between constructions of race, class, gender and childhood and how these relationships changed in Virginia from the colonial period into early statehood. Finally, I analyze patterns of inequality inscribed within indenture contracts for children during the first half of the nineteenth century and how these patterns demonstrate the very different childhoods experienced by children in Virginia.

CHAPTER 1

European Conceptualization of Childhood and Race

The concepts of childhood and race in Europe informed written discourse and decisions related to children and "race" in Virginia during the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries. The following overview is far from exhaustive, but provides a sketch of the ideological context of Anglo-Virginians' classificatory practices and foregrounds the historical and cultural construction of categories that came to be taken as self-evident within Virginia as a colony and state.

Childhood

The European "discovery" of childhood as a separate and distinct time of life, according to Phillipe Ariès, did not begin until after the thirteenth century and was fully developed during the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries (Ariès 1962:47). Ariès analyzed family portraits, change in dress for children, change in language used regarding children, and the types of literature produced for children, to argue for the emergence of a modern concept of childhood by the eighteenth century (Ariès 1962).

Prior to modern times, children had been viewed as small adults. However, during the seventeenth century, European children gradually came to be viewed as

morally innocent. Childhood crystallized conceptually as a separate time of life requiring distinct care and preparation through "coddling," moral discipline, and education in order to properly prepare young people for adulthood (Ariès 1962:132, 133, 336). This special period of life was first embraced by the upper classes, but spread over time to encompass all classes in European and "Western" societies (Ariès 1962:412; Stephens 1995:5).

While Ariès argues that education and scholastic endeavors began to replace apprenticeship as the focus of preparation for adulthood, he points out that the first part of the nineteenth century may have experienced a "regression" due to the employment of children in the textile industry. "Child labor retained this characteristic of medieval society: the precocity of the entry into adult life. The whole complexion of life was changed by the differences in the educational treatment of the middle-class and the lower-class child" (Ariès 1962:336). This statement indicates the emergence of hierarchy within childhood and different experiences and meanings within the social category of "child" in relation to social categories such as "class," "race" and "gender."

Race

The Great Chain of Being, while having ideological beginnings in the works of Plato and Aristotle, was a system of ordering the universe by hierarchically ranked categories that informed the European world-view into the eighteenth century. However, European categorization of human beings according to "race" began to emerge in the fifteenth century. Roger Sanjek defines and historicizes "race" as "the framework of ranked categories segmenting the human population that was developed by western Europeans following their global expansion beginning in the 1400s" (Sanjek 1996:1).

Rolfe used the phrase "20. and Odd Negroes" to describe the Africans from Angola arriving in Virginia in 1619. The racial term "Negroes" obscures the ethnic and geographic origin of these individuals and only research within the last ten years has revealed their point of enslavement and capture as Angola, and their origins as likely from the Kingdom of Kongo (Thornton 1998:421). A hierarchical ordering of human beings by "race" provided justification for enslaving and exploiting Africans and Native Americans. However, Carl Linné, or Linnaeus, challenged the Great Chain of Being by asserting that the "natural order" involved a tiered, rather than vertical, relationship between Class, Order, Genus and Species (Marks 1995:6-7). Linnaeus' classification system subdivided humans into the racial categories American, Asiatic, African and European. Linnaeus provided commentary to describe dispositions and the "mode of governance" he believed characteristic of each race. These divisions, as Michael Blakey argues, associated people of African descent with "nature" and people of European descent with "culture and civilization" (Blakey 1991:17–18).

In 1795, Johann Friederich Blumenbach further classified humans into five races – Caucasian, Mongolian, Ethiopian, American and Malayan. In the late 1700s and into the 1800s, debate about human origins centered on the issue of natural inequality the competing theories of multiple origins (polygenism) versus singular human origins (monogenism) (Sanjek 1996:5, Armelagos and Goodman 1998:360). "Natural" ranking and racial hierarchy, however, was defended and justified by supporters of both schools of thought (Armelagos and Goodman 1998:360). As Frederick Douglass argued in 1861, the "fashion" of science, in the theory of polygeny, was employed to justify social inequality and the violation of human rights within the institution of slavery.

> "For, let it be once granted that the human race are of multitudinous origin, naturally different in their moral, physical, and intellectual capacities, and at once you make plausible a demand for classes, grades and conditions, for different methods of culture, different moral, political, and religious institutions, and a chance is left for slavery, as a necessary institution" (Douglass 1854 in Foner and Taylor 1999:287).

Douglass' argument shows how ideologies of natural ranking were a fundamental premise for promoting and justifying social inequality as a reflection of a "natural" order. The institutionalization of inequality became not only justified, but was viewed as necessary, by the proponents of natural hierarchy, for maintaining the status quo of social order.

CHAPTER 2

Social Construction, Inequality, and the Documentary Record

Once established, institutionalization of inequality did not remain static. "Child" and "race" as well as "slave" and "apprentice" were socially constructed and socially maintained categories that changed in meaning over time and space. Although studying children within an historical context is crucial to analysis, the multi-dimensional experience of childhood must be understood within the relational and historical contexts where intersections of social roles are lived: courtrooms, on streets, in the workforce, in the home, and in innumerable interactions between individuals.

I seek to demonstrate that adults continually sought to define and enact social distinctions between children and their childhoods according to the categories of race, class and gender that created unequal childhoods and unequal access to resources. Alison James and Alan Prout assert that childhood is culturally defined "in terms of its own set of meanings and practices." (Stephens 1995: 8). My analysis explores the adult "meanings" and "practices" that culturally constructed and reinforced the social category of "child" in terms of "race," "class" and "gender." Adults treated children of different status with varying degrees of concession for age – so that the European convention of childhood was a privilege not experienced by all children in Virginia.

Representations of Childhood

Following Ariès' approach, I compared examples of children in portraiture and artwork to provide a comparison between representations of childhood during the latter portion of eighteenth century England and nineteenth century Virginia and between representations of free, wealthier Virginia children and enslaved children. Figure 1, though not representative of the changes in portraiture discussed by Ariès, provides a nice

Figure 1: Painting "Conversation Group" (English family group painting) 1775-1800. Artist unidentified, produced in England. DeWitt Wallace Collections. Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Library, Williamsburg, Virginia.

example of the transition from viewing children as small adults to viewing children as inhabiting a special and separate social space. The British family represented in Figure 1 displays the older representation of the child as a miniature adult. The little girl's clothing is adult in style, yet the positioning of the child in her mother's lap and the very

presence of children in the portrait represent the special place of childhood in eighteenth century British family life. Figure 2 portrays a Virginia mother and her child circa 1826. The child is dressed in clothing that is differentiated from the mother's more adult style. The child's features are more rounded and distinct from the mother's features.

Figure 2: "Mrs. Sylvanus Ingram (Alice Littlepage). Artist unidentified. Possible origin, Lunenburg County. Folk Art Collection, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Library, Williamsburg, Virginia.

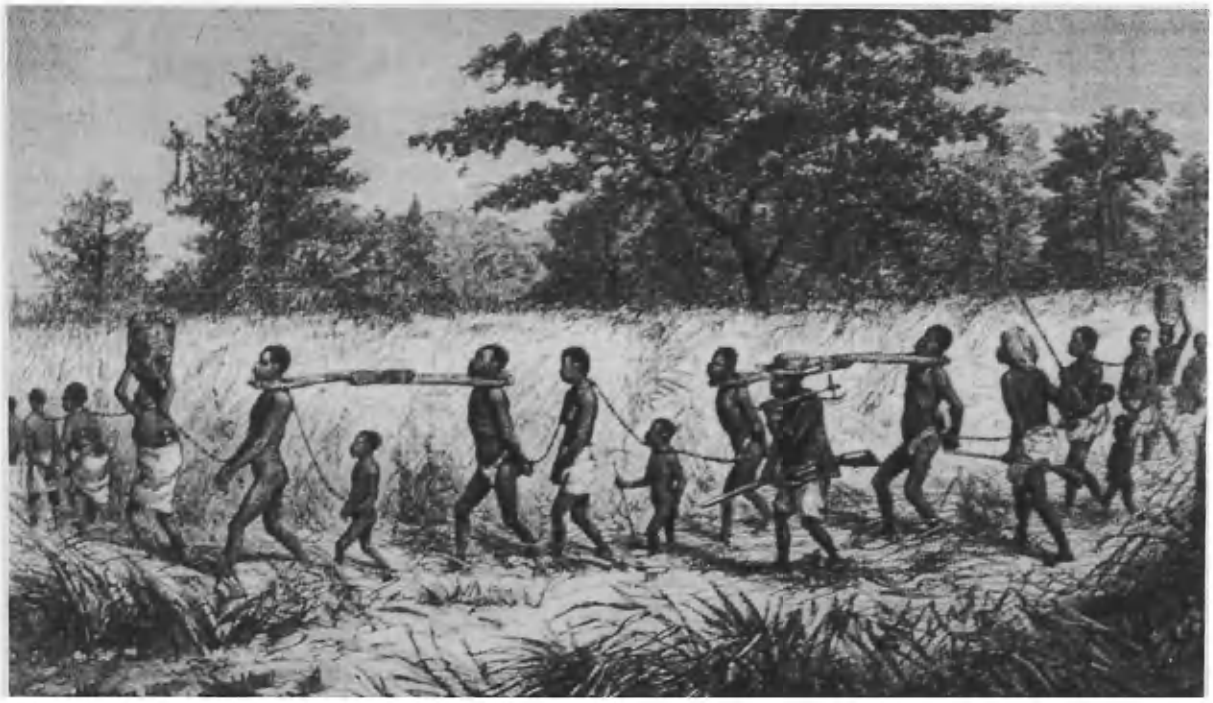

Figure 3: "Taking Slaves to Market" From "Old Times in the Colonies." 1880 Artist, Charles Coffin. Special Collections, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Library, Williamsburg, Virginia.

Figure 3 portrays enslaved adults and children, in which the children are exact miniatures of the adults. The children are wearing no clothes, as are some of the adults, and adults as well as children are bound by their necks and wrists. While this portrait reflects the physical conditions experienced by adults and children who were enslaved, no consideration for the humanity of the adults and children, much less special consideration for children, is indicated within this portrait.

Figure 4 illustrates two Virginia children interacting – one of African descent and one of European descent. Within this sketch, the child of African descent is not dressed, though the adults of African descent are dressed. The child of European descent is clothed in a shorter dress that is distinguished from the adult woman's dress. The child of African descent is carrying a service tray toward the child of European descent,

Figure 4: Title page, Lewis Miller Sketchbook. 1853-1867. Abbey Aldrich Rockefeller Art Museum, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Library, Williamsburg, Virginia.

Figure 5: Detail Top, page 22, Lewis Miller Sketchbook. 1853-1867. Abbey Aldrich Rockefeller Art Museum, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Library, Williamsburg, Virginia.

indicating the difference in social categories of race and class and the differential roles expected within each. Figure 5 is a sketch from the same series drawn by Lewis Miller. This detail shows a child of African descent serving a woman of European descent.

Within this sketch, the child is dressed similarly to the child of European descent in Figure 4, with the exception of shoes. When two children, one of European descent and one of African descent are portrayed together and interacting, their differential social roles and status are made evident by one child offering a tray and glass toward the other child and by the absence or presence of clothing. When only one child is portrayed, difference is not so starkly suggested. Difference becomes defined and framed within an alternate contextual point of reference. The child of African descent is depicted in a service role, but wearing a white garment. Miller depicts difference with greater emphasis when portraying two children, rather than a child and adult inhabiting different roles outside of "child" or "adult." Children learn their social roles within contextualized relationships. "Free" and "enslaved" social roles were defined in relation to each other. Miller's representations of children demonstrate how children's interactions with adults and other children were moments of vulnerability, for children could transgress adult definitions of social roles and categories. Miller emphasized difference more clearly in figure 4 than figure 5. These visual representations demonstrate the different experiences of childhood and the disparate ideas of appropriate behavior and roles required of children inhabiting particular social categories.

Childhood and English Colonial Expansion

David Cannadine in *Ornamentalism* argues that the British Empire "was first and foremost a class act, where individual social ordering often took precedence over collective racial othering (Cannadine 2001:10). Focusing on the British imagination,

Cannadine seeks to elucidate the role of social hierarchy and ranked status in the construction of British and colonial identities. Cannadine argues that

> "social ranking was as important (perhaps more important than?) colour of skin in contemplating the extra-metropolitan world, remained important for the English and, latterly, for the British long after it has been generally supposed that they ceased to matter" (Cannadine 2001: 8).

However, Cannadine fails to engage the interpenetration of multiple "rankings" of racial, gender and class categories within the British conceptualization of social status and rank. The interdependence of social hierarchy and various hegemonic relationships, such as racial and gender hierarchies, necessitated that social rank emerged alongside and was expressed within racialized and gendered terms enacted between colony and metropole. The intimate connections within these various formations of inequality *generated* the familiarity of self-evidence that might allow Cannadine to refer to a time when "it has been generally supposed that" social status and skin color "ceased to matter" (Cannadine 2001:8). I argue that the routinization of inequality constructed and enacted in Virginia oriented toward a self-evident hierarchy where Europeanness or Americanness as whiteness served as an invisible and standardized norm, a backdrop against which difference was set in relief in racialized and gendered terms. Thus, the shifting roles of children and childhood within seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth century demonstrates the production of colonial and national identities within Virginia.

Childhood as a metaphor for a formative and cultivable terrain served as a complement to the metaphor of the "empty" frontier of the colonial territory (McClintock 1995). However, the nascent and vulnerable colonies needed a reproducible *physical* labor force as well as increased potential for population growth to ensure their viability.

Thus, the one hundred children from the "streets of London" who arrived on the shores of the new colony of Virginia in 1619 (Ballagh 1895:28), were imported to provide a labor force, to sanitize London society, and to infuse the colony with growth potential embodied by these 100 children.

In 1609, the Privy Council, following the Portuguese model in the East Indies, set forth a proposal to the Mayor of London suggesting that monies be secured to provide transport for poor children from the streets of London to the colony of Virginia and provided a cost estimate furnished by the Virginia Company (Smith 1965[1947]: 148). Although money was collected, the Lord Mayor approved another collection in 1617, specifically to send one hundred poor children to the colony of Virginia. A.E. Smith in *Colonists in Bondage* describes the total £500 collection as a combination of "charitable" donations from parishes and individual donors. Five pounds per child was to cover "equipment and passage money" and the children were to be apprenticed until the age of twenty-one. After completion of the apprenticeship term, the former apprentices were to receive fifty acres in land on a plantation for which they would pay one shilling per year in rent (Smith 1965[1947]: 148).

The Virginia Company was so pleased with the results of the first importation that the Company petitioned the Lord Mayor in November 1619 to send one hundred more children at the cost of £500. However, the Virginia Company proposed a change in the terms under which the second set of children would exit their apprenticeship. The proposal included tenancy on public land, a house and cattle as compensation and fifty percent of profits at some later date (Smith 1965[1947]: 148). The common council met on December 18, 1619 and agreed to send another 100 children at the same expense, this

time paid by taxpayers, but under different terms of exit from apprenticeship. According to the decision of the Council, the apprentices were to receive twenty-five acres of land seven years after they completed their apprenticeships. The former apprentices would be required to pay sixpence per year in rent. While Smith views the amendment to the terms of the apprentices' exit from their apprenticeship commitments as demonstrating "that the council had some genuine interest in their [the children's] welfare," (Smith 1965[1947]:149) the interest may have rested more within the general notion of public charity that obscured the financial gain produced for the Virginia Company and the British metropole.

The Virginia Company submitted yet another request for young people to be sent to Virginia in 1620; in 1622 the common council approved allocation of £500 to cover the travel expenses of one hundred children. Smith notes that this decision was passed with "greater enthusiasm" due to the deaths incurred during a conflict with Native Americans - what the council termed the "'great loss which was lately susteyned by the barbarous cruelty of the savage people there'" (Smith 1965[1947]: 149, Boskin 1976: 11). A letter dated 1627 reports that 1,500 children were sent to Virginia within that year (Smith 1965[1947]:148). Smith questions the validity of this number. However, whatever the exact number, the correspondent's perception seems to have been that many children were continuing to be brought into Virginia at this time.

Contributors for the transport of poor children to the colonies considered their efforts to be charitable. In 1640 Anthony Abdy of London bequeathed £120 "'to be disposed and bestowed by my Executors upon twenty poore Boyes and Girles to be taken up out of the streets of London as vagrants for the cloathing and transporting of them

either to Virginia, New England or any other of the Western Plantations there to be placed'" (Smith 1965[1947]: 150). Abdy's three sons employ the same language and donation in their wills.

A monetary collection was taken in the early 1640's "for transplanting various poor and fatherless children of the kingdom who were out of work." However, the trustees mishandled the £832.9.5 so that only a small number - approximately twenty children - were sent to New England (Smith 1965[1947]: 150). Smith found no other records of groups of children being sent to the colonies but characterizes the impetus for child labor demands as both desirous of servants and "a genuinely charitable instinct which sought to remove young people from their virtually hopeless situation in Britain...to prevent these children from growing up into the rogues and vagabonds and felons" – a category of people defined by English law (Smith 1965[1947]: 136-138,150).

As Smith points out, England viewed children gathered "from the streets" as members of the "'surcharge of necessitus people, the matter or fewel of daungerous insurrections'" (Smith 1965[1947]: 138). The removal of these children was perceived as socially beneficial and convenient to the labor needs of the colonial planters. Smith's analysis, however, does not sufficiently stress that this social program may have been conceptualized within an ideology perceived as altruistic, but the benefit was in favor of the metropole via the colony of Virginia. The terms under which the children exited their indentureship also provided a future class of adult, non-elite tenants to work for the planters. Smith, as mentioned above and perhaps due to limitations in the documentary sources, does not explore the costs to the children or the social networks from which they were extracted.

England's authorities recognized the original "Adventurers" and colonists who accepted the charge and opportunity to establish a colony in Virginia as extending the boundaries of England while demarcating boundaries of Englishness. King James I decreed on April 10, 1606:

> I. James, by the grace of God, King of England, Scotland, France, and Ireland, Defender of the Faith & c. Whereas our loving and well-disposed subjects.[list of names of adventurers], gentleman, and diverse others of our loving subjects, have been humble suitors to us, that we would vouchsafe unto them our licence, to make habitation, plantation, and to deduce a colony of sundry of our people into that part of America, commonly called Virginia, and other parts and territories in America, either appertaining unto us, or which are not now actually possessed by any christian prince or people..." (Hening 1969[1823] vol. 1:57)

James I refers to the colonists as "adventurers *of and for our* city of London" to whom he granted permission to exploit all resources available in the territory for the purpose of founding a "colony of sundry of *our* people" – a diverse mixture of English people envisioned as populating the colony of Virginia ([emphasis mine]Hening 1969[1823] vol. 1:58). The listing of the "adventurers *of* and *for*" England was hierarchically delineated by proper names, followed by the generalized category of "gentleman" and finally the "diverse others."

King James I, within this document, describes and categorizes Virginia as land for cultivation and exploitation within his domain because it exists as land not inhabited by a christian prince or people. The document above alludes to, while not overtly acknowledging, Native Americans. King James I refers to children within this charter, revealing the King's vision for the colony and an English identity for the future colonists. The King ensures that all children born within the colony are entitled to the "privileges of

British subjects" (Hening 1969[1823] vol. 1:64). Shared English identity contrasts with the ranking of notables, gentlemen and "diverse others." The charter is unclear as to the range of these "others" but imparts Englishness to their subjectivity. However, from the earliest colonial period, the diversity of Virginia inhabitants was realized within the laws and codes applied to the colony – albeit in a manner that excluded certain people from the broad category of "diverse others," who were also English.

Prior to the arrival of the first 100 children from London or the first Africans, the British had begun efforts to teach "English ways" to indigenous children (Boskin 1976: 9-10). Colonial officials established schools to teach Native American children who embodied an internal threat to the colony just as the poor children of London embodied an internal threat to the metropole. Childhood was approached as a period of ambiguity and malleability holding out potential threats and benefits for English and colonial interests. Teaching indigenous children became less of a priority once the threat of Native American resistance to English occupation materialized in a 1622 conflict resulting in the deaths of many English colonists (Boskin 1976: 10). However, incorporating children into English families continued to be a method of teaching Native American children English ways.

An act established in 1655 discusses means by which Virginians could attempt to "civilize" Native Americans. The methods proposed within the act included familiarizing Native Americans with the concept of private property by giving cows in exchange for wolf pelts (Hening 1969[1823], vol. 1: 393). The second initiative simultaneously established that the category of "slave" existed within the colony, and that Indian children were excluded from being treated "as slaves" (Boskin, 1976: 43):

> If the Indians shall bring in any children as gages of their good and quiet intentions to us and amity with us, then the parents of such children shall choose the persons to whom the care of such children shall be intrusted and the countrey by us their representatives do engage that wee will not use them as slaves, but do their best to bring them up in Christianity, civillity and knowledge of necessary trades (Hening 1969[1823] vol.1: 396).

The child, within this act of assembly, signifies and embodies a social contract, providing "proof" of indigenous peaceful intention in offering one of their children for an English family to raise with the promise not to treat the child as a slave.

This "contractual" relationship raises several points. First, this is very similar to an apprentice indenture in which a child serves for a length of time within a family in order to learn a skill or trade. Second, the necessity to establish that these children will not be treated "as slaves" implies that other children were treated "as slaves" (Boskin 1976: 43). Usage of the word and the codification of the status of "slave" becomes increasingly dissociated from English and Native American ancestry and associated with African ancestry throughout the seventeenth century.

A second group of newcomers arrived during the same year that Virginia received the first one hundred poor children. In 1619 approximately twenty Africans also arrived in Virginia and quickly entered the labor force, thus helping to ensure the stability of the Virginia colony. Michael Gomez states that one social category or freedom status cannot be applied to all of the earliest Africans living in Virginia – some were free, while others were indentured servants or enslaved (Gomez 1998 :19). However, Maurice Duke argues that various indicators, such as the absence of last names, suggest without confirming the status held by the Africans who first came to Virginia (Duke 1995: vii). While these twenty people appear to have been adults, throughout the seventeenth, eighteenth and into

the nineteenth century, children of African descent, enslaved, indented and free, were taught particular roles to take in adult society within the institutions of slavery and indentureship.

Children of mixed African and European descent were a threat to the colonial conception of English and African subjectivities, as reflected within the progression of recorded punishment for unions between Virginians of European and African descent. Hugh Davis was "soundly whipped before an assembly of Negroes and others" on September 17, 1630 "for abusing himself to the dishonor of God and shame of Christians, by defiling his body in lying with a negro..." (Hening 1969[1823], vol.1:146; see also Boskin, 1976). This public punishment took place little more than ten years after the Rolfe's and Smith's accounts of the 1619 arrival of Africans in Virginia. Davis and the person with whom he had sex are differentiated in significant ways. Davis' full name is recorded, though the sex and name of the person with whom he had sex are not noted. No racial category is assigned to Davis, which implies that he is of English descent, while a racial category of "Negro" indicating African descent, is the only identifier provided for the second party to the "crime." There is a normative sameness indicated in the absence of a racial qualifier and a normative sameness inclusive of all people of African descent in the racial qualifier "Negro" – irrespective of ethnic affiliation or place of birth – that foregrounds social difference between the parties that is deemed so great as to be a crime to traverse.

In 1640 Robert Sweet was charged with "getting a negroe woman with child." The recipient of corporeal punishment was "the woman" – remaining nameless – who was whipped. Pregnancy outside of marriage was punishable. However, the gendered

and racial distinctions demonstrated within the legal documents of Virginia exemplify the process of sorting out the various ranks of "otherness" within the British colony. In 1632 "two maids" became pregnant on their journey to Virginia and were sent back to England upon arrival (Hening 1969[1823], vol.1:552). The names of the women are not mentioned, though their identity as English maids is noted. None of the circumstances surrounding the sexual encounters between women and men is discussed within these decisions. The two maids were said to have "got with child at sea" as though they were impregnated by the sea air itself. The focal point is on the meaning of the sexual acts and their manifestation in the condition of pregnancy. While children are not discussed overtly within these court decisions, the implications of a child conceived outside of socially accepted conditions embodied transgressed boundaries of social categories.

Children of African descent, as progeny and property, were sites of contestation as early as 1640. Even when two people of African descent conceived a child, a difference in freedom status could be grounds for a legal dispute. John Gravolere, a free servant of African descent, fathered a child with an enslaved woman of African descent. Gravolere had to file suit to gain permission from the court to buy his son from the mother's enslaver. The court granted him permission to purchase his son, juxtaposing the social categories of "child" and "property" (Boskin 1976: 40). The legislation related to Native American children not being treated as slaves was passed in 1655, which distinguished between conditions of childhood appropriate for children of Native American versus African descent. In 1662, due to the ambiguities exemplified in the Gravolere case and the increasing number of children of mixed European and African descent born within the colony of Virginia, a law was passed that stated the freedom

status of a child would follow the status of the mother. A child born to an enslaved mother, regardless of the status of the father, would be enslaved for life. Prior to this act, the freedom status of the father was usually the precedent for the child's status. Punishment for sexual relationships with a man or woman of African descent was also delineated within this legislation (Boskin 1976:43).

Differences between "servant" and "slave" and associations between who inhabited the social status of each emerged within the legislation of the seventeenth century. Winthrop Jordan traces the transitioning social status of Africans within colonial America from 1619 to the 1700 and summarizes the changes:

> The first Negroes landed in Virginia in 1619, though very, very little is known about their precise status during the next twenty years. Between 1640 and 1660 there is evidence of enslavement, and after 1660 slavery crystallized on the statute books of Maryland, Virginia, and other colonies. By 1700 when African Negroes began flooding into English America they were treated as somehow deserving a life and status radically different from English and other European settlers (Jordan 1969[1968]:44).

Legislation in the 1660s and 1670s distinguished between "servant" and "slave" in terms of punishment and penalty for crimes such as running away (Boskin 1976:45). Difference is defined and allusions made to distinctions between European, Native Americans and Africans in phrases such as "'all servants not being christians imported to this colony by shipping shall be slaves for their lives'" whereas those (also "non-christians") who entered "'by land shall serve, if boyes or girles, until thirty years of age, if men or women twelve yeares and no longer'" referring to Africans in the first portion , Native Americans in the latter, and tacitly to Europeans as Christians in the distinction of non-Christian within both groups (Boskin 1976: 46). Native Americans were not bound

in service for life and had their terms of servitude clearly encoded, whereas Africans entered the colony as slaves for the duration of their lives.

A repeal of a March 1657/8 act further delineated European from non-European and provided a more inclusive definition of privilege based upon European descent.

> Whereas the act for Irish servants comeing in without indentures enjoyning them to serve six years, carried with it both rigour and inconvenience, many by the length of time they have to serve being discouraged from comeing into the colony, And by that meanes the peopling of the country retarded, Bee it therefore enacted...that for the future, no servant comeing into the country without indentures, of what christian nation soever, shall serve longer then those of our own country, of the like age... (Hening 1969[1823], vol.1: 538 – 39)

The language indicates that white servants and, moreover, white bodies were desired within the colony and this servant class was distinguishable from Native American servants and enslaved Africans by reference to coming from a "christian nation," continuing the connection between Christianity and Europeanness and by extension, "whiteness." "Our own country" appears to be inclusive of Europeans and exclusive of the Native Americans who, according to the 1660 – 1670 legislation could serve until the age of thirty or enslaved Africans who served for their lifetime and in perpetuity (Boskin 1976: 44-46).[1]

"Our own country" is also interpretable as inclusive of metropole and colony, for an "Enquiry" was made by the Lords Commission in England to the Governor of Virginia, William Berkley, requesting enumeration of planters, servants, and slaves. The

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[1] Terrence W. Epperson discusses the transition in colonial New York from a Negro/Christian or slave/Christian distinction to a Negro/white dichotomy. According to Epperson, "Before the final decades of the seventeenth century, English colonists seldom referred to themselves as 'white,' choosing instead to self-identify as 'Christian' or 'English.'" Epperson attributes this change to "Anglican proselytization," which encouraged baptism of enslaved Africans and, therefore, necessitated new distinctions and justification for slavery. (Epperson 1999:88-89).

Governor reported "'there is in Virginia above forty thousand persons, men, women and children, and of which there are two thousand *black slaves*, six thousand *christian* servants...'" ([emphasis in Berkley's original] Boskin 1976: 46; Hening 1969[1823], vol.2:515). English officials structured their inquiry within hierarchical terms and the Virginia Governor replied in equally ranked terms that delineated between men (first), women (second) and children (last) with further distinction provided in terms of "black slaves" and "christian" or white servants. Within the context of the previous legislation, this report demonstrates the circulation of racialized hierarchies between colony and metropole and the production of sameness and difference in terms of like categories understood within the metropole's ideology.

CHAPTER 3

Childhood and the Transition from Colony to State

Childhood, within the institutions of indented servitude and slavery, provided a context in which these distinctions were further enacted within the colony to produce and reproduce what Kelly and Kaplan, refer to as "places" and "spaces" for race. Kelly and Kaplan call for a "political anthropology" in which social contracts are analyzed in understanding the creation of communities. The documentary record for Virginia demonstrates what Kelly and Kaplan refer to as "instituted, routinized practices" providing "a history of contracts and their narratives" (Kelly and Kaplin 2001:151-152). Laws, contracts and correspondence are recorded moments demonstrating the relationship between "representation" and "spaces" for "race" as discussed by Kelly and Kaplan:

> when colonial social contracts not only put races in their places but made the places for races...they were not generally negotiated with them or by them. Instead, these places were constituted for specific groups by representatives themselves nominated by colonial powers...not only race but also "community" is a conception grounded in large part, at least in the British Empire, in specifically colonial practices of social contract, deals *for* peoples rather than *with* them (Kelly and Kaplan 2001:197).

Act XXVII within the Laws of Virginia (see Figure 6), passed in October 1646, establishes the power of colonial officials to remove poor children from their homes and to bind them out for an indentured apprenticeship. The moral basis for such a law and the initial order for conscription of child labor are intertwined with reference to the power

and precedent of English law. Indenture documents provide examples of the continued practice of placing poor children within homes for a contracted period of time with the agreement that the child will learn an occupation or skill. This institution continued after the Revolution and the Declaration of Independence from English rule in 1776. Soon after the United States severed colonial ties, Overseers of the Poor took over the Vestry's responsibility in "overseeing" the poor in Virginia and in placing children within indenture contracts. This transference of responsibility and power occurred in 1780 for several counties within the state and for the whole of Virginia in 1785 (Hening 1969[1823], vol. 10:289).

Act XXVII establishes a shared identity of "poor children" who are in need of "breeding" in order to become "good" adults by learning a trade with great benefit to the colony, by working in a public flax house. The physical housing and provisions are specifically delineated. However, we learn little more about the process of conscription other than the youngest age considered acceptable (7 or 8 years) and the moral benefit the act will provide for the child and society. The same process demonstrated in "sanitizing" the streets of London was applied *within* the colony and continued within Virginia's early national period. Indenture documents show how this "sameness" of "poor child" was enacted through indenture contracts in ways that crystallize "difference" and routinely established unequal access to resources for children of African descent. Figure 7 is a transcribed indenture document from England in 1619 and serves as a comparative example of the continuity in form and content for standardized indenture contracts in England, the colony, and the state of Virginia. Figure 8 is an indenture document from colonial Virginia in 1746 and Figure 9 from the national period of 1850. The most

Laws of Virginia, Act XXVII:

October 21, 1646: Charles 1

Whereas sundry laws and statutes by act of parliament established, have with great wisdome ordained, for the better educateing of youth in honest and profitable trades and manufactures, as also to avoyd sloath and idlenesse wherewith such young children are easily corrupted, as also for releife of such parents whose poverty extends not to give them breeding, That the justices of the peace should at their discretion, bind out children to tradesmen or husbandmen to be brought up in some good and lawful calling, And whereas God Almighty, among many his other blessings, hath vouchsafed increase of children to this colony, who now are multiplied to a considerable number, improve the honor and reputation of the country, and noe lesse their owne good and theire parents comfort: But forasmuch as for the most part the parents, either through fond indulgence or perverse obstinacy, are most averse and unwilling to parte with theire children, *Be it therefore inacted by authoritie of this Grand Assembly*, according to the aforesayd laudable custom in the kingdom of England, That the commissioners of the severall countyes respectively do, at their discretion, make choice of two children in each county of the age of eight or seaven years at the least, either male or female, which are to be sent up to James Citty between this and June next to be imployed in the public flax houses under such master and mistresse as shall be there appointed, In carding, knitting and spinning, the said county with sixe barrells of corne, two coverletts, or one rugg and one blankett: One bed, one wooden bolwe or tray, two pewter spoones, a sow shote of sixe months old, two laying hens, with convenient apparell both linen and woollen, with hose and shooes, And for the better provision of houseing for the said children, *It is inacted*, That there be two houses built by the first of April next of forty foot long apeece with good and substantial timber, The houses to be twenty foot borad apeece, eigh foot high in the pitche and a stack of brick chimneys standing in the midst of each house, and that they be lofted with sawne boardes and made with convenient partitions, And it is further thought fitt that the commissioners have caution not to take up any children bur from such parents who by reason of their poverty are disabled to maintaine and educate them, *Bee it likewise agreed*, That the Governour hath agreed with the Assembly for the sum of 10000 lb. of tob'o. to be paid him the next crop, to build and finish the said houses in manner and form before expressed.

Figure 6: Source: *Hening's Statutes at Large: vol.1* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1969 [1823]), pp.336 – 337.

This Indenture made the Eighth day of Feby in the third year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord & Lady William & Mary by the Grace of God of *England, Scotland, France* and *Ireland* King, Defender of the Faith, & c. Annoq, Dom. 1691 *Witnesseth* that [names of Church Wardens, illegible] Church-Wardens of the Parish of Bridgewater in the County of Somerset and [names of Overseers of the Poor, illegible] Overseers of the Poor of the said Parish, by and with the consent of His (& Her) Majesties Justices of the Peace the said _____ whose Names are hereunto subscribed, have put and placed, and by these presents do put and place William Harris a poor Child of the said Bridgewater Parish, Apprentice to Robert Poasey of Bridgewater aforesaid mason with h[im] to dwell and serve from the day of the date of these presents, until the said Apprentice shall accomplish h is full age of four and twenty years according to the Statute in that case made and provided; *During* all which term, the said Apprentice h is said M aster faithfully shall serve in all lawful business, according to h is power, wit and ability; and honestly, orderly and obediently, in all things demean and behave h im self towards h is said M aster and all h is during the said term. And the said Robert Poasey for h im self, his Executors and Administrators, doth Covenant and Grant and with the said Church-Warden and Overseers, and every of them, their and every of their Executors and Administrators, and their and every of their Successors for the time being, by these presents, That the said Robert Poasey the said Apprentice in the arty mystery or occupation of a mason which he now useth shall [teach and instruct] *And* shall and will, during all the term aforesaid, find, provide and allow unto the said Apprentice, meet, competent and sufficient Meat, Drink and Apparel, Lodging, Washing and all other things necessary and fit for an Apprentice. And also shall and will so provide for the Apprentice, that h e be not any way a charge to the said Bridgewater Parish, or Parishoners of the same; but of and from all charge shall & will make, provide, allow and deliver unto the said Apprentice double Apparell of all sorts, good and new, that is to say a good new Suit for Holy-days, and another for the Working-days. In Witness whereof, the Parties, abovesaid to these present Indenentures interchangeably have put their Hands and Seals the day and year above-written

Sealed and Delivered in the presence of	We whose Names are subscribed, Justices of the Peace of the Bridgewater [Parish] aforesaid do (- - - -) consent to the putting forth of the abovesaid William Harris Apprentice, according to the intent and meaning of the Indenture aforesaid.
[Signature] [Signature]	Sign Robert X Poasey[2]

Figure 7: English Indenture document dated 1691

[2] Single Item, Poasey 83-30, February 8, 1691. English Indenture Document. Special Collections, Swem Library, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia. Transcription by A.R.D. Barrett. Times New Roman font indicates printed template language. French Script MT with underline indicates hand written portions of the document. Superscript indicates insertion and is written above printed language in the original document. Bracketed language indicates questionable legibility or illegibility.

consistent language in the documents pertains to the contractual obligations of the party to whom the child is indentured. Within Virginia, the "specifically colonial practices" of contractually creating "deals for peoples rather than with them" that Kelly and Kaplan (2001) refer to, continued into statehood.

This document provides the terms under which the apprentice will serve and be taught a skill by the "Master" to whom the child is being indentured. It also provides comparison in relation to template language found in colonial and post-colonial Virginia indenture documents. Important to note within these documents is the information printed versus the information intended to be handwritten for which lines or spaces are provided. This document indicates that the sovereign ruler of England was presumed to be male, for "& Lady" had to be written into space not provided within the template. A "poor Child" was an established category of person within England at this time, for this language is a part of the template and the child's name is to be handwritten. The child and the person(s) to whom a child is indentured/ apprenticed may have been a man or woman, as indicated by the space left after "h__" for his or her and "M___" for Master or Mistress. Unfortunately, the age of the child is not provided and, therefore gives us no indication as to the length of indenture. Language changes occur within colonial and post-colonial Virginia documents, including use of the word "bound" to indicate the relationship of indenture being contracted.

Behavioral stipulations, such as those detailed in the 1746 indenture, were not unusual and serve to install a code of subservient and loyal behavior that denotes the "place" of the child within the household. The child shall serve his or her "Master" in order to learn a trade that may thereby redeem his or her social space and place within

society. The 1850 indenture demonstrates how template language standardized the obligations and provisions required from the contractual relationship. The standardized language is sufficiently vague to provide for variation in interpretation of the language, which could be left up to the Overseers and the family/ person to whom the child was bound. The template language bounded sameness while leaving spaces for difference

This Indenture Witnesseth That Thomas Clayton son of Thomas Clayton late of Richmond County hath put himself, and by these Presents, doth voluntarily, and of his own free will and accord, to and with the consent and Aprobation of his Mother, put himself apprentice, to James Griffith of the aforesaid County (Joiner), to learn his art, Trade, or Mystery, after the manner of an Apprentice; to – Serve him from the Ninth Day [of] October last past, for and during the Term of five Years Next ensuing; During all which Term the said Apprentice his said Master faithfully shall serve, his secrets keep, his lawful commands gladly every where obey. He shall do no Damage to his said Master, nor see it be done by others without letting or giving notice thereof, to his said Master. He shall not waste his Masters Goods nor lend them unlawfully to any. He shall not commit Fornication, nor contract Matrimony within the said form, At Cords, Dice, or any Other unlawful Games he shall not play, whereby his said Master may have Damage, with his own gods, or the goods of others, He shall not absent himself Day or Night from his Masters Services without his leave, nor haunt Ordinaries, but in all things behave himself as a faithful Apprentice ought to do during the said Term. In consideration where of the said Master shall use the Utmost of his Endeavor to teach or cause to be taught or instructed, the said apprentice in the Trade or Mystery of a Joiner or House Carpenter which he now followeth; And procure and provide for him Sufficient, Meat, Drink, Apparel, Lodging, and Washing Fitting for an Apprentice During the said covenants and Agreements, either of the said Parties bind themselves unto the other by these presensts. In Witness where of they have Interchangeably put their hands and Seals this *Second* Day of *March* in the Twentieth Year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord George the second by the Grace of God of Great Brittain [illegible] Annoz Dimini 1746[3]

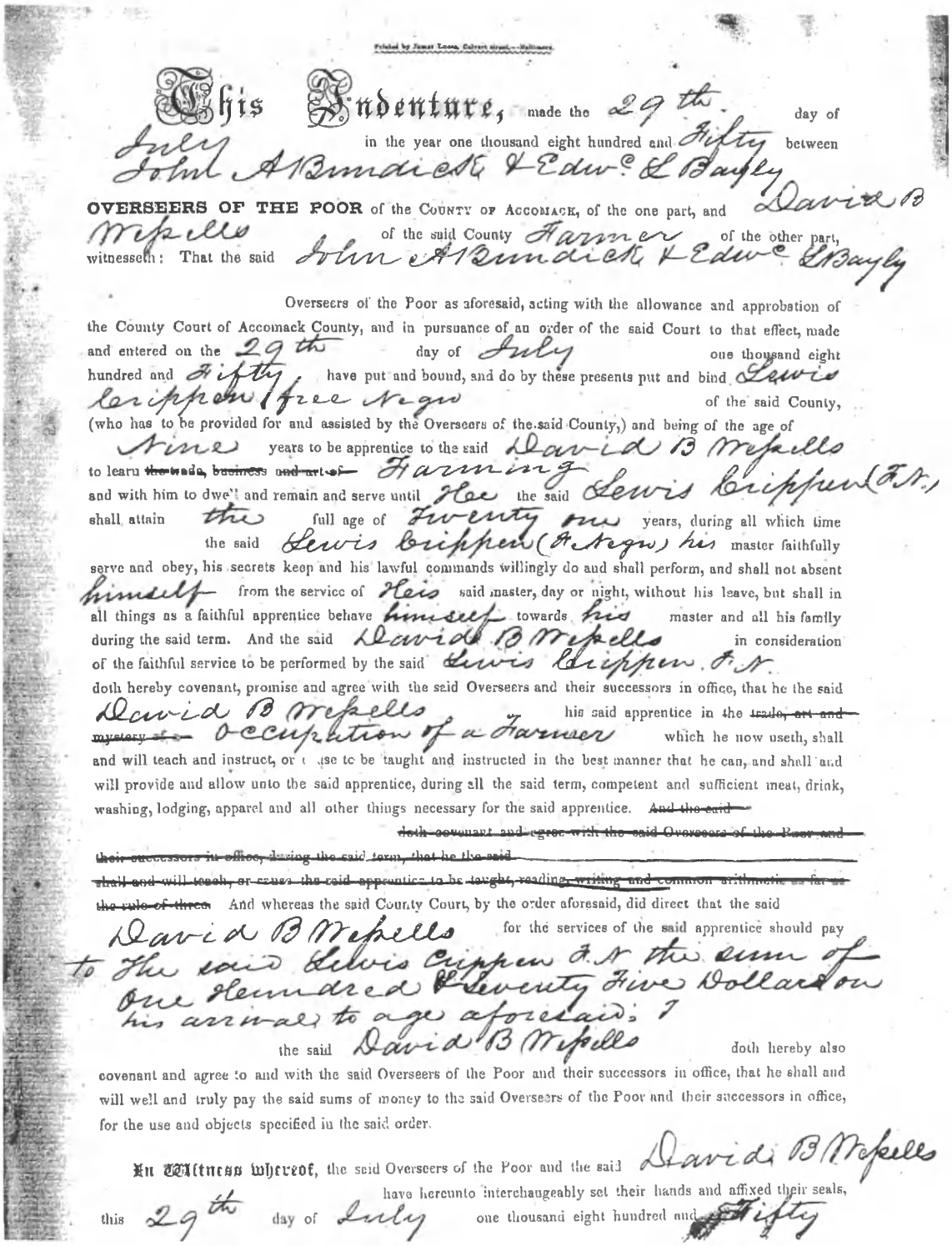
Signed Sealed & Delivered in Presence of us

Thomas Clayton

her
Ann ∧ Jhunt (?)
mark

Figure 8: Indenture Document 1746: transcribed from handwritten document

[3] Miscellaneous Manuscripts – Tho. Clayton to James A87.1 Indenture of Thos. Clayton to James Griffin, 1746. Colonial Williamsburg John D. Rockefeller Special Collections. Williamsburg, Virginia.



This Indenture, made the 29th day of July in the year one thousand eight hundred and Fifty between John A Bundick & Edwd L Bayly OVERSEERS OF THE POOR of the County of Accomack, of the one part, and David B Mapells of the said County Farmer of the other part, witnesseth: That the said John A Bundick & Edwd L Bayly Overseers of the Poor as aforesaid, acting with the allowance and approbation of the County Court of Accomack County, and in pursuance of an order of the said Court to that effect, made and entered on the 29th day of July one thousand eight hundred and Fifty have put and bound, and do by these presents put and bind Lewis Cripper a free Negro of the said County, (who has to be provided for and assisted by the Overseers of the said County,) and being of the age of Nine years to be apprentice to the said David B Mapells to learn ~~the trade, business and art of~~ Farming and with him to dwell and remain and serve until He the said Lewis Cripper (a Negro) shall attain the full age of Twenty one years, during all which time the said Lewis Cripper (a Negro) his master faithfully serve and obey, his secrets keep and his lawful commands willingly do and shall perform, and shall not absent himself from the service of His said master, day or night, without his leave, but shall in all things as a faithful apprentice behave himself towards his master and all his family during the said term. And the said David B Mapells in consideration of the faithful service to be performed by the said Lewis Cripper a F.N. doth hereby covenant, promise and agree with the said Overseers and their successors in office, that he the said David B Mapells his said apprentice in the ~~trade, art and mystery of~~ occupation of a Farmer which he now useth, shall and will teach and instruct, or cause to be taught and instructed in the best manner that he can, and shall and will provide and allow unto the said apprentice, during all the said term, competent and sufficient meat, drink, washing, lodging, apparel and all other things necessary for the said apprentice. ~~And the said doth covenant and agree with the said Overseers of the Poor and their successors in office, during the said term, that he the said shall and will teach, or cause the said apprentice to be taught, reading, writing and common arithmetic as far as the rule of three.~~ And whereas the said County Court, by the order aforesaid, did direct that the said David B Mapells for the services of the said apprentice should pay to the said Lewis Cripper a F.N. the sum of One Hundred & Seventy Five Dollars on his arrival to age aforesaid: I the said David B Mapells doth hereby also covenant and agree to and with the said Overseers of the Poor and their successors in office, that he shall and will well and truly pay the said sums of money to the said Overseers of the Poor and their successors in office, for the use and objects specified in the said order.

In Witness whereof, the said Overseers of the Poor and the said David B Mapells have hereunto interchangeably set their hands and affixed their seals, this 29th day of July one thousand eight hundred and Fifty

Figure 9: Indenture Document from Accomack County 1850. Accomack County Court Records July 1850- October 1867; Library of Virginia. Archives Branch. Richmond, Virginia 23219.

within its vagueness. It literally made a space and place for race in the spaces left for identifiers such as name, sex, age, and occupation. "Whiteness" or Europeanness was embedded as a normative standard through the routinized absence of a racial identifier unless children were of African descent – and that "poor" was templated language but race indicators were hand written.

CHAPTER 4

Childhood, Race and Class in Early Statehood

Correspondence and court documents record interactions that situate children within different categories and levels of racial hierarchy. For example, Turner Christian of Providence Forge wrote to Francis Jerdone of Louisa County on July 29, 1800, reporting matter of factly that he had "lost a little negro last week about 8 moths old with whooping cough."[4] Christian maintained the same detached tone when reporting to Francis Jerdone again in December of 1802.

> I have not sold the crop of wheat and shall wate to hear from you Our Crop of corn Short only 900 Barells Our Stock of Hoggs Small to what you have had for two years pasts, they will be ready in a few days after Christmas, we have lost two little negros this Fall, three horses with a distemper this Summer thoe they were of the oldest two of them useless, from age.[5]

Christian views the "little negros" as property and does not refer to them as children but as small versions of another category - "negros." The loss of these children is reported within the context of loss of property rather than loss of life.

Christian's slight discussion of enslaved children is contrasted with the discussion of children by parents within a privileged position. During the years of 1854 to 1864, Doctor Iverson L. Twyman, corresponded with his wife, Martha, when he was away from home. Twyman ended his letters with the postscript "kiss the children." Primarily

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[4] Jerdone Papers. 39.1J47 Box 4 folder 1, 29 July 1800. Swem Library, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

[5] Jerdone Papers. 39.1J47 Box 4 folder 2, 20 December 1801. Swem Library, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

the concern that Twyman expressed regarding his children related to his son, Iverson's, education. Evidentially, young Iverson was reluctant to go to school and learn his lessons. Several letters express Twyman's frustration that Iverson would not be able to learn of and understand the world if he did not pay attention to his studies and learn to read. Iverson's instructor wrote to Twyman in1855 to express her concern and perhaps agitation with her six year old student due to his absences and tardiness. Unfortunately, the Twyman correspondence does not offer as rich of an account for Twyman's thoughts on his other children. However, he sends his affection to them in each of his postscripts. Young Iverson's occupation and duties, according to his father's perspective, accord with Ariès' characterization of a European conceptualization of childhood for the upper classes by the eighteenth century. Twyman insists that his son must learn his lessons in preparation for adulthood. Twyman is ensuring that his son is equipped to assume the level of social position that he himself holds. Evidently, young Iverson did learn to read and adhere to his studies, for he became Superintendent of the Buchanan County public schools as an adult.[6]

The Austin-Twyman correspondence also provides a few glimpses into Twyman's view of children who are not his own. On Friday April 21, 1854 Twyman wrote to Thomas Austin with a tone of urgency regarding two children. He entreats Austin to intercede:

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[6] Austin-Twyman Papers. 69 Au7, folders 28 1854-1855 and 49 1863-1864. Swem Library, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

A few days ago Lewis T [?]. Miller hired one of his children's little negroes to Major Ryle this merchant who lives near me, and on day before yesterday evening, Miller, came on horse back and carried the [negro] off, no doubt to sell it. I was at Miller's yesterday and the mother of the girl was talking to me about the child in Miller's presence, and sent a little present to her. I thought the [negro] girl was at Ryle's till this morning when I ascertained fro Ryle that Miller took her away day before yesterday evening. [Mr.] Munoz tells me that he met Miller with the girl behind him on his way toward [illegible], somewhat drunk, & he Miller said he was carrying her off to sell her. He told Ryle when he came for her that he wanted to carry her home to have her "valued." ...Mr. Miller must have sent her off somewhere, or he would have said something about her when the mother was talking to me and sending a present of a little bundle which the mother tied on behind my saddle, in the presence of Miller & requested me to have some of my [negroes] to [give] to her

The girl is not at home, nor is she at Ryle's, and as Miller took her away day before yesterday saying to Mr. Munoz when he met him that he intended to sell her, I think it quite certain that he has sent her off to be sold.

It is unfortunate for Miller's poor children and I pity them. It is a matter which the world would say does not concern me, but I cannot stand still & see orphan children wronged out of [their] rights. Let me beseech you to go to [Spotswood] Jones to-night and tell him about it. I suppose he will take steps to recover the girl. He had [better] send to both Richmond & Lynchburg & he had better consult a lawyer in regard to the proper procedures. He ought to go [illegible].

The girl was daughter of Sarah and was the [illegible] girl that she had at Miller's named – Molly – I believe

Yours

I.L. Twyman

You my [show] this letter to Spottswood Jones. If you cannot go yourself send some one at once to carry this letter

I.L.T.

But do go yourself[7]

[7] Austin-Twyman Papers, (69 Au7, Folder 28 1854-1855), Swem Library, College of William and Mary. All emphasis is in the original letter transcribed by A. Barrett. Words that were partially legible but not absolutely identifiable are in brackets. Words that were not able to be transcribed due to illegibility are noted.

Twyman, when discussing Miller's "children" and Molly in the same sentence, set the two categories of children in relief by employing the racialized term "negroe," while the racial category of Miller's children is presumed to be clear by the absence of a qualifier. The reader may discern urgency in Twyman's tone but the subject of that urgency is unclear until the latter portion of the letter.

Two points of view and two value statements are represented within this letter. The author of the letter, Twyman, expresses the first point of view. A differential value for an orphaned child and an enslaved child is represented within Twyman's entreaty to Austin. Twyman is, in fact, concerned for the rights of an orphan child living with Miller rather than the welfare of the enslaved girl, belonging to the orphan child.[8] Twyman appears to communicate some mistrust of Miller's conduct with Molly in telling that he was encountered drunk with her behind his back and then noting suspicion over Miller's meaning of taking her home "to have her '<u>valued</u>'" by the emphasis he places on the word through underlining and parentheses. However, Twyman provides no further indication as to what he may suspect to be the meaning behind Miller's behavior. Twyman's ultimate indignation becomes clear, however, when he states that he cannot "stand still & see orphan children wronged out of [their] rights" – realizing that Twyman is referring to rights of property, and in particular the young girl Molly, owned by an orphan child.

The second point of view and value statement is represented in the interaction between Molly's mother, Sarah, and Twyman. Sarah makes a request of Twyman to take

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[8] Wilma King also quotes a portion of this letter in Born in Bondage(1995: 106), noting the value placed on the rights of the orphan over the rights of Molly in stating "Twyman's sole interest in the child was the potential for the financial security of the white children.".

a present to her daughter who has been hired out to Ryle, and she makes this statement in front of Miller. Although Twyman does not infer meaning beyond relaying the mother's request and making clear that the request was made in Miller's presence, Sarah made Twyman aware of her daughter's absence by requesting that Twyman take a present to her. The child for whom Sarah's concern and care was expressed was her child, not the orphan. She may have known or suspected that Molly was about to be sold and intervened by sending a present through Twyman in order for Molly's absence to be discovered. In addition to Twyman's letter to Austin, Twyman's correspondence with Hill Dickenson and Company includes several references to intended sales of enslaved children[9] and an attempt to hide the future sale from the children's parents. Twyman requested that John Austin (his brother-in-law) not tell the parents of the impending sale because it would "'set them to crying and howling (King 1995: 104).'" Enslaved children, for Twyman, were property to be worked or sold for profit, despite the pain and profoundly different value held and expressed by the parents of enslaved children.

The Norfolk County Court minutes for December 21, 1840 document a judicial recommendation regarding the estate of Thomas Tooley and his child heirs. The court's recommendation demonstrates another moment in which the intersection of social categories of race and freedom status were displayed in actions portraying differential value held by the court for children of free and orphan status versus children of enslaved status. The court minutes record the following:

> The account of Michael Sykes, Guardian of James, Catherine and Thomas Tooley infant children of Thomas Tooley amounting to $256.50 [illegible] examined allowed and ordered to be recorded and it appearing to the Court

[9] Austin-Twyman Papers, 69Au7, folder 49.;

> that the infants have no income whatsoever and that they were of an age too young to have been bound out or apprenticed doth recommend to the guardian to sell the eldest child of the negro Simmon towards paying the said account the said child to be sold at public auction before the Court house of Norfolk County on some Court-day after giving ten days notice by advertisement of the same.[10]

The court recommended that the enslaved child of Simon be sold in order to pay the debts of the account inherited by free, orphaned children, due to the judges' estimation that the children were too young to be bound out for indentureship.

However, during this same period, Virginia children as young as two years of age were bound out as apprentices. The youngest indentures in Norfolk County were aged three. Given that there are three siblings deemed "infants,"[11] at least one of the three children would probably have been of an age considered acceptable (for some children) to be indentured as an apprentice. Whatever the court's reasoning for judging the Tooley children to be too young to work, the judge made stark contrasts in his value for the Tooley children compared with Samuel's son, as well as a disparity in assessing age-appropriateness for work. Samuel's son had to leave his family to provide labor to pay off the Tooley debt. The children's status difference and how each child experienced their status were made painfully clear through the judge's decision. The Norfolk County Court enacted cultural values in which the juxtaposed social categories of freedom status

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[10] Norfolk County Court Records: Reel # 69 Minute Book #26. December 21, 1840. Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia 23219.

[11] "infant" is used in other documents in conjunction with a qualifier that the child is less than fourteen years of age but can also mean under the age of twenty-one for males and eighteen for females (Kegley, 1995:91). For example, the indenture of Lombard Jones to Robert N. Crittendon in March 1851 refers to six-year-old Lombard as "an infant of the age of fourteen years." Lancaster County Court Records. Overseers of the Poor 1773-1861. Box 2, Folder 10. Library of Virginia. Archives Branch. Richmond, Virginia 23219.

and race benefited the free child of European descent and disadvantaged the enslaved child of African descent.

Thomas Jefferson wrote to John L. Ravenscroft of Lunenburg County requesting information regarding spinning machinery and the type of labor force required to run the machinery. Ravenscroft responded to Jefferson on 12 July 1812, describing the spinning and roving machinery, the labor suggested and estimated productivity of the machines:

> My machinery now at work in my sights are all together conducted & worked by negroes and with the exception of one, such as could not earn their living any other way – some of them being under 5 years of age; we spin any size of cotton yarn wanted for clothing either myself, the labouring hands or the house – either warp or filing – the carding machine, on which the whole depends, is so constructed that the Rove cannot be made unequal unless by very great carelessness or by design which was long the great [illegible] in the spinning business and is learned by any chap of 7 or 8 years of age, the [roveing] frame is distinct and separate and requires one of the same age the spinning frame is drove by a girl of 16 – quite easy and pleasant work – and the size and quality of the yarn is entirely out of her control – the carding engine for coarse work will do from 5 to 6 [lbs.] per day once carded, for finer spinning it is carded oftner, even to three times, the spinners will do with ease three to four pound of negroe yarn as it is called in the day, and of any other, [lies] in proportion to the spinning fineness...[12]

Ravenscroft politely expressed skepticism that Jefferson's machine, which combined the spinning and roving operations "must certainly add to the complexity and consequently liability to go out of order; rendering it moreover unfit to be put into the hands of negroes."[13] The labor recommended for the spinning machines in question comprised children under the age of seventeen and, as stated, several functions were assigned to children younger than five years old. Child labor provided clothing for Ravenscroft as

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[12] Letter to Thomas Jefferson from John L. Ravenscroft of Lunenburg County, July 12 1812. Jefferson Papers in the Tucker-Coleman Collection, Swem Library. College of William and Mary.
[13] Tucker-Coleman Collection, 1812. College of William and Mary.

well as the "labouring hands," family members and workers in the house. Wilma King notes the essential role that enslaved children served by stating "even a cursory look at historical data shows that children made large contributions to the nation's economic growth. Their work was static only in the sense that they were destined to toil as soon as they were useful, and it continued until they were useless" (King 1995: 41).

Ravenscroft's portrayal of his loom machines as being so efficient that they may be worked by children "such as could not earn their living in any other way" discounts the obvious labor value provided by the children, while simultaneously recommending the appropriateness of employing them in the loom business.[14] Clearly, if the children were paid for their work in the manner that free adults might be paid for labor, regardless of the efficiency level of the machinery being used, they would be able to earn wages. Genovese notes that enslaved children under the age of ten were considered unable to support themselves "and that they did not earn a profit until their late teens" (Genovese 1972:502), though the Ravenscroft letter attests to the employment of much younger children in profitable economic activity. Ravenscroft credits the machine's efficiency (and therefore the machine's inventor) as enabling the use of a younger laborer (considered by him to be otherwise unproductive). The language used to describe the effectiveness of the machines contrasts with the presumed ineffectiveness of the enslaved children, referred to as "it" and "negro."

In the Ravenscroft – Jefferson correspondence, the children are not discussed as inhabiting the social category of "child." The children who work the loom are laborers of a particular capacity. Ravenscroft connects work capacity with the socially constructed

[14] Tucker-Coleman Collection, 1812. College of William and Mary.

racial category of "negro." "Negro" obscures the social categories of "infant" or "child" and sets the racial category in relief as connected solely with work capacity. According to Ravenscroft, the complexity of Jefferson's machinery lends it unfit "to be put into the hands of negroes"[15] - not, instead, too difficult for a child less than five years old to operate. Within this context, age is not a qualifier for skill level; rather, the social category of race is the qualifier. The Ravenscroft-Jefferson correspondence demonstrates that labor was deemed appropriate for very young enslaved children of African descent. Although the correspondence does not indicate if Jefferson took Ravenscroft's advice regarding the loom machines and child labor force, King quotes Jefferson on enslaved labor as recommending "'children until 10. years old to serve as nurses. from 10. to 16. the boys make nails, the girls spin. at age 16 go into the grounds or learn trades'" (King 1995: 22).

The Austin-Twyman papers cited above, in addition to secondary source materials, show the economic contribution and value of enslaved child labor in Virginia. A representative of Hill Dickinson & Company wrote to Twyman on December 2, 1863 to inform him that "there has been a decline in the price of negroes for the past three weeks, but for a few days past they are more steady especially for young negroes...We should think your woman of three children [illegible] likely may bring about $5000."[16] Although the age of the woman is not mentioned, nor are the ages of her children, she and her children were deemed the most likely to bring a profitable sale to Twyman. Thomas Jefferson, in a letter to John W. Eppes, encouraged enslaved women to have

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[15] Tucker-Coleman Collection, 1812. College of William and Mary.
[16] Austin-Twyman Papers, Folder #49. 69 Au7, Letters to Iverson L. Twyman (1810-1864). Swem Library, College of William and Mary.

children because it brought financial increase to himself. Jefferson wrote, "'I consider a woman who brings a child every two years as more profitable than the best man on the farm...what she produces is an addition to capital'" (King 1996: 147). Newborn children were not considered "assets" to a slaveholder, but were viewed as an investment that would grow in value over time (King 1995: 8). For example, Robert Moore Riddick assessed the worth of a breastfeeding infant at twenty-five dollars, an eighteen-month-old girl as worth eighty dollars and a three-year-old boy as worth one hundred and fifty dollars (King 1995: 8).

Children provided slaveholders with increased labor capital, as demonstrated in the estate of the prominent Virginia landholder, Carter Burwell. In 1738, Burwell claimed a labor force comprising fifty people. Burwell no longer needed to purchase slaves after about 1745 because the birth and survival of enslaved children into adulthood "offset" the decrease in his labor force due to deaths among enslaved adults (CWF 1999:301). By 1756 Burwell's estate held a labor force of 96 people (an increase of 46 individuals in 18 years) and a minimum of 154 people in 1786.

Benjamin Powell of Williamsburg drafted a will in 1790 in which he stipulated that his daughter Ann Burwell receive "'all the Slaves and personal Estate which I purchased at the sale of her late Husband John Burwell (except a Negro Girl named Pegg and a Bay Horse called Stephen).'" To his daughter Hannah Drew he left "the Following Slaves to with, Betty, Boy Phil, Boy James, Boy called Billy Drew, Hannah and all her increase (Except her Child Charles) and after the death of my said Daughter Hannah, I give the said Slaves to my Grandson Benjamin Drew.." (CWF 1999:376). Although the reason for Powell's stated exceptions are unclear, he stipulated that slaves were to be

inherited by the next surviving heir if those listed were deceased. Powell was careful to note that all of Hannah's future children were to be owned by his "Daughter Hannah." Another example is provided in the estate of Thomas Everard and Diana Robinson included Scipio, an enslaved 11 year old African who most likely came to the Everard-Robinson estate as Diana's dowry. Their daughter, Frances Everard inherited Beck, an enslaved girl valued at £20 in 1764 (CWF 1999:301). Enslaved children were integral to increasing profitability for slaveholders. Furthermore, enslaved children as "property" were transferable, enabling slaveholding families to commute their property in persons from generation to generation.

CHAPTER 5

Childhood and Servitude: Making Spaces and Places for a New Nation

The responsibility to "oversee" the poor within Virginia transferred from the church vestry to state Overseers of the Poor in 1780 for territories west of the Blue Ridge Mountains and was extended to the entire state in 1785 (Hening 1969[1823], vol. 10:289). Overseers of the Poor were elected or appointed by the courts and were influential members of the communities they served (Kegley 1995: 91). Overseers of the Poor placed poor and/ or orphaned children within apprentice/ indenture service agreements. Court ordered indentures were contracted and witnessed by one or more Overseers of the Poor. The Overseers of Poor occasionally made indenture arrangements with no reference to a court order, indicating that children may have been indentured without a court order due to authority vested in the Overseers of the Poor positions. Parents could indenture their children as well and could contractually arrange to receive a yearly income in exchange for the indentured service of their child. Boys were indentured until the age of twenty-one and girls until the age of eighteen. An indenture document served as a contract that bound the indentured child to service for a specified period of time and delineated the responsibilities of the indentured and the adult apprenticing the child. The standardized language of Indenture contracts, similar to the colonial contracts, continued to create and reinscribe spaces and places for race, class and

gender in the state of Virginia. Child labor, both free and enslaved, continued to provide an inexpensive work force for privileged families.

Young enslaved children began work at early ages, according to narratives of adults who were formerly enslaved as children. Young children could be required to complete tasks that adults performed (King 1995: 21) and, in fact, formerly enslaved Mingo White of Alabama attested to this by remembering, "'I weren't nothing but child endurin' slavery, but I had to work the same as any man'" (King 1995: 23). Andrew Moss remembered specially sized tools for children working in the fields (King 1995: 23). The tasks assigned to children varied but largely included domestic and field work, with some children learning a skilled trade. Richard Steckel, using narratives of ex-slaves and probate records, calculated that 48% of enslaved children in North America began to work before the age of seven, 84% before the age of eleven. Most narratives indicated that enslaved children were working by the age of fourteen (7% of the reports indicate no work before age fourteen). As children, approximately 50% of the males worked in the field versus 20% of the females. Almost half (44%) of the males versus 53% of the female children worked by the age of seven. As adults, 75% of the males were laborers and 25% skilled in a craft, whereas 80% of the women were field laborers and 20% were servants and seamstresses (Steckel 1996:44).

In order to determine if these patterns of child labor were experienced similarly among indentured free children in Virginia, I have analyzed indenture documents for Accomack, Lancaster and Norfolk Counties from1804-1858. My analysis focuses on demonstrating the patterns of inequity created by adults who valued and defined childhood differently according to race, class and gender. While previous analysis within

this thesis provided examples of daily interactions that created and reinforced difference and inequality, the following analysis explores how the routinization of racism influenced children's lives and potential futures.

A catalogue of 164 indenture documents from Accomack County Lancaster County and Norfolk City are the primary sources employed in the following analysis.[17] The indenture documents were either completely hand written or were printed templates with spaces left for hand written details (see figures 10, 11 and 12). The handwritten and printed documents contain largely standardized language. The following analysis is based upon recording the following: name of Overseer(s) of the Poor, date of indenture document, date of court order for indenture, name, age, sex and race (when indicated) of the child to be indentured, name of adult who is indenturing the child, occupation the child is to learn, child's age when the term of service ends, level of supply stipulated, whether education was stipulated, the amount of money paid during and/or at the end of the indenture period and to whom it was paid (if indicated). Furthermore, if a child's parent is the party indenturing the child rather than the Overseers of the Poor, this information was noted. If a child's parent is named within the indenture document or a court note accompanying the document, the parent's name was recorded. Language used to describe the child's status, such as "orphan," "bastard," "free boy/ girl," "of colour," and "negro" was recorded into the database. Forty-four occupations are represented within the indenture documents, with some overlap in description (see Table 1). The

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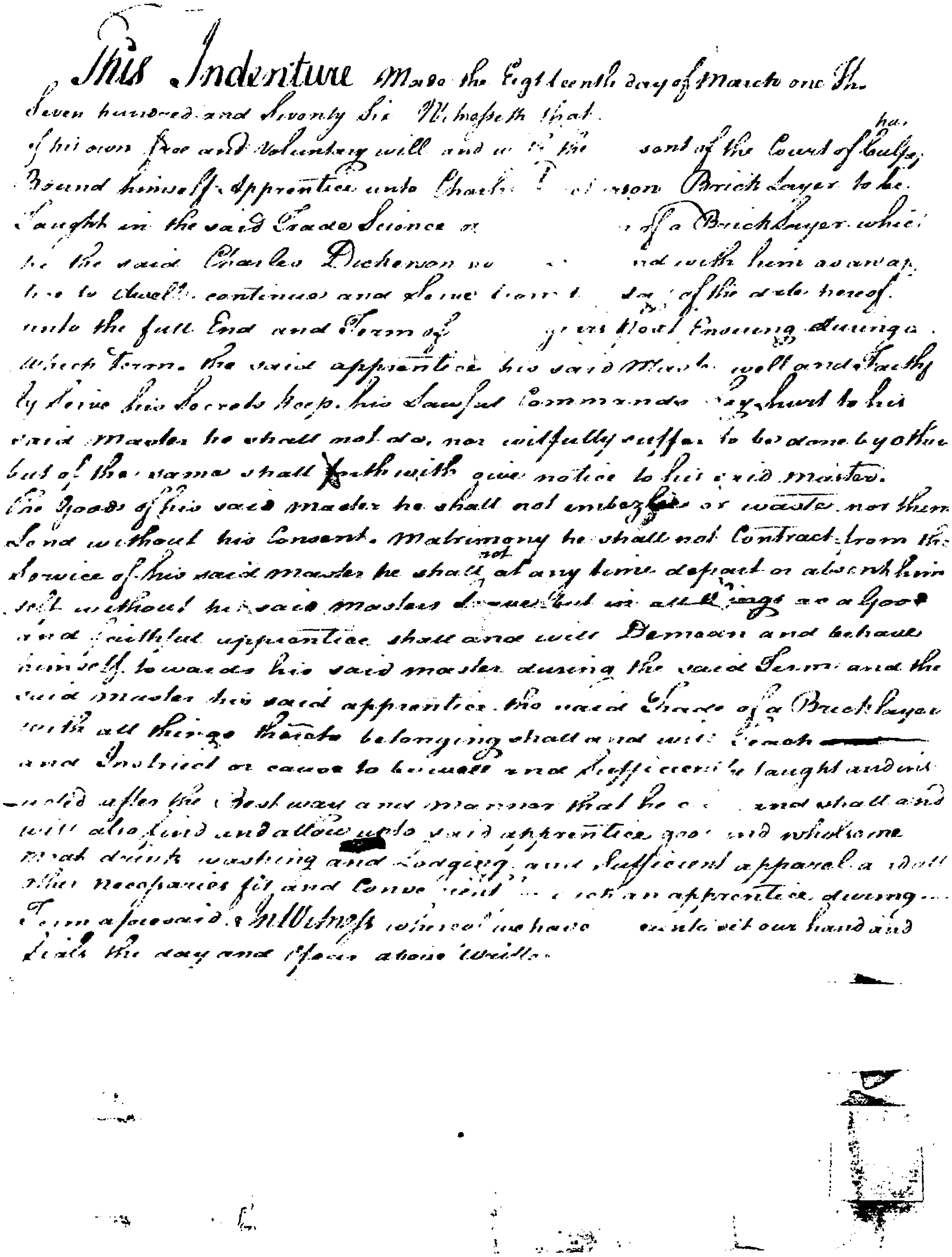
[17] Accomack County Court Records July 1850- October 1867; Lancaster County Court Records. Overseers of the Poor 1773-1861. Box 2, Folder 10; Norfolk County Court Records. Overseers of the Poor 1804-1842. Box 294. Library of Virginia. Archives Branch. Richmond, Virginia 23219.

youngest indentured children were of age two, the oldest nineteen, with the most common age being fifteen years. Girls were indentured until the age of eighteen and boys until the age of twenty-one. The majority (69%) of the indentured children were males, whereas 31% were females. Almost all (82%) of the occupations for which female children were indentured were domestic and/ or agricultural. Only four females (7.8%) included farming as well as housework and one female (2%), was assigned to husbandry as well as spinning and weaving duties.

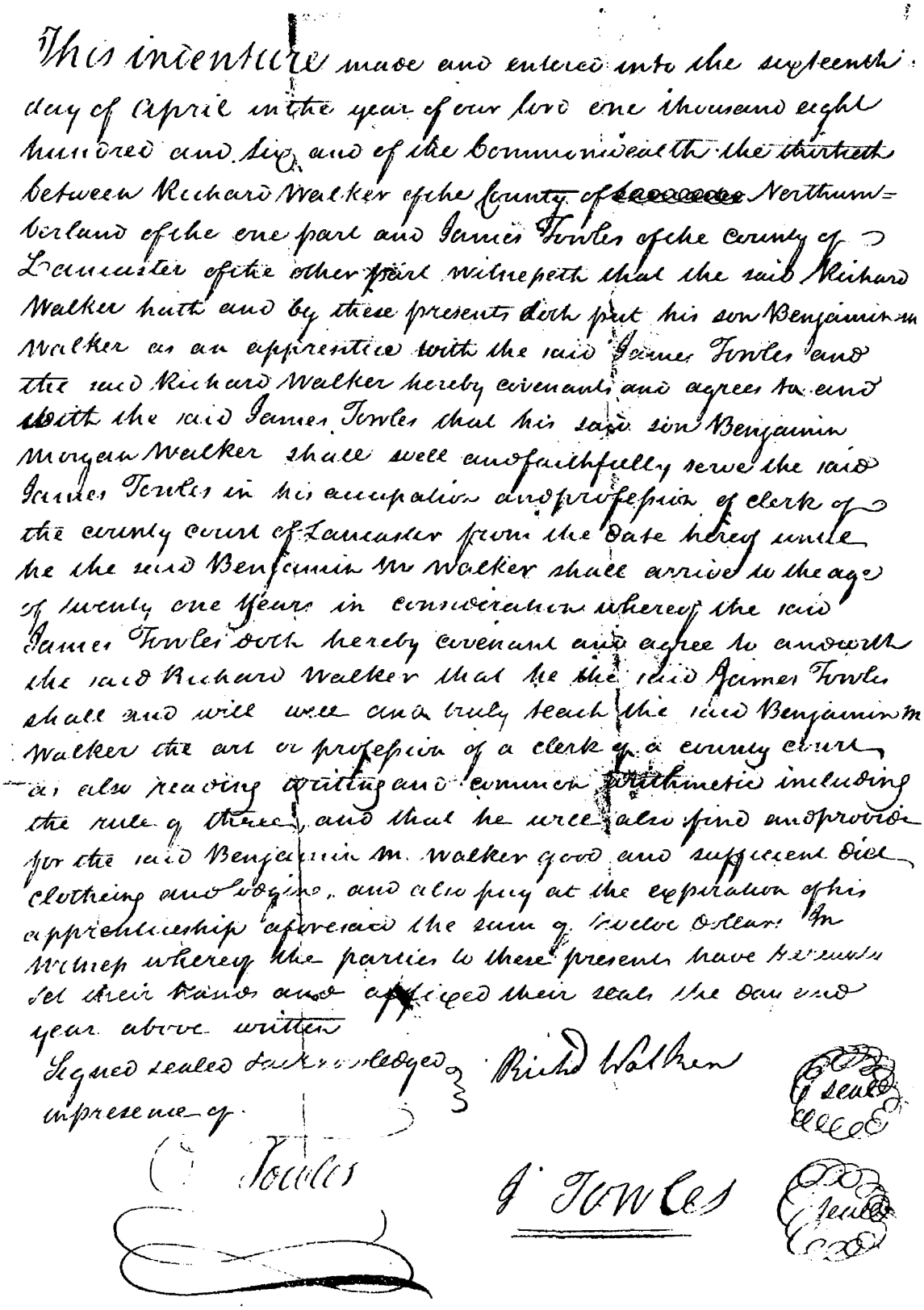
Less than one-fourth (17.6%) of female indentures were taught a skilled occupation as an apprentice. These occupations included Spinning, Weaving and Seamstress. Only two girls (3.9%) were educated and both girls had no racial category indicated on their indenture document. Therefore, girls were less likely to be taught a skilled occupation and the skilled and domestic occupations assigned were largely divided along gender lines, so that girls were mainly trained to be House Servants, Seamstresses, Spinners and Weavers.

The majority (68 %) of the indentured children for whom no race is indicated were indentured to learn a skilled trade or craft versus 32% domestic or agricultural occupations. These children are presumed to be of European descent. Thirty-five different occupations learned by males and females of European descent were represented in the document samples. Girls of European descent represented 4.6% of the skilled occupations versus 10% of the domestic occupations (no indenture documents indicated girls of European descent learning agricultural occupations). Young boys of European descent were indentured to learn a skilled occupation in 82% of the documents and 61% were provided an education of reading, writing and basic arithmetic within their



This Indenture Made the Eighteenth day of March one Thousand Seven hundred and Seventy Six Witnesseth that [illegible] has of his own free and Voluntary will and [illegible] the [con]sent of the Court of Culpeper Bound himself Apprentice unto Charles [illegible]erson Brick Layer to be taught in the said Trade Science or [illegible] of a Bricklayer which he the said Charles Dickenson [illegible] and with him as an ap[prentice] to dwell continue and serve from [illegible] day of the date hereof unto the full End and Term of [illegible] years Next Ensuing during which Term the said apprentice his said Master well and faithfully Serve his Secrets keep his lawful Commands [illegible] hurt to his said Master he shall not do, nor wilfully suffer to be done by others but of the same shall forthwith give notice to his said master. The goods of his said master he shall not embezzle or waste nor them lend without his Consent. Matrimony he shall not Contract from the Service of his said master he shall not at any time depart or absent himself without his said masters [illegible] but in all things as a good and faithful apprentice shall and will Demean and behave himself towards his said master during the said Term and the said master his said apprentice the said Trade of a Bricklayer with all things thereto belonging shall and will Teach and Instruct or cause to be well and Sufficiently taught and instructed after the best way and manner that he c[an] and shall and will also find and allow unto said apprentice goo[d] and wholesome meat drink washing and Lodging and Sufficient apparel a[nd] all other necessaries fit and Conve[nient] [for] such an apprentice during [the] Term aforesaid. In Witness whereof we have [here]unto set our hand and Seals the day and year above Written.

Figure 10: Indenture Document from Culpeper County 1776. Overton Papers, 65 OV2 Box 11, folder 44. Special Collections, Swem Library, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia



This indenture made and entered into the sixteenth day of April in the year of our lord one thousand eight hundred and six and of the Commonwealth the thirtieth between Richard Walker of the County of ~~Lancaster~~ Northumberland of the one part and James Fowles of the county of Lancaster of the other part witnesseth that the said Richard Walker hath and by these presents doth put his son Benjamin M Walker as an apprentice with the said James Fowles and the said Richard Walker hereby covenants and agrees to and with the said James Fowles that his said son Benjamin Morgan Walker shall well and faithfully serve the said James Fowles in his occupation and profession of clerk of the county court of Lancaster from the date hereof until he the said Benjamin M Walker shall arrive to the age of twenty one years in consideration whereof the said James Fowles doth hereby covenant and agree to and with the said Richard Walker that he the said James Fowles shall and will well and truly teach the said Benjamin M Walker the art or profession of a clerk of a county court as also reading writing and common arithmetic including the rule of three and that he will also find and provide for the said Benjamin M. Walker good and sufficient diet clothing and lodging and also pay at the expiration of his apprenticeship aforesaid the sum of twelve dollars In Witness whereof the parties to these presents have hereunto set their hands and affixed their seals the day and year above written

Signed sealed and acknowledged in presence of

Richd Walker (seal)

J. Fowles (seal)

Figure 11: Indenture Document from Lancaster County 1806. Lancaster County Court Records. Overseers of the Poor 1773-1861. Box 2, Folder 10; Library of Virginia. Archives Branch. Richmond, Virginia 23219.

This Indenture, made this fourth day of July in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty Seven between Charles A. Grice, Richd. W. Baugh and Joseph Moore

Overseers of the Poor of the parish of Portsmouth in the County of Norfolk, of the one part, and John Miars ——— of said County, of the other part, Witnesseth, that the said Charles A. Grice, Richd. W. Baugh and Joseph Moore ———

Overseers of the Poor as aforesaid, by virtue of an order of the Court of the aforesaid County, bearing date the nineteenth day of June 1837. have put, placed and bound, and by these presents do put, place and bind, Martha Saunders a free girl of Colour of the age of Ten ——— years, to be an apprentice with him the said John Miars and as an apprentice with him the said John Miars ——— to dwell from the date of these presents, until the said Martha Saunders — shall come to the age of eighteen years, according to the act of the General Assembly in that case made and provided——By and during all which time and term, the said Martha Saunders shall the said John Miars ——— the said master well and faithfully serve in all such lawful business as the said Martha Saunders ——— shall be put unto by her said master, according to the power, wit and ability, of her the said Martha Saunders ——— and honestly and obediently in all things shall behave herself towards her said master, and honestly and orderly towards the rest of the family of the said John Miars.

AND the said John Miars for himself his executors and administrators, doth hereby promise and covenant to and with the said Overseers of the Poor, and every of them, their and every of their executors and administrators, and their and every of their successors for the time being, and to and with the said Martha Saunders that the said John Miars shall the said Martha Saunders in the craft, mystery and occupation of a Spinstress, ~~which the said~~ ~~now uses~~, after the best manner that he can or may teach, instruct and inform, or cause to be taught, instructed and informed, as much as thereunto belongeth or in anywise appertaineth :—And that the said John Miars ——— shall also find and allow unto the said apprentice, sufficient meat, drink, apparel, washing, lodging, and all other things needful and meet for an apprentice during the term aforesaid :—

And also that the said John Miars shall ~~teach, or cause to be taught to the said~~ ~~reading, writing, and common arithmetic, including the Rule of Three~~; and will moreover pay to the said Martha Saunders ——— the sum of twelve dollars at the expiration of the aforesaid term.

In witness whereof the parties to these presents have interchangeably set their hands and seals the day and year first above written.

Signed, sealed and delivered, in presence of

James Murdaugh

Ch. A. Grice [L.S.]
Richard Baugh [L.S.]
Joseph Moore [L.S.]
Jn. Miars [L.S.]

Figure 12: Indenture Document from Norfolk County 1837: Norfolk County Court Records. Overseers of the Poor 1804-1842. Box 294. Library of Virginia. Archives Branch. Richmond, Virginia 23219.

Note that the child is indicated as a "free girl of colour" and that the printed education provisions are crossed out

indenture document. Children of European descent, therefore, were trained in a larger variety of occupations with males more likely to be trained in a skilled trade and educated, whereas the females were more likely to be trained in domestic work.

Among the indentured females, 67% were indicated to be of African descent, and 94% of these females were assigned to domestic and/ or agricultural occupations (only four individuals, representing 12% included agricultural duties as well). None of the indenture contracts for females of African descent included stipulations for education to be provided. Less than one-fourth (18%) of the females of African descent learned skilled occupations and these occupations included Spinstress, Weaving and Seamstress. Young girls of African descent were more likely than girls of European descent to be taught a skilled occupation, but were overall more likely to be taught domestic work. Girls of African descent far outnumbered girls of European descent in the occupation of House Servant (22:8). Girls of African and European descent were assigned gendered occupations such as House Servant, Spinning, Weaving, and Seamstress. However, young men of African descent were more likely than young men of European descent to be indentured for the occupation of House Servant or Waiter, though girls were more likely than boys overall to be assigned to these occupations.

Among indentured males, 40% were indicated to be of African descent, and 89% of these males were assigned to domestic and/ or agricultural occupations (78% were indentured to learn an agricultural rather than domestic trade or a combination of the two). Young males of African descent held 7.6% of the skilled occupations represented in the indenture documents. Only 11% of the males of African descent were indentured

Table 1: Sex, Race and Occupation for Indentured Children in Virginia 1804-1858

Accomack County Court Records July 1850- October 1867; Lancaster County Court Records. Overseers of the Poor 1773-1861. Box 2, Folder 10; Norfolk County Court Records. Overseers of the Poor 1804-1842. Box 294. Library of Virginia. Archives Branch. Richmond, Virginia 23219.

Sex	# Race Indicated	Occupation	Skilled or Domestic/Agriculture	Number
male		Blacksmith	skilled	2
male		Boat Builder	skilled	2
male		Bricklaying & Plastering	skilled	4
male		Cabinet Maker	skilled	3
male	1	Carpenter	skilled	3
male		Carriage Maker	skilled	1
male		Caulker	skilled	2
male		Chair & Gigg Maker	skilled	1
male		Clerk of the County Court	skilled	1
male		Edge Tool Maker	skilled	2
male		Engine Maker	skilled	1
male	28	Farmer	domestic/agriculture	38
2 male, 4 female	6	Farmer and House Servant	domestic/agriculture	6
male	2	Hostler	domestic/agriculture	2
male		House & Ship Carpenter	skilled	1
male	1	House Carpenter	skilled	4
male	1	House Carpenter & Joiner	skilled	2
male		House Joiner	skilled	4
7 male, 30 female	27 (5male 22 female)	House Servant	domestic/agriculture	37
male	1	House Servant & Waiter	domestic/agriculture	1
male		House Servant, Hostler & Farming	domestic/agriculture	1
female	1	Household Service	domestic/agriculture	1
male	1	Husbandry	domestic/agriculture	3
female		Husbandry, Spinning & Weaving	domestic/agriculture	1
male	1	Mariner	skilled	1
female	1	Menial Duties Servant	domestic/agriculture	1
female		Milliner & Mantua Maker	skilled	1
male		Navigation of Chesapeake Bay	skilled	1
male		Painter	skilled	2
male		Saddler	skilled	1
male		Sailor	skilled	2
female	2	Seamstress	skilled	3
female		Seamstress & Weaver	skilled	1
2male 4female	5 (4 female 1 male)	Servant	domestic/agriculture	6
female		Sewing, Knitting & Housework	domestic/agriculture	1
male	1	Shingle Getter	skilled	1
male		Shoe/ Boot & Shoe Maker	skilled	5
male		Slater & Plasterer	skilled	2
female	4	Spinning & Weaving/ Spinstress	skilled	4
male		Tailor	skilled	5
male		Wagon Making	skilled	1
male		Wheel Wright	skilled	2
male		Windsor Chair Maker	skilled	1

to learn a skilled occupation, and these occupations included Carpenter, Mariner, Shingle Getter, House Carpenter and Joiner. None of the indenture contracts included provisions for education to be provided to male indentures of African descent.

Young males of European descent were more likely to be trained in a skilled occupation and provided an education than young males of African descent, and young females of European or African descent. In contrast with wealthier children, the children represented in the indenture documents were probably less educated overall, though more research is necessary to compare the education of wealthier children. However, within the context of this sample of indenture documents, the social categories of race and gender intersected with the social category of child, even among children of the same socio-economic status in shaping the occupations and education level available during childhood. These preparations, in turn, would affect the economic opportunities available to these children as they entered adulthood.

Comparison of Steckel's (1996) analysis of enslaved child labor with the patterns observed in the Virginia child indenture documents provides an opportunity to understand the implications of a racialized hierarchy enacted within Virginia's system of indented servitude, the intersection of race, class, and gender with freedom status in relation to child labor in Virginia, and the construction of social inequality. Within the indentured population, 12% were indentured by the age of seven (55% of these children were of African descent) verses the 48% of enslaved children reported by Steckel to have been working by this age. Among indentured children, 39% were contracted as an apprentice/indentured laborer by the age of eleven (66% of African descent) versus 84% working by this age in the enslaved population. More than half (57%) of Virginia

children were indentured by the age of fourteen (65% of African descent) versus 83% working by this age in the enslaved population. The pattern displayed within this research indicates that the indentured population was not as young, overall, when they began to work. However, indentured children of African descent were over represented in the younger categories and were assigned non- skilled field or domestic labor occupations in the majority of cases. No children of African descent were provided education.

The intersection of the social category of "race" with the social category of child, whether free or enslaved, involved the potential to experience labor at younger ages. The intersection of the social category of "gender" with "child," regardless of freedom status, influenced the educational opportunities and the type of occupation deemed appropriate – though the level of effect was greater for girls of African descent.

CONCLUSION

Frederick Douglass, in an address at Western Reserve College on June 2, 1854 titled "The Claims of the Negro Ethnologically Considered," quoted the *Richmond Examiner*, published in Richmond, Virginia, as an example of the pro-slavery argument against the humanity of Africans and their descendents.

> The white peasant is free, and if he is a man of will and intellect, can rise in the scale of society; or at least his offspring may. He is not deprived by law of those 'inalienable rights,' 'liberty and the pursuit of happiness,' by the use of it. But here is the essence of slavery – that we do declare the Negro destitute of these powers. We bind him by law to the condition of the laboring peasant for every, without his consent, and we bind his posterity after him. Now, the true question is, have we a right to do this? If we have not, all discussions about his comfortable situation, and the actual condition of free laborers elsewhere, are quite beside the point. If the Negro has the same right to his liberty and the pursuit of his own happiness that the white man has, then we commit the greatest wrong and robbery to hold him a slave – an act at which the sentiment of justice must revolt in every heart and Negro slavery is an institution which that sentiment must sooner or later blot from the face of the earth. – *Richmond Examiner* (Douglass 1854 in Foner and Taylor 1999:283)

However, "after stating the question thus, the Examiner boldly asserts that the Negro has no such rights – BECAUSE HE IS NOT A MAN!" (Douglass 1854 in Foner and Taylor 1999:283). This basic tenet in support of slavery is argued in terms of an a-historical and culturally displaced "Negro," a social and legal category synonymous with slavery, and a life of labor in perpetuity. However, this racialized category transcended the legal status of "slave" and was enacted within the institution of indented servitude and apprenticeship. While the Examiner claims that the enslaved lived life within the

conditions of the "poor white peasant," the above comparison demonstrates that this is not the case for enslaved children of African descent nor free children of African descent. The "poor white peasant" and the "free Negro" are in fact not offered the same position or resources by which they may "rise in the scale of society," but free children of African descent were prepared for a life of labor, comparable to the experiences of enslaved children.

Social inequality existed within European, and particularly, English society throughout the period of European and British expansion. However, within the colony of Virginia, an English identity became racialized in terms of European and "white" identity in juxtaposition to non-Europeans – specifically Native Americans and Africans within Virginia during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Childhood for children of Virginia's elite corresponded to the European conceptualization of "child." However, enslaved and indentured children were not afforded special preparation that centered on education, but were prepared for a laboring position within society. Enslaved children of African descent were often referred to as property or labor units, without reference to their age or status as "child." The intersection of "child" and "race" throughout the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries was contextually defined and enacted. Within the documentary records analyzed in this study, the routinization of racist ideology defined elite white children as "children" according to the European conceptualization, poor white male children as educated laborers (more often employed in a skilled craft) and enslaved and free children of African descent as domestic and agricultural laborers without education. Access to

resources of education and occupational skills beyond agricultural and domestic labor placed children of African descent at a disadvantage as they exited their indenture tenure.

The delineation of "race" within the nineteenth century indenture documents demonstrates the precarious status of childhood for free children of African descent. These children were more likely to be assigned occupations that mirrored the labor conducted by enslaved children. Gendered hierarchies nested within racial hierarchies further defined the adult role for which a child was prepared. While elite female children may have been educated, indentured females and enslaved females of European and African descent were rarely educated. As the analysis of indenture documents demonstrates, young females of African descent were more likely to be indentured as house servants than their counterparts of European descent as well as young males of African descent.

Whiteness, and particularly the white male, was constructed as the "natural" position of privilege within Virginia as colony and state. While the importation of "poor" children from London indicates social inequality among London society, the marker of "poor" remained a qualifier that implied an unnatural deviation from the position of privilege held by elite whites. This qualifier continued to appear in descriptions of indentured children. However, the marker of deviation for indentured children of African descent was "free." The assumption that the absence of a racial indicator implied European descent and the absence of "poor" implied privilege as the "natural" order, constructed whiteness in contrast to people of color as Virginia transitioned from colony to state – and constructed Virginians-as-Americans as "white" unless otherwise noted. Michael Blakey, commenting on the contemporary manifestations of racism in America

within the Smithsonian museums, states that "reflections of the ideology of white supremacy are so pervasive as to seem invisible" (Blakey 1991:20). This study has focused on the daily construction of inequality within the childhoods of Virginia children and the mechanisms by which Americanness as whiteness and whiteness as superior and privileged was made invisible in Virginia as a colony and state within the nation.

"Childhood" according to the European conceptualization described by Ariès was not experienced by all children in Virginia during the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries – but varied in experience and material implications according to "race," "class," and "gender." However, the European concept of childhood as a formative period was applied to all children in terms of preparing them for specific roles within a society that was ranked in hierarchical terms of inequality. Virginia's letters, court decisions, and contracts demonstrate the ways in which social inequality was constructed and injustices were deployed, lived, negotiated and challenged in everyday circumstances and daily interactions involving children. My hope is that in understanding the constructions we inherit from the past, and the process by which they were maintained and reinscribed, we may more effectively challenge and change the inequalities and injustice created and lived daily in our present social world.

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