From Slaves, Convicts, and Servants to Free Passengers: The Transformation of Immigration in the Era of the American Revolution

Aaron S. Fogleman

For the first two centuries of the history of British North America, one word best characterizes the status of the vast majority of immigrants—servitude. From the founding of Jamestown until the Revolution, nearly three-fourths of all immigrants to the thirteen colonies arrived in some condition of unfreedom. (See tables 1 and 2.) These migrations of slaves, convicts, and servants played a critical role in the demographic, economic, social, and cultural development of the colonies. When they came (or were brought) in large numbers, these strangers often caused a sensation in colonial society. Yet at a time when servitude was considered "normal," few were concerned that their arrival in America meant a temporary or permanent loss of freedom for most of them.[1]

On the eve of the Revolution, these new servant immigrants contributed to a complex world of the free and the unfree, occupying different conditions of liberty and bondage, some tied to masters for brief periods, others viewed as criminal outcasts rightly condemned to forced labor, and many more branded by race and doomed to servitude for life, with no rights of their own. All were interwoven into what Gordon S. Wood has called a "hierarchy of ranks and degrees of dependency" that was simultaneously a pluralistic world of peoples from Europe, Africa, and the Americas.[2] Before 1776, for most arrivals, coming to America meant a curtailment

[1] For summations of recent literature on transatlantic migrations to early America, see P. C. Emmer, ed., *Colonialism and Migration: Indentured Labor before and after Slavery* (Dordrecht, 1986); Susan E. Klepp, ed., *The Demographic History of the Philadelphia Region, 1600–1860* (Philadelphia, 1989); Bernard Bailyn and Philip D. Morgan, eds., *Strangers within the Realm: Cultural Margins of the First British Empire* (Chapel Hill, 1991); Ida Altman and James Horn, eds., *"To Make America": European Emigration in the Early Modern Period* (Berkeley, 1991); and Nicholas Canny, ed., *Europeans on the Move: Studies on European Migration, 1500–1800* (Oxford, Eng., 1994).
[2] Gordon S. Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (New York, 1992), 3–8, esp. 6.

Table 1
Estimated Immigration into the Thirteen Colonies and the United States
by Legal Status and Condition of Servitude, 1607–1819
(to the Nearest 100 Immigrants)

| | Unfree by Condition of Servitude | | | | |
	Slaves	Convicts and Prisoners[a]	Indentured Servants	Free	Total
Before the American Revolution					
1607–1699	33,200	2,300	96,600	66,300	198,400
1700–1775	278,400	52,200	103,600	151,600	585,800
During and after the American Revolution					
1776–1809	114,600	1,000	18,300	253,900	387,800
1810–1819	7,000	0	5,300	134,300	146,600
Total Immigration, 1607–1819	433,200	55,500	223,800	606,700	1,318,600

SOURCES: See appendix.
NOTE: Adjustments were made for rounding errors.
  [a] Includes political exiles and kidnapping victims.

Table 2
Estimated Immigration into the Thirteen Colonies and the United States,
by Legal Status and Condition of Servitude, 1607–1819 (in Percentages)

| | Unfree by Condition of Servitude | | | | |
	Slaves	Convicts and Prisoners[a]	Indentured Servants	Free	Total Percentage
Before the American Revolution					
1607–1699	17	1	49	33	100
1700–1775	47	9	18	26	100
During and after the American Revolution					
1776–1809	30	0	5	65	100
1810–1819	5	0	4	91	100
Total immigration, 1607–1819	33	4	17	46	100

SOURCES: See appendix.
NOTE: Adjustments were made for rounding errors.
  [a] Includes political exiles and kidnapping victims.

of freedom. The literary and historical image of America as the land of unlimited opportunity or as a "best poor man's country" hardly resonates with the realities of servitude for most of the strangers who completed the journey in the colonial period.

But in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, something fundamentally and permanently altered the nature of North American immigration. When war and independence came after 1775, disruptions in the British Empire forced many involved in the immigrant trade on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean to reconsider how they would do business. Further, many Americans concluded that a large immigration of slaves, convicts, and servants was incompatible with the egalitarian ideas of the Revolution and with the cultural changes occurring in the United States. These developments transformed an immigration primarily of slaves, convicts, and indentured servants into one of free subjects. By the 1820s, when the United States government began keeping official statistics, the transformation was already so complete that it obscured the changes that had occurred before, during, and after the Revolution.

The fundamental transformation in the nature of early American immigration is important for many reasons. First, it reveals significant unfreedom during the early chapters of the "immigrant" story and thus the complicated, changing interaction of freedom, unfreedom, and immigration in American history. Second, a study of this transformation addresses the important question: How (if at all) did the Revolution impact ordinary people in American society? Did the Revolution fundamentally alter the outlook for "freedom" for most Americans? By assessing the extent to which the American Revolution caused a transformation in immigration, study of this little-known aspect of the immigrant story may help answer larger questions about continuity and change in the revolutionary era and about America itself.

Immigration and Servitude during the Colonial Period

Since the founding of English colonies in the seventeenth century, immigrants—people who came from somewhere else—have shaped and reshaped society and culture in North America. In the first century of settlement, most colonies south of New England depended on large-scale immigration from the English provinces to maintain their populations and allow economic growth. Without such immigration they would have collapsed. Nearly 150,000 English immigrants arrived before 1700, providing labor, markets, and settlers to the developing "immigrant societies" there. (See appendix, table A.1.) They may have brought with them their regional folkways, which in turn shaped the varied cultural development of the colonies.[3]

Not all seventeenth-century immigrants were English, of course. Many other European and African arrivals began to establish the ethnic diversity that became

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[3] On the transfer of regional folkways, see David Hackett Fischer, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (New York, 1989).

the hallmark of American society. Over 6,000 Dutch, perhaps 5,000 Irish, and smaller numbers of Scots, French, and others had settled on the mainland by 1700. (See table A.1.) African slave importations did not reach numerically significant levels until after 1680. Indeed, in that year less than 5 percent of the English colonial population on the mainland was of African origin and fewer than 10,000 slaves had been imported. By the end of the century, however, forced African immigration had made a significant impact on the population, culture, and economies of the southern colonies.[4]

In the seventeenth century, servitude played an important role in the immigration of both Africans and Europeans to all the English colonies in North America. In addition to African slaves imported into the colonies, approximately one-half of the European immigrants of this period may have arrived as servants. Some convicts and other prisoners were forced to go to America, where they were sold as indentured servants. They included many Scots banished by Oliver Cromwell for their activities during the English Civil War, the Scottish Covenanters who resisted English rule, and criminals. Irish prisoners taken from 1651 to 1654, English Quakers in the 1660s, and some kidnapping victims were transported involuntarily to the colonies and sold as servants. Some personal servants followed their masters to the colonies. But the majority of unfree arrivals were voluntary migrants who chose America to seek economic improvement and could not afford the costs. Perhaps 70 to 85 percent of the immigrants to colonies on the Chesapeake Bay before 1700 were indentured servants, as were about 16 percent of participants in the Great Migration to New England in the 1630s. Some of the New England immigrants became servants because they were poor, but others were not and allowed their children to become indentured servants as a form of apprenticeship. Perhaps nearly one-half of the Dutch immigrants to New Netherland came as servants. Some signed contracts with the Dutch West India Company or the city of Amsterdam, which were the least restrictive. These immigrants agreed to stay for three years and to repay the advances they had received. Other contracts, for example, those used at the Rensselaerswyck settlement, restricted the immigrants' freedoms more significantly. They were required to remain in the patroonship, or domain, for three to four years and to work at a specific job, for which they received a yearly salary, room, and board. Some worked as servants and others as independent producers. Smaller enterprises and private masters also used contracts of this type. None of the contracts used in the colony was negotiable. In short, the majority of seventeenth-century European immigrants to the English North American colonies temporarily forfeited much of their freedom in exchange for passage and employment in America.[5]

[4] In 1680 only 7% of the population in the South was black. By 1700 the figure had risen to 21%. See U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970*, vol. II (Washington, 1975), 1168.

[5] David Dobson, *Scottish Emigration to Colonial America, 1607–1785* (Athens, Ga., 1994), 1–80; Abbot Emerson Smith, *Colonists in Bondage: White Servitude and Convict Labor in America, 1607–1776* (Chapel Hill, 1947), 89–203; David Cressy, *Coming Over: Migration and Communication between England and New England in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, Eng., 1987), 52–63; James Horn, "'To Parts beyond the Seas': Free Emi-

Many historians have characterized indentured servitude as a harsh system that mistreated immigrants; however, this view needs to be modified. The system provided opportunities for improvement to many who voluntarily chose to make a go of it in the New World. For many, the system was comparable to servitude and apprenticeship in England. The terms of service were longer in America, and the labor was generally more arduous, but the incentives via freedom dues were greater than in Britain, and those ex-servants who set up as small planters probably did better than if they had stayed at home. In fact, when falling real wages and bad harvests in mid-seventeenth-century England made the overseas option more attractive, and when indenturing oneself to pay transportation costs was the only way to cross the Atlantic, then the indentured servant system actually offered opportunities. Moreover, until about 1660 the chances were high that a young man who completed an indenture in the Chesapeake could achieve a comfortable position in society.[6]

Although indentured servitude offered opportunity to some struggling European migrants, opportunities were even greater for those who traveled as free passengers. In the seventeenth century this included most of the New England and French Huguenot settlers and a small portion of the Chesapeake settlers. Free immigrants came from socially diverse backgrounds, but in general they were of a higher social status than indentured servants. Some came from the lower end of the English social system and were barely distinguishable from the servants, while others came from the middle ranks. The latter included small merchants, petty retailers, craftsmen, and men with modest sums to invest in small-scale merchandising or perhaps a tobacco plantation. Still others were part of the elite—merchants, gentry, and government officials. The free immigrants left for many reasons, but economic improvement was the most common. Some (in both New England and the Chesapeake) combined desire for profit with religious motives for migrating or fled England to escape debt or other trouble. The Huguenots left France because of religious persecution, but many of them chose to go to America only after sojourning in London and deciding that economic opportunities might be better in the colonies. Some who went to the Chesapeake intended to remain there only one or two years, while others intended to stay for good. Kinship networks were important in encouraging and helping maintain migrations and in forging links with the major mercantile centers, especially London.[7]

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gration to the Chesapeake in the Seventeenth Century," in *"To Make America,"* ed. Altman and Horn, 85–103, esp. 91; Virginia DeJohn Anderson, *New England's Generation: The Great Migration and the Formation of Society and Culture in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, Eng., 1991), 24–26, 108–12; Richard S. Dunn, "Servants and Slaves: The Recruitment and Employment of Labor," in *Colonial British America: Essays in the New History of the Early Modern Era,* ed. Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole (Baltimore, 1984), 157–94, esp. 159; Ernst van den Boogaart, "The Servant Migration to New Netherland, 1624–1664," in *Colonialism and Migration,* ed. Emmer, 55–82, esp. 59–65.

   [6] See, for example, Dunn, "Servants and Slaves," 157–94; and Russell R. Menard, "British Migration to the Chesapeake Colonies in the Seventeenth Century," in *Colonial Chesapeake Society,* ed. Lois Green Carr, Philip D. Morgan, and Jean B. Russo (Chapel Hill, 1988), 99–132, esp. 103–17.

   [7] Horn, "'To Parts beyond the Seas,'" 85–103; Cressy, *Coming Over,* 37–73; Jon Butler, *The Huguenots in America: A Refugee People in New World Society* (Cambridge, Mass., 1983), 41–67.

In the late seventeenth century, the preponderance of immigration to the English colonies in America shifted dramatically from servants and free passengers to slaves. Many historians have emphasized that the planters in the English Caribbean colonies relied on indentured servant labor in the early decades of settlement. Most servants were young English males leaving deteriorating conditions at home. By the late seventeenth century, however, conditions for workers began improving in England, and few wanted to emigrate to America. As prices for lifetime slave workers became competitive with those for short-term servants, planters shifted to the use of African slaves to meet their labor demands. Thus the immigration of indentured servants declined beginning in the late seventeenth century, while that of African slaves increased rapidly.[8]

The shift from servants to slaves occurred later on the mainland than in the Caribbean; the crucial transition occurred between 1680 and 1720. Before 1680 fewer than 10,000 African slaves were imported into the English mainland colonies, while well over 100,000 Europeans settled there, most of whom were servants. From 1680 to 1720, however, over 50,000 slaves were imported into the mainland, and the total number of European immigrants (servants and free passengers) decreased significantly. The transition was most pronounced in the Chesapeake colonies and in South Carolina, where opportunities for new planters in the tobacco market, South Carolina planters' importation of slaves skilled in rice production, and improving conditions for workers in England caused the shift. In 1680 the combined colonial population of Virginia and Maryland was only 7 percent black; in South Carolina it was only 17 percent black. By 1720 the respective figures were 25 percent and 70 percent. Immigration and society in the southern colonies had been transformed, just as they had been in the Caribbean.[9]

The transition from servants to slaves in the late seventeenth century has led many historians to postulate an inverse relationship between the two types of migrations. Not only did large-scale slave importations dominate migrations and labor markets in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries but the demise of slavery in the Caribbean during the nineteenth century also revived indentured servitude there. In other words, when indentured servant immigrations were high, slave importations were low, and vice versa. Some historians have modified the model to fit the mainland, emphasizing the gradual decline of indentured servi-

    [8] Edmund S. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia* (New York, 1975); Russell R. Menard, "From Servants to Slaves: The Transformation of the Chesapeake Labor System," *Southern Studies,* 16 (1977), 355–90; Russell R. Menard, "Migration, Ethnicity, and the Rise of an Atlantic Economy: The Re-Peopling of British America, 1600–1790," in *A Century of European Migrations, 1830–1930,* ed. Rudolph J. Vecoli and Suzanne M. Sinke (Urbana, 1991), 58–77; David Galenson, *White Servitude in Colonial America: An Economic Analysis* (Cambridge, Eng., 1981), 141–68; David Eltis, "Free and Coerced Transatlantic Migrations: Some Comparisons," *American Historical Review,* 88 (April 1983), 251–80, esp. 260–61; Henry A. Gemery, "Markets for Migrants: English Indentured Servitude and Emigration in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," in *Colonialism and Migration,* ed. Emmer, 33–54; Donald R. Wright, *African Americans in the Colonial Era: From African Origins through the American Revolution* (Arlington Heights, 1990), 49–61. For a summary of arguments on why the English servant migration declined rapidly in the late seventeenth century, see Dunn, "Servants and Slaves," 159–64.

    [9] See appendix for estimates of African and European immigration. For percentages of whites and blacks in the colonial populations, see Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States,* II, 1168.

tude there in the eighteenth century, but the perception of an inverse relationship between servant and slave migrations to the mainland is still common.[10]

Yet a model that posits an inverse relationship works for the mainland colonies only during the first century of European settlement. Although the immigration of indentured servants clearly declined after 1680—just as slave importations increased significantly—the decline was only temporary. After 1720 the immigration of slaves and servants (including convicts) increased to record levels. This corroborates the view that the shift from servants to slaves occurred only in the Caribbean. The mainland colonies still needed both forms of labor, and although improving economic conditions at home meant a decline in the servant pool from England, new supplies came from Germany and Ireland. Indeed, in the half century before independence, indentured servitude, which languished in the French and English Caribbean colonies and in Canada, flourished in the thirteen colonies and played a crucial role in the immigration of tens of thousands of Europeans who helped transform the ethnic, cultural landscape of British North America.[11]

The increase of slave and servant migrations to the thirteen colonies in the eighteenth century was part of an increase in all forms of migration. The volume of eighteenth-century immigration became so large that by midcentury, people born elsewhere may have constituted a larger percentage of the American population than they did later, when the absolute number of immigrants peaked. The percentage of foreign-born inhabitants in the colonial population may have been *increasing* throughout the eighteenth century, after having earlier declined from the skewed levels of early settlement. The demand for labor and settlers became so extreme that record numbers of African slaves, British convicts, indentured servants, and free passengers were imported. Indeed, in the generation before independence, the mechanisms and markets for transporting all four groups flourished in British North America.[12]

[10] For the argument that the substitution of slaves for servants on the mainland began in the late seventeenth century but was not complete by the Revolution, see David W. Galenson, "The Rise and Fall of Indentured Servitude in the Americas: An Economic Analysis," *Journal of Economic History*, 44 (March 1984), 1–26, esp. 11–13. See also Stanley L. Engerman, "Servants to Slaves to Servants: Contract Labour and European Expansion," in *Colonialism and Migration*, ed. Emmer, 263–94; and Ida Altman and James Horn, "Introduction," in *"To Make America,"* ed. Altman and Horn, 1–29, esp. 5–6. On the revival of indentured servitude in the Caribbean after the abolition of slavery, see David Northrup, *Indentured Labor in the Age of Imperialism, 1834–1922* (Cambridge, Eng., 1995); and Walton Look Lai, *Indentured Labor, Caribbean Sugar: Chinese and Indian Migrants to the British West Indies, 1838–1918* (Baltimore, 1993).

[11] Richard S. Dunn argues that a complete shift from servants to slaves occurred only in the Caribbean. See Dunn, "Servants and Slaves," 159–64. On similar developments in the French colonies, see Frédéric Mauro, "French Indentured Servants for America, 1500–1800," in *Colonialism and Migration*, ed. Emmer, 83–104; Leslie Choquette, "Recruitment of French Emigrants to Canada, 1600–1760," in *"To Make America,"* ed. Altman and Horn, 131–71; Christian Heutz de Lemps, "Indentured Servants Bound for the French Antilles in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," *ibid.*, 172–203; Peter Moogk, "Manon's Fellow Exiles: Emigration from France to North America before 1763," in *Europeans on the Move*, ed. Canny, 236–60.

[12] On the number of foreign-born in the population, see Aaron Spencer Fogleman, *Hopeful Journeys: German Immigration, Settlement, and Political Culture in Colonial America, 1717–1775* (Philadelphia, 1996), 1–4, 155–62, esp. tables A.1, A.2, and A.3. A. Roger Ekirch argues that Americans in general did not want convicts and often protested to the British authorities for sending so many, yet planters in the Chesapeake found them desirable because they were much cheaper than slaves, served longer terms than indentured servants, and received no freedom dues. See A. Roger Ekirch, *Bound for America: The Transportation of British Convicts to the Colonies, 1718–1775* (Oxford, Eng., 1987), 124–25.

The large volume of eighteenth-century migrations to the thirteen colonies has been overlooked by historians who have neglected to consider the African slaves. In the 1970s Peter H. Wood and C. Vann Woodward lamented the exclusion of African slaves from the ranks of "immigrants." They attributed it to racism and the tendency of immigration historians to begin their studies in the nineteenth century, as African immigration into the United States was ending. Too often historians have used the European model to explain immigration and the immigrant story in American history—whatever does not fit that model may not be understood as immigration. In my view, however, immigrants were people who came from somewhere else to the mainland colonies or the United States (as opposed to having been born there). The immigrant story critical to the demographic, economic, and cultural development of the United States is an ongoing, complex, and changing tale that enlists a cast of characters from nearly all parts of the globe. In the past generation that view has become more accepted, as historians have given increasing attention to slaves in the colonial period as forced African immigrants. But a comprehensive study of immigration into British North America and the United States that includes Africans and takes into account their varied ethnic backgrounds is still lacking, even though the number of slaves imported may have equaled or surpassed that of European immigrants in the eighteenth century.[13]

From 1700 to independence, nearly 300,000 slaves were imported into the thirteen colonies, and they were crucial to the transformation of the economic and social systems in the Tidewater South. As African immigration increased and the slave system expanded, conditions for the new arrivals and their descendants worsened. Slave codes began evolving in the Chesapeake as early as the mid-seventeenth century, and more followed in the eighteenth century. Planters used the codes to help control the black population by restricting their mobility and other legal rights, including the right to hold property. In South Carolina, the shift to rice production in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries led to the large-scale importation of slaves. The large African immigration created a black majority in the colony that heightened anxieties among whites, who responded by strengthening the legal codes to control the slave population. This and the rising mortality resulting from the switch to staple agriculture severely deteriorated conditions for South Carolina slaves. In Georgia slavery was not legal until the mid-eighteenth century, but the colony's Low Country planters quickly caught on and created a slave society that resembled South Carolina's. By the mid-eighteenth century, the number of free blacks in the southern colonies had declined, while the slaves toiled in far harsher working conditions than any other workers endured as they confronted increasingly hierarchical, patriarchal, and racist societies.[14]

[13] See Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York, 1974), 167–68; and C. Vann Woodward, *American Counterpoint: Slavery and Racism in the North-South Dialogue* (Boston, 1964), 5. A highly influential work from the 1940s does not consider Africans in its chapter on the colonial period. See Marcus L. Hansen, *The Atlantic Migration, 1607–1860: A History of the Continuing Settlement of the United States* (Cambridge, Mass., 1940), 25–52.

[14] See, for example, Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, 293–387; Wood, *Black Majority*; Allan Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves: The Development of Southern Culture in the Chesapeake, 1680–1800* (Chapel Hill, 1986); and Wright, *African Americans in the Colonial Era*, 56–69.
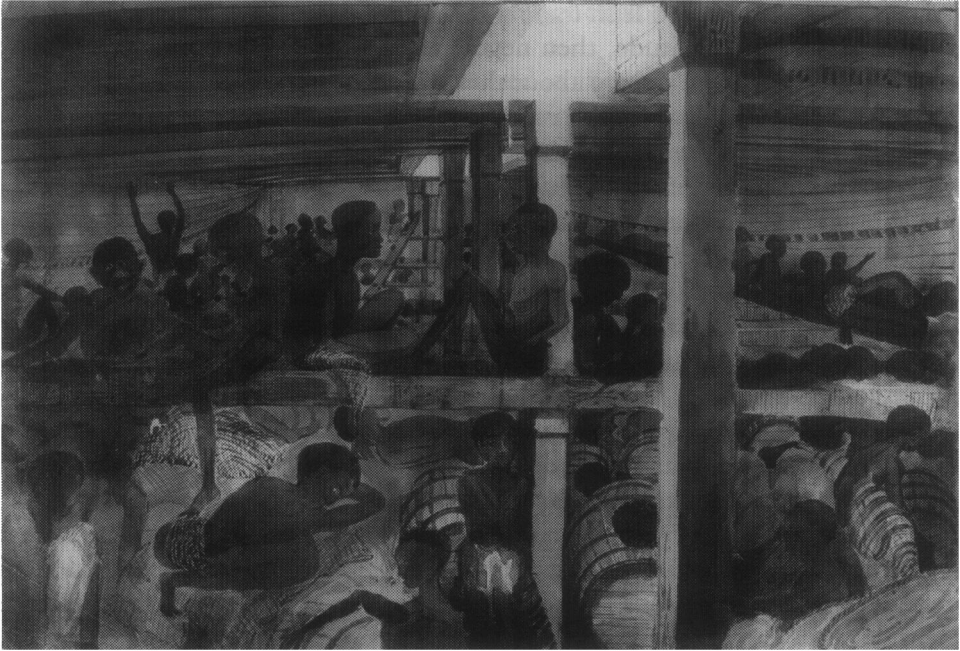
Watercolor painted by a British naval officer depicting slaves
being transported to America (date unknown).
Courtesy National Maritime Museum, London.

Indentured servitude too flourished in the eighteenth century, although it under-
went many important changes. Perhaps more than 100,000 of the new arrivals from
1700 to 1775 were indentured servants, and this figure does not include the many
convicts, who were often sold as servants. While the number of English servants
migrating to the thirteen colonies declined from the high levels of the seventeenth
century, these losses were more than offset by the large numbers of non-English
servants who came, especially Germans and Irish.[15]

In the 1720s a new form of servitude, the "redemptioner" system, developed
among German-speaking immigrants. Philadelphia merchants in the immigrant
trade found that Pennsylvania-based relatives, friends, and former fellow villagers
of poor immigrants were often willing to redeem their fare costs. The merchants
in Philadelphia and Rotterdam (the port of embarkation for most German emi-
grants) developed a sophisticated system in which immigrants signed contracts in
Rotterdam stating how much time they had to get in touch with people in Penn-
sylvania who might pay their passage. If they did not raise the money within that
time, the new arrivals, or redemptioners, were auctioned as indentured servants.
In the redemptioner system, the length and terms of service were negotiable, while
the prices for servants (that is, passage costs) were fixed. In contrast, the common

[15] See table 1 for estimated numbers of servants arriving in the eighteenth century.

practice in the English and Irish trade since the early seventeenth century had been to fix the length of servitude, then negotiate the price for servants.[16]

There has been much debate about the conditions immigrant servants endured. Historians have recently corrected earlier views that focused on worst-case scenarios and emphasized the horrors of the servant trade. For example, English servants were fewer and more skilled in the eighteenth than in the seventeenth century, and so they enjoyed better conditions than their predecessors. Some immigrants even used servitude as a "safety net" or apprenticeship to ensure that they would not plunge immediately into poverty upon arrival in America. In other words, they ensured employment and support in America by signing an indenture before departing. This allowed them to save what means they had taken with them and learn the customs of the country at another's expense. After their period of service they would better know how to invest their money and would have the benefit of their freedom dues. Some immigrant families indentured their children, sparing themselves full passage costs for the entire family and ensuring that someone else paid to raise the children and perhaps to teach them skills during the first, costly years of settlement in America. Parents in Europe and colonial America often apprenticed their children and for similar reasons. In short, according to recent accounts, indentured servitude was a largely successful economic enterprise that helped meet the high demand for labor in the colonies and helped many poorer immigrants establish themselves in America.[17]

While many immigrant servants benefited from the system, many others did not. Indeed, indentured servitude was rarely advertised as one of the attractions America offered. The conditions of immigrant servitude in British North America were generally worse than white servitude in the French colonies or in England. French immigrant servants sometimes received a salary and return passage. A one-year term of service was typical in England and three years in the French colonies, whereas four-year contracts were normal for adult immigrants in the English colonies. Some had to endure beatings (which were not usually allowed in England) and excessive extensions of service as punishment for running away. Further, in the English colonies indentured servants were bought and sold much more frequently than English servants or apprentices. For German indentured servants and redemptioners the worst conditions of overcrowded ships and abusive agents were confined to a few years, 1738, 1749–1754, 1764, and 1773. But well over one-half of all Ger-

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[16] For a comparison of the "redemptioner" system with traditional "indentured servitude," see Marianne Wokeck, "Harnessing the Lure of the 'Best Poor Man's Country': The Dynamics of German-Speaking Immigration to British North America, 1683–1783," in *"To Make America,"* ed. Altman and Horn, 204–43, esp. 217–18. See also Günther Moltmann, "The Migration of German Redemptioners to North America, 1720–1820," in *Colonialism and Migration,* ed. Emmer, 105–22; and Farley Grubb, "German Immigration to Pennsylvania, 1709 to 1820," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History,* 20 (Winter 1990), 417–36.

[17] Galenson, *White Servitude in Colonial America,* 51–64; Galenson, "Rise and Fall of Indentured Servitude in the Americas," 1–26; Nicholas Canny, "English Migration into and across the Atlantic during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," in *Europeans on the Move,* ed. Canny, 39–75, esp. 63; Bernard Bailyn with Barbara DeWolfe, *Voyagers to the West: A Passage in the Peopling of America on the Eve of the Revolution* (New York, 1986), 172–73; Wokeck, "Harnessing the Lure," 217–18; Sharon V. Salinger, *"To Serve Well and Faithfully": Labor and Indentured Servants in Pennsylvania, 1682–1800* (Cambridge, Eng., 1987).

mans who immigrated through Philadelphia in the colonial period arrived in those years.[18]

Conditions for servants may have improved in the early eighteenth century, but they worsened in the generation before independence. In Philadelphia, the chief port of entry for European immigrants in the eighteenth century, laborers enjoyed generally favorable living and working conditions into the 1740s, but their situation deteriorated badly in the next thirty years. Tens of thousands of Irish and German immigrant servants plunged into this environment. Overcrowded ships and exploitative agents led to some of the worst abuses of the colonial period among voluntary immigrants, and many servants ran away. The Seven Years' War abruptly halted most German immigration, and when it resumed after 1763 conditions were better, but the percentage of passengers who were indentured servants or redemptioners actually increased. At the same time, opportunities for acquiring land declined, and it grew more difficult for freed servants to succeed in the mid-eighteenth-century economy.[19]

An important source reveals the attitudes of the immigrants themselves toward indentured servitude: the letters they wrote home. Although the authors of such letters often exaggerated their successes in order to impress their families and former neighbors, their comments about immigrant servitude are less biased than the propaganda for or against emigration that appeared in public pamphlets, decrees, newspapers, and other printed sources. Letters home written by Scottish immigrants in the 1770s offer mixed evidence, but even one of the most positive assessments suggested that indentured servitude was an obstacle, not a stepping-stone, toward prosperity in America. In 1772 John Campbell, who had recently settled in Maryland, encouraged others to follow him even "at the expense of a few years of servitude," but only if they were still young. Those who were older would find work in a system that ranked them as slaves too oppressive. Baikia Harvey, an indentured servant who had settled near Augusta, Georgia, wrote home in 1775 that he had run away from a cruel master. Although his situation improved when a kind merchant bought his contract, he still felt that it was intolerable. He recommended that none of his relatives come to America unless they could pay their passage. Only then did a poor man have a chance to earn a good living.[20]

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[18] For a comparison of servant labor in England and its North American colonies, see Robert J. Steinfeld, *The Invention of Free Labor: The Employment Relation in English and American Law and Culture, 1350–1870* (Chapel Hill, 1991), esp. 15–54; and Galenson, *White Servitude in Colonial America*, 7–8, 102–13. For a comparison between indentured servitude and apprenticeship in the colonies, see Bailyn with DeWolfe, *Voyagers to the West*, 167n17. For conditions of indentured servitude in the French colonies, see Moogk, "Manon's Fellow Exiles," 236–60; Choquette, "Recruitment of French Immigrants to Canada," 131–71; Heutz de Lemps, "Indentured Servants Bound for the French Antilles," 172–203; and Mauro, "French Indentured Servants for America," 83–104. On the dates of the worst conditions for Germans arriving in Philadelphia, see Marianne S. Wokeck, "A Tide of Alien Tongues: The Flow and Ebb of German Immigration to Pennsylvania, 1683–1776" (Ph.D. diss., Temple University, 1983), 176.

[19] Salinger, *"To Serve Well and Faithfully,"* 1–4; Dunn, "Servants and Slaves," 181; Wokeck, "Tide of Alien Tongues," 137–201, esp. 176, 202–43; Fogleman, *Hopeful Journeys*, 69–99; Hans-Jürgen Grabbe, "Das Ende des Redemptioner-Systems in den Vereinigten Staaten" (The end of the redemptioner system in the United States), *Amerikastudien / American Studies* (Munich), 29 (1984), 277–96, esp. 282.

[20] Bailyn with DeWolfe, *Voyagers to the West*, 173–74.

The theme of hopeful prospects in America if one avoided servitude also re-sounded in letters written home by German-speaking immigrants. In their letters from Pennsylvania, many narrated glowing success stories, but they also warned that it was getting harder to make it in America and that one should avoid inden-tured servitude if at all possible. A Swiss immigrant who arrived in Philadelphia in 1750 could not pay his debts and had to serve "the worst master in all of Penn-sylvania" for three years. His fortunes did not improve until, after fourteen months, two friends discovered his plight and purchased him from his master. This immi-grant despised Pennsylvania and told others to stay home in Switzerland. Johann Georg Rüdel, who came from Schwaigern (in the northern Kraichgau—an area in modern Baden-Württemberg), was able to purchase land deep in the backcountry of Pennsylvania and avoid servitude. Yet in a letter home written in 1750, Rüdel condemned the system and told others not to come to America. The voyage was too difficult and land too hard to find. Poorer immigrants who could not pay their debts upon arrival did not have a chance in the colony. They were sold and had to work at hard labor for four to ten years.[21]

The tale of Maria Barbara Kober, also of Schwaigern, illustrates how devastating the experience of German redemptioners could be. Kober told her story years later in a letter to her brother. In May 1738, just three months after Kober's marriage to a twenty-four-year-old weaver, Elias Beringer, she and her husband left for Phila-delphia with their newborn son and twenty-eight others from Schwaigern. Their son died on the way from Rotterdam to Cowes, England, the major stopover point for Germans emigrating to North America. After a difficult transatlantic voyage lasting sixteen weeks, the group landed in Philadelphia on October 30, 1738. Kober and her husband were redemptioners. For three weeks they wandered the streets of Philadelphia, searching for some opportunity to meet their financial ob-ligations and get started in Pennsylvania. Having no luck, Kober, on the advice of her husband, indentured herself for four years to some "English" who lived about twenty-six miles from Philadelphia. She left her husband on the ship. Four years later, after working off her debts, Kober returned to Philadelphia to look for him. But she found neither her husband nor any prospects for a better life in Philadelphia, and so she returned to her former master and acquaintances. There she lived and worked for twenty-three more years, never knowing that her husband had died in Philadelphia shortly after she had left him.[22]

The personal experiences of these immigrants suggest that indentured servitude, in spite of the opportunities it offered to poorer migrants, was to be avoided if possible. The statements of such immigrants as John Campbell and Johann Georg Rüdel, who were fortunate enough to avoid servitude yet close enough to observe it and describe it, and the narratives of those who actually endured this status, such as Baikia Harvey, the Swiss immigrant, and Maria Barbara Kober, provide a gen-erally negative image of servitude in late colonial America. Time and time again,

[21] Fogleman, *Hopeful Journeys,* 73.
[22] For Maria Barbara Kober's story, see *ibid.,* 77–79.

Zwanzig Schilling Belohnung.

Den 19ten März, 1774.

Am 12ten dieses Monats ist von dem Endsbenamten, wohnhaft in Passyunk Taunschip, eine Deutsche verbundene Magd weggelaufen, Namens Catharine Moserin; als sie wegging hatte sie eine weisse Haube auf, ein rothlecht Seiden Halstuch um, und einen roth Flanellenen Schort-Gaun an mit schwarzen Blumen, einen dunkelbraunen Unterrock mit Schnüren von einer hellen Farbe eingefaßt, neue Schuh, mit Weiß-metallenen Schnallen; sie ist etwan 5 Fuß lang, hat eine frische Farbe, kan kein Englisch sprechen; trinkt gern Rum, und ist sehr schwathaftig. Wer sie aufnimmt und ihrem Meister wieder bringt, soll obige Belohnung haben, nebst Erstattung billiger Kosten, von mir
b35-37   **Christian Derick.**

This advertisement in Henry Miller's Philadelphia newspaper, *Der Wöchentliche Pennsylvanische Staatsbote* (March 22, 1774), describes a runaway German servant woman named Catharine Moserin. Her master, Christian Derick of Passyunk Township (near Philadelphia), is offering a reward for her return.
Courtesy Library Company of Philadelphia.

the people who were unfree servants condemned the system and warned others to find another way. Free immigrants generally had more opportunities.[23]

Many European servant immigrants in the eighteenth century were transported involuntarily, including kidnapping victims, political exiles, and convicts. Kidnapping cases often received publicity, but the number of such victims forced to go to America was relatively small. The number of political exiles was larger. After the rebellions of 1715 and 1745 in Scotland, nearly 2,000 Jacobites settled in the colonies, most as involuntary exiles. Some went to the West Indies, but the majority settled on the mainland. But by far the largest group of involuntary immigrants from Europe were the convicts. A. Roger Ekirch estimates that Britain banished about 50,000 criminals to North America from 1718 to 1775. Indeed, well over one-half of all English and over one-tenth of all Irish immigrants from 1718 to 1775

[23] On the difficulties facing newly arrived German immigrants (including servants) in colonial America, see *ibid.*, 69–99.
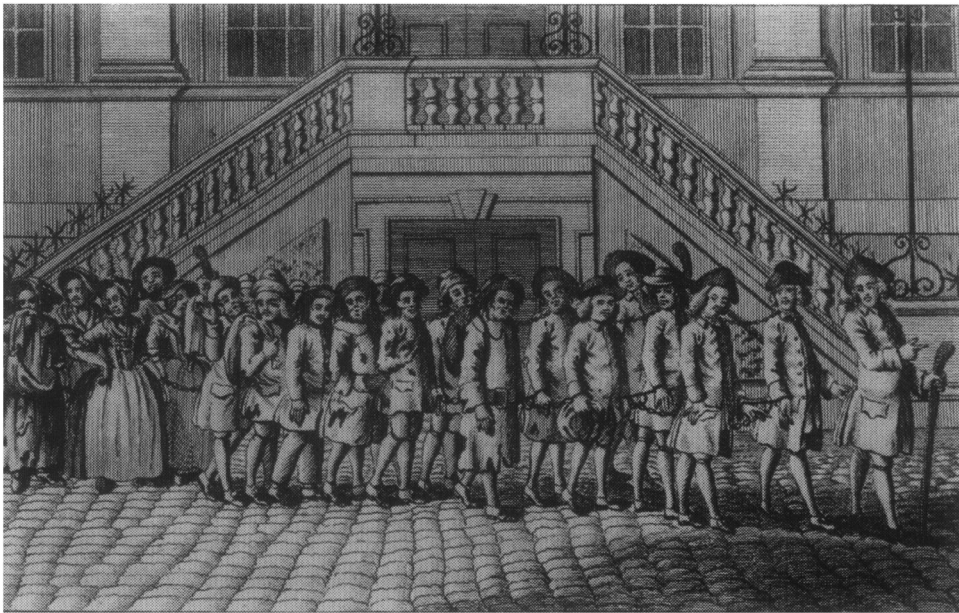
"Representation of the Transports going from Newgate to take water at Blackfriars"
depicting eighteenth-century British convicts prior to their transportation
to North America. From *The Newgate Calender.*
I would like to thank A. Roger Ekirch and Michael Thomason
for their assistance with this illustration.

were convicts. The number of British convicts arriving in the colonies during the
eighteenth century was so large that they did much to replace indentured servants
as a source of bound labor from England. Most were sent to Tidewater Maryland
and Virginia. Sentenced to seven or fourteen years service in the colonies and trans-
ported in chains below deck, this large, peculiar group of "immigrants" constituted
an important, though often unwanted, part of the labor force.[24]

Living and working conditions for the convicts worsened in the eighteenth cen-
tury. After sentencing, British authorities marched groups of convicts through the
streets in chains to the ships. Because they made the long voyage to America below
deck in cramped quarters, their death rate was high (about 14 percent). Upon their
arrival, colonial authorities led them to the auction block—still in chains. (Contem-
poraries likened these events to livestock auctions.) The majority were probably em-
ployed as field workers on plantations. Although convicts received more favorable

[24] On convict transportations, see Ekirch, *Bound for America;* Peter W. Coldham, *Emigrants in Chains: A
Social History of Forced Emigration to the Americas of Felons, Destitute Children, Political and Religious Non-
Conformists, Vagabonds, Beggars, and Other Undesirables, 1607–1776* (Baltimore, 1992); Smith, *Colonists in
Bondage;* Patrick Fitzgerald, "A Sentence to Sail: The Transportation of Irish Convicts to Colonial America in the
Eighteenth Century," Working Paper 96-22, 1996 (International Seminar on the History of the Atlantic World,
1500–1800, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.); and Dobson, *Scottish Emigration to Colonial America,* 92,
125. On kidnapping, see *ibid.,* 93; and Bailyn with DeWolfe, *Voyagers to the West,* 307–12. See appendix, table
A.3, for total immigration by ethnic group during this period.

legal treatment than slaves—their condition was temporary, and they could peti-
tion courts for relief from excessive abuse—they steadily lost rights during the
eighteenth century. The material conditions under which the convicts lived and la-
bored may not have differed much from those of slaves. Americans treated the con-
victs as outcasts with little stake in society. In the Chesapeake, where most were
sent, they occupied a visible place in society between slaves and white servants—
outside the growing racial unity among white planters and servants.[25]

About one-fourth of all immigrants to the thirteen colonies in the eighteenth
century arrived as free passengers. The vast majority of these were not English, as
they had been in the seventeenth century, but rather German speakers, Irish, and
Scots. They came voluntarily and paid for their passage, incurring no contractual
obligations or debts that required service in repayment. Upon arrival, assuming
they were well enough, they were free to seek employment or land wherever they
might find it. That is, they were free to fend for themselves in a competitive labor
market where work and wages were often uncertain and land was becoming scarce
and more expensive. But for most, freedom was a better choice than servitude, as
their own commentaries make clear.

By 1760 the immigrants—slaves, convicts, indentured servants of all sorts, and
free passengers—had become quite visible as part of a colonial world characterized
by a hierarchy of ranks and degrees of dependency. Slavery flourished in the col-
onies, challenged only by the Quakers and a few others, and convicts arrived in
record numbers. Both the English and the Americans considered indentured labor
(including that of apprentices and of adults who bound themselves out in exchange
for a lump sum) as a normal form of voluntary labor. Indeed, until the eighteenth
century, most labor in England and the colonies was bound, and workers were nor-
mally referred to as "servants."[26]

The extent to which immigration directly created the hierarchy of ranks and
degrees of dependency varied from region to region. In the eighteenth century, im-
migration had the least impact on society in New England. There were German,
Scots-Irish, and other European settlers in the region, and even some African slave
importations, but together they represented only a small portion of either the total
New England population or the total number of European and African immigrants
arriving in the thirteen colonies. Farther south this was not the case.

Traditionally, historians have emphasized ethnic diversity in the middle colonies,
especially southeastern Pennsylvania. Indeed, Philadelphia was the major entrepôt
for free and indentured European immigrants in the eighteenth century, and for
many convicts and slaves. In 1748 Peter Kalm, a Swedish naturalist touring the col-
onies, described the effects of the ongoing, ethnically diverse immigration into
Pennsylvania society. He carefully delineated many of the degrees of servitude, de-
scribing laborers free to serve by the year (who could leave whenever they wished
but forfeited their wages if they did so), indentured servants, and slaves. By 1760

[25] Coldham, *Emigrants in Chains*, 79, 99–133; Ekirch, *Bound for America*, 99, 123, 140–56.
[26] Wood, *Radicalism of the American Revolution*, 11–92; Steinfeld, *Invention of Free Labor*, 3–121.

many Scottish, Irish, German, and other immigrants had settled in southeastern Pennsylvania and spread into the northern Chesapeake and the southern backcountry as far south as North Carolina.[27]

Immigration, ethnic diversity, and servitude transformed colonial society in South Carolina as well in the eighteenth century. The forced immigration of many different African ethnic groups after 1680 permanently transformed the colony's Low Country and created a black majority by 1720. Further, many Scots-Irish, Germans, and other Europeans—servant and free—began settling in Charleston and in the backcountry of the colony in the mid-eighteenth century. Indeed, one could argue that South Carolina, more than Pennsylvania, was the center of ethnic diversity in colonial North America.[28]

In the Chesapeake region, immigration in the eighteenth century meant the significant expansion not only of settlement by free people but also of all forms of servitude—that of slaves, convicts, and indentured servants. By 1760 the population of Maryland and Virginia had increased more than eightfold and was 38 percent black—virtually all of the blacks being slaves. In addition, some 40,000 convicts (80 percent of the total sent to America) were transported to Maryland and Virginia, especially to Tidewater areas on the Western Shore, where they labored at the center of the growing commercial economy. In 1755 nearly 10 percent of the white population in Maryland were servants or convicts. In the same year in Baltimore, Charles, Queen Annes, and Anne Arundel counties on Maryland's Western Shore, 12 percent of productive adult laborers (a category defined as those working for others and excluding slaves too young or infirm to work) were convicts, 22 percent were hired and indentured servants, and 66 percent were slaves. Moreover, in the eighteenth century many free and indentured Europeans immigrated directly to Chesapeake ports such as Baltimore, which grew rapidly and developed a close economic relationship with southeastern Pennsylvania. Many European immigrants from Pennsylvania also spilled across the blurred boundary with the Chesapeake.[29]

But the changing immigration patterns and the resulting transformation in Chesapeake society during the eighteenth century went beyond percentages discernible only by historians studying population figures centuries later: As in Pennsylvania, the effects of the "new" immigration were *visible* to observers at the time. A French traveler in Virginia in 1765 touched upon every one of the immigrant groups, servant and free. He wrote that "the number of Convicts and Indented servants imported to virginia [is] amazing, besides the numbers of Dutch and Germans which is also Considerable." Shortly thereafter he commented on seeing three

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[27] Pehr Kalm, *Peter Kalm's Travels in North America: The English Version of 1770*, ed. Adolph B. Benson (New York, 1987), 204–11. On ethnic group settlement in southeastern Pennsylvania, see James T. Lemon, *"The Best Poor Man's Country": A Geographical Study of Early Southeastern Pennsylvania* (Baltimore, 1972).

[28] Wood, *Black Majority*. For European immigration into South Carolina after 1763, see Jane Reveill, ed., *A Compilation of the Original Lists of Protestant Immigrants to South Carolina, 1763–1773* (Columbia, S.C., 1939).

[29] Populations and percentages that were black in 1760 were calculated from Bureau of Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States*, II, 1168. The Maryland census of 1755 enumerates 98,357 free whites, 6,871 servants, 1,981 convicts, 3,592 mulattoes, and 42,764 blacks. See Smith, *Colonists in Bondage*, 324. On transportations of convicts to the Chesapeake, see Ekirch, *Bound for America*, 116, 140–43.

slaves hanging from the gallows in Williamsburg. A travel journal kept in 1747 by two Moravian missionaries on a preaching tour in the Chesapeake reveals the effects of the new immigration in a hierarchical society. Here, where the heaviest influx of bound immigrants of all categories occurred, the missionaries reported to the authorities whenever they entered a new county and received a pass before attempting to preach. This was done for their own protection — otherwise local people might believe that the two white strangers passing through their community were runaway servants or convicts. Indeed, on the Western Shore of Maryland a man accosted the two Moravians and attempted to take them into custody, but they escaped. Convicts and indentured servants were so omnipresent in these areas that even white strangers passing through had to be on their guard lest they be regarded as unfree — and thus outside the law and dangerous. Richard S. Dunn describes the formation of this society, writing that from the 1680s to the 1750s the Chesapeake tobacco planters created an "elaborately tiered social and economic hierarchy with slave laborers at the base, convict and indentured servants ranked next, then tenant farmers, then small landholders, then middling planters, and a handful of large planters — one to five in each county." I would argue that immigration in the eighteenth century contributed significantly to this development and that the hierarchical immigration itself closely resembled the society that evolved.[30]

This predominantly servant immigration into the British North American colonies, part of a trend in migrations to all the Americas during the early modern period, was a complex and changing one. In the seventeenth century, servant immigration from England meant opportunity for many, but in the eighteenth century, it normally reflected the forced migration of convicts in chains. Many Irish, Scots, and Germans found opportunity as servants in the half-century before independence, but a significant number of one group, the Irish, were also convicts, and all of them faced generally worsening conditions. Free immigrants too often had a rough go of it, but in the rapidly growing colonial economies and societies of the eighteenth century, free immigrants controlled their own labor and had a much better chance of making it than indentured servants and convicts.

Thus immigration played a critical role not only in population growth in early America but also in the development of hierarchical social and economic relationships there. The forced transportation of slaves and convicts in the eighteenth century created new dimensions in an immigration and a society already characterized by servitude. In the decades before the Revolution, immigration reached record levels, and it became more identified with servitude. In the revolutionary era, however, this trend would quickly change.

[30] "Journal of a French Traveller in the Colonies, 1765, I," *American Historical Review*, 26 (July 1921), 726–47, esp. 744–45; "Journal of a French Traveller in the Colonies, 1765, II," *ibid.*, 27 (Oct. 1921), 70–89. The travel journal was written in English by Jasper Payne. See Jasper Payne and Christian Fröhlich, Description of Their Journey to Maryland, Oct. 26 to Nov. 27, 1747, Journals Box JD III 1 (Moravian Archives, Bethlehem, Pa.). For the quote from Richard Dunn, see "Servants and Slaves," 176. On the importance of servitude in the Chesapeake and its meaning for American history, see Jack P. Greene, *Pursuits of Happiness: The Social Development of Early Modern British Colonies and the Formation of American Culture* (Chapel Hill, 1988).

The Transformation to a Free Immigration in the Revolutionary Era

When war broke out between Britain and the thirteen colonies in the spring of 1775, immigration of all kinds suddenly ended. When it resumed in the 1780s, it took on a different character. Free immigrants, not slaves, convicts, and servants, dominated the ranks of strangers entering the new republic. Whereas in the decades before the Revolution free immigrants made up only about one-fourth of all immigrants, during the thirty-five years after independence, free passengers made up nearly two-thirds of the total. And from 1810 to 1819, after the importation of African slaves was banned, free immigrants made up more than 90 percent of the total. (See table 2.)

Why did this happen, and why did it happen when it did? For nearly two centuries most immigrants arrived in British North America in some condition of unfreedom, and the colonists considered this normal. Yet in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the trend suddenly reversed. After 1808 few immigrants were servants or slaves, and by 1820 immigrants in servitude were numerically insignificant. The character of American immigration had permanently changed.

The most important factor causing this transformation in immigration into North America was the American Revolution, which involved war, forced removals of populations, disruptions in trade of all kinds, egalitarian ideas and impulses, new constitutions, independence, and the political maneuverings that typically accompany such upheavals. The war that broke out in 1775 disrupted the transatlantic British Empire. Long-standing trade and credit networks were destroyed. Many merchants on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean, who had provided essential links between Europe, Africa, and America, suffered tremendous losses or went bankrupt. At the conclusion of the war, the merchants who survived could not simply return to business as usual — they were now former enemies in two different countries. These events also directly affected immigration to North America, which had been closely associated with overseas trade and credit throughout the colonial period. For example, when the war temporarily ended immigration and most trade, the Scottish mercantile community, especially in Glasgow, switched from a heavy emphasis on trade in Virginia tobacco to West Indian sugar and cotton. This led to increased immigration of Scots to the Caribbean. Moreover, the Revolution affected trade in other transatlantic empires, as the war disrupted not only the British but also the French slave trade.[31]

The politics and ideas of the Revolution influenced immigration most clearly in the case of the African slaves, who were nearly one-half of all immigrants from 1700 to 1775. The egalitarian impulses of the Revolution led many to challenge the renewal of African slave importations after the war, and the ensuing debate at the Constitutional Convention of 1787 in Philadelphia led to a compromise that

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[31] On the relationship between trade and immigration in the colonial period, see Horn, "'To Parts beyond the Seas,'" 85–103; and Wokeck, "Harnessing the Lure," 204–43. On Scottish immigration to the Caribbean, see Dobson, *Scottish Emigration to Colonial America*, 7–8. On disruptions in the French slave trade, see Philip Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (Madison, 1969), 177–78.

forbade Congress to prohibit slave importations prior to 1808. The compromise at Philadelphia did not reflect a general conversion in white Americans' attitudes toward slaves and slavery. The southern delegates at the convention knew that the abolition of the Atlantic trade would not directly threaten the institution of slavery, since the slave populations in the South (unlike those in Latin America) had well-established positive natural growth rates by the late eighteenth century. Carolina planters did not press harder for more slaves because they had not yet discovered how to gin cotton. Forced African immigration soared during the 1780s, 1790s, and 1800s as planters sought to replace their losses during the war and to improve their holdings before the 1808 deadline. Pennsylvanians who freed their slaves frequently, if not generally, put them into very long-term indentures. Thus for many northern black people, indentured servitude began rather than ended after 1775. And while Europeans began pouring into the United States in the nineteenth century, freed of servile restrictions, many white Americans debated how to get rid of the unwanted free black population by shipping its members back to Africa. Although relatively few went to Africa, a second forced migration did occur: Nearly one-third of a million slaves were transported overland from the Chesapeake, the Carolinas, and Georgia to the southwest territories between 1790 and 1820. Another three-quarters of a million were forced to migrate from 1820 to 1860. Given the less than revolutionary, indeed inegalitarian, attitudes held by the majority of whites, slave imports boomed after the war. It was only the constitutional ban — caused by the "Revolution" — that cut them off after 1808. The events of the American Revolution, then, all but ended the critical role that slave importations had played in colonial immigration.[32]

The demise of the British convict trade shows how American independence per se led to a decline in servant migrations to the new republic. The war threw the British criminal justice system into chaos. When immigration resumed in the mid-1780s, the British tried to send convicts disguised as indentured servants to the former colonies (and sometimes they succeeded). The American authorities quickly caught on to the practice, however, and ended it. Thus American independence forced the British to redirect convict transportations to their new colony in Australia.[33]

The American Revolution, broadly understood, led not only to the decline of the slave and convict trades, but also to the demise of the indentured servant migrations. Gordon Wood argues that acceptance of indentured servitude began to erode shortly before independence. "Everywhere ordinary people were no longer willing to play their accustomed roles in the hierarchy," and as a sequel to the "revolution-

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[32] I am indebted to Richard S. Dunn for many of the ideas presented here. On freed slaves becoming indentured servants in Pennsylvania, see Gary B. Nash and Jean R. Soderlund, *Freedom by Degrees: Emancipation in Pennsylvania and Its Aftermath* (New York, 1991), 167–93. On the second forced migration of slaves to the Old Southwest from 1790 to 1860, see Allan Kulikoff, "Uprooted Peoples: Black Migrants in the Age of the American Revolution, 1790–1820," in *Slavery and Freedom in the Age of the American Revolution,* ed. Ira Berlin and Ronald Hoffman (Charlottesville, 1983), 143–71.

[33] Patrick Fitzgerald, "Sentence to Sail," 3; Coldham, *Emigrants in Chains,* 151–57; Ekirch, *Bound for America,* 227–38.

"Dinner on Board a Ship at Gravesend," probably by a Captain Wright. This watercolor depicts free passengers traveling to the United States in the early nineteenth century.
Courtesy National Maritime Museum, London.

ary attack on patriarchal monarchy," "servitude of any sort (for white males) suddenly became anomalous and anachronistic." Robert J. Steinfeld emphasizes social and cultural change. The American Revolution, he argues, had no sudden, direct impact on indentured servitude, but it advanced processes that made the system seem abnormal. After the Revolution, Americans repudiated traditional hierarchical forms of subordination (at least for white males). As they began to perceive all forms of bound labor as involuntary rather than voluntary servitude, they began to take steps to end them.[34]

The decline of apprenticeship after the Revolution also reflects this gradual ideological change. The absence of guilds in colonial America had meant that anyone could get started in a craft, become a journeyman, and hire apprentices. It had also meant that apprentices could easily walk out on their obligations, as Benjamin Franklin did when he left Boston. Franklin's *Autobiography* describes a runaway apprentice who made good, and thus his widely read work contributed to the decline of the institution. The Revolutionary War also undermined apprenticeship. The British occupations of Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, along with the action of many young men who went off to war, led to soaring labor demand. Some apprentices began running off, while others demanded journeymen's wages. Colonial traditions of apprenticeship required stability, yet the war disrupted life in

[34] Wood, *Radicalism of the American Revolution*, 145, 184; Steinfeld, *Invention of Free Labor.*

the cities and raised questions about such traditions. The economic fluctuations of the postwar period led to a reluctance on the part of masters and apprentices to commit themselves to long-term contracts. Moreover, after the Revolution the authority of masters to manage apprentices came under increasing challenge. The masters had to contend with a generation of apprentices who, "having absorbed Revolutionary rhetoric, spouted claims to liberty and equality." Relations between masters and apprentices became strained, and runaways increased. The masters cracked down in the courts, but eventually the courts began favoring the apprentices — the law could not save the master's authority, and there was no social pressure to do so. Thus attitudes toward bound white labor in all forms were changing during the revolutionary era, as Americans came to reject it.[35]

The egalitarian ideology of the Revolution stimulated some direct attacks on indentured servitude, but the effects of ideology should not be exaggerated. Thomas Jefferson's second draft of the Virginia constitution in 1776 opposed all forms of servitude, including indentured servitude. In 1784 a group of New Yorkers protested the arrival of a shipload of servants because the "traffick of White People" was contrary to "the idea of liberty this country has so happily established." Yet during this time at least one founding father had no qualms about keeping white servants. In 1784 George Washington tried to buy skilled immigrant servants in Philadelphia and Baltimore. In short, just because Jefferson and a few consciencestricken New Yorkers decided that placing white male immigrants in a servant status was a bad idea, it does not follow that this caused the immediate end of the practice.[36]

It is likely that the Revolution had some long, slow impact on the decline of indentured servitude, but one should not overemphasize the ambiguous gradualism of this important event in transatlantic history. In the early 1770s the system flourished. Nearly one-half of English and Scottish emigrants to America in the London register of 1773 to 1775, an official list of persons leaving for the colonies, were servants, and more than one-half of German arrivals in Philadelphia in 1772 were servants. The system remained important for German immigration until 1820, but Germans made up less than 10 percent of all voluntary immigrants during the period. (See appendix, tables A.5 and A.7.) For the other 90-plus percent of voluntary immigrants, primarily the Irish, Scots, and English, the system had all but ended before 1800. The longevity of indentured servitude among the Germans was an exception that may obscure the timing of and the reasons for the decline of the institution throughout the new republic.[37]

[35] See W. J. Rorabaugh, *The Craft Apprentice: From Franklin to the Machine Age in America* (New York, 1986), 3–56, esp. 32.

[36] Julian P. Boyd, ed., *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson* (27 vols., Princeton, 1950–), I, 353; *New York Independent Gazette*, Jan. 24, 1784, quoted in Samuel McKee Jr., *Labor in Colonial New York, 1664–1776* (Port Washington, 1935), 175–76; W. W. Abbot, ed., *The Papers of George Washington: Confederation Series* (6 vols., Charlottesville, 1983–), I, 473, 529.

[37] On high levels of servitude among British and German immigrants in the early 1770s, see Bailyn with DeWolfe, *Voyagers to the West*, 166–69; and Farley W. Grubb, "The End of European Immigrant Servitude in the United States: An Economic Analysis of Market Collapse, 1772–1835," *Journal of Economic History*, 54

The rapid demise of the immigrant servant system in the 1780s and 1790s among all but the Germans suggests that the American Revolution, broadly understood to include not just ideology and politics but also the impact of the war and independence on the British Empire, may have been a direct cause of the change. The breakup of a significant portion of the British Empire—one of the many effects of the American Revolution—changed migration, trade, and credit patterns for the English, Scots, and Irish. After 1783 all those involved in the immigrant trade, as well as the immigrants themselves, had to reevaluate whether and how they would participate in the new migrations. Irish immigration increased dramatically after the war, but the servant trade declined because British ship captains no longer believed that American courts would enforce contracts. According to Maurice Bric, independence redefined the "Atlantic umbrella under which people moved between the old and new worlds" and led to reorganization of the Irish passenger trade and change in the composition and nature of the immigration. When immigration resumed after 1783, it included many indentured servants, but the institution's days were numbered. Irish newspapers emphasized its cruelties and reported that the United States Congress was planning to forbid it. By 1789, according to one report, few Irish servants were arriving in Philadelphia. Others reported that so many Irish who were coming could pay for their passage that ship captains no longer needed to take on those who could not pay. In short, independence led to an altered perception of America by the Irish, which led to a different kind of immigration, no longer dependent on indentured servitude.[38]

The disruptions of war and independence certainly played a critical role in the sudden decline of the British and Irish servant trades in the 1780s and 1790s, but were other factors, notably conditions in Europe, more important? The outbreak of the French Revolution did lead to a new wave of free immigrants to the United States in the 1790s. For the first time since the late seventeenth century, there was a significant number of French immigrants. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, nearly 13,000 free French immigrants came, thus contributing to the transformation in early American immigration. But the French immigration represents less than 3 percent of European immigration and less than 2 percent of total immigration from 1776 to 1809. (See tables 1 and A.5.)[39] The only other significant Continental immigrants were the German speakers, and indentured servitude in the United States continued for them, in spite of the French Revolution. Similarly, the impact of the industrial revolution in Britain should not be exagger-

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(Dec. 1994), 794–824, esp. 818–19. On the decline of servitude among Germans, see Grabbe, "Ende des Redemptioner-Systems"; Grubb, "End of European Immigrant Servitude"; and Farley W. Grubb, "The Disappearance of Organized Markets for European Immigrant Servants in the United States: Five Popular Explanations Reexamined," *Social Science History,* 18 (Spring 1994), 1–30.

[38] Kerby A. Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America* (Oxford, Eng., 1985), 169; Maurice Bric, "Irish Emigration to America, 1783–1800," Working Paper 96-21, 1996 (International Seminar on the History of the Atlantic World, 1500–1800, Harvard University), esp. 1.

[39] For French immigration during this period, see Hans-Jürgen Grabbe, "European Immigration to the United States in the Early National Period, 1783–1820," in *Demographic History of the Philadelphia Region,* ed. Klepp, 194.

ated. Most British immigrants came from Ireland and Scotland, where the effects of industrialization were less significant than in England at this early date. Further, the decline of indentured servitude in the British immigrations (including the Irish) occurred so quickly that it is difficult to explain it by industrialization. In short, conditions in Europe did little to cause the transformation in American immigration that is reflected in tables 1 and 2.

Clearly we must look to conditions in the United States, especially to the American Revolution, to explain not only the rapid decline in indentured servitude but also the entire shift from an immigration characterized by degrees of servitude to one characterized by freedom. The war, independence, and the ideas of the Revolution had a tremendous impact on the transatlantic British Empire; in this context indentured servitude all but disappeared. From 1607 to 1699, almost one-half of all immigrants were indentured servants, and from 1700 to 1775, when record numbers of immigrants arrived, about three-fourths of all immigrants (including those from Europe and Africa) were slaves, indentured servants, redemptioners, or convicts. But in the generation after the war, less than 5 percent of immigrants were indentured servants and by the 1810s less than 4 percent. The indentured system, which had appeared a normal form of voluntary labor to most Americans before the Revolution, which had helped 200,000 Europeans make it to America the hard way—sometimes the only way—came to a relatively sudden end after the Revolution. Together with the abolition of slave imports and the end of convict transportations, the demise of indentured servitude ensured that formal, legal servitude would never again characterize American immigration.

The Significance of the Transformation for American History

This study deals with the relationship between two of the most important factors in American history: the American Revolution and immigration. Since the guns of the Revolution fell silent and its leaders ceased to pronounce its lofty declarations, historians of each generation have asked the crucial questions: Did the Revolution really make a difference in the lives of ordinary people? Did permanent, significant change in American history result from the political, military, ideological, and other upheavals of that era? The debate over those large questions will surely continue, but the evidence presented here suggests that in the context of immigration, the Revolution certainly did make a difference.

Since the beginning (and until this very day), immigrants have shaped and reshaped American history and culture. The old seventeenth-century pattern of an inverse relationship between the demand for indentured servants and the demand for slaves was replaced in the eighteenth century by a strong demand for all kinds of servant and free immigrants. After the Revolution yet another trend developed— Americans no longer wanted overseas immigrants unless they were free. The Revolution had transformed immigration and hence transformed how immigration would continue changing America in the future. Much of the saga of American immigration as it is known to us today could not have come about without the

transformation from a largely unfree to a free immigration. Discovering the meaning and limitations of that freedom became part of the immigrant story, but we should not let that story, so well known to us, obscure what was once there.

The significance of the transformation of immigration in the era of the Revolution even transcends the borders of the United States. The shift in North American immigration patterns was part of larger contemporaneous changes in transatlantic migrations. In addition to the United States, many other countries banned the slave trade in the early nineteenth century. But when the legal slave trade ended in the Caribbean, the slave population began to decline. West Indian planters relied in part on the revival of indentured servitude and the illegal slave trade (much larger and more important in Latin America than in the United States) to replace their lost labor supply. In the nineteenth century, slaves, convicts, and indentured servants still crossed the Atlantic in large numbers, but no longer to the United States. Even Chinese immigrants, who were an important part of the indentured servant population in the Caribbean, came to the United States in the mid-nineteenth century voluntarily as free laborers. Thus while unfree people (indentured servants, smuggled slaves, and convicts) were transported to the Caribbean and Australia, immigration into the United States remained one almost exclusively of free passengers, and the migration of millions of Europeans to the United States that followed dominated transatlantic migrations for over a century.[40]

Within the borders of the United States, as many Americans began preaching equality and arguing over its meaning, the people entering that society—many of whom ultimately contributed to the debate and the changing immigrant saga—were more free and equal than immigrants had ever been in American history. Slavery was extended and promoted by different kinds of migrations in the new republic, but transatlantic immigration was no longer one of its sources. Other forms of hierarchy and dependency continued to flourish in the United States, but after a long history before the Revolution, formal, legal servitude in all its forms permanently disappeared as a characteristic of American immigration.

APPENDIX: SOURCES FOR TABLE 1

Historians who estimate levels of migration to the Americas in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries usually employ two methodologies, singly or in combination. The first, a residual method, relies on colonial population estimates and fertility and mortality data.

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[40] Denmark abolished the slave trade to its West Indian colonies in 1803, followed by Britain in 1808, the Netherlands in 1814, and France in 1815. On the abolition of the trade, see David Eltis, *Economic Growth and the Ending of the Transatlantic Slave Trade* (New York, 1987); and David Eltis and James Walvin, eds., *The Abolition of the Atlantic Slave Trade: Origins and Effects in Europe, Africa, and the Americas* (Madison, 1981). On indentured servitude in the Caribbean, see Northrup, *Indentured Labor in the Age of Imperialism;* and Look Lai, *Indentured Labor, Caribbean Sugar.* On Chinese immigrants in the United States, see Ronald T. Takaki, *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America* (Boston, 1993), 192–94. For a good overview, see Engerman, "From Servants to Slaves to Servants," 263–94.

In this method, any population growth not resulting from natural means (as calculated from sample fertility and mortality data) is attributed to migration. The second method involves counting known immigrants from passenger lists and estimating the numbers of other immigrants from shipping records and the history of the sending and receiving areas.

Each method has its advantages and disadvantages. The residual method provides both a way to estimate net migration when there is no "migration" data per se and an understanding of levels of migration in a population. The disadvantage, in this case, is that it depends entirely on estimates of populations and very sketchy fertility and mortality data. In addition, there is often a large error factor in the residual "net migration" figure, which can include unrecorded deaths at sea and among vagrants, soldiers, travelers abroad, etc.[1] The advantage of the counting method is that it is usually based on hard evidence of actual migrations. The disadvantage is that it can lead to undercounting, since many people who migrate leave no direct or indirect evidence of their actions in either the homeland or the place of settlement. Migration estimates that are corroborated by both methods tend to be the soundest, and where possible, my estimates in table 1 are based on this technique.[2]

1607–1699

When estimating seventeenth-century British immigration to America, most historians have referred to the work of Henry A. Gemery. Using a residual method, Gemery calculated 116,100 British immigrants to the southern mainland colonies, 39,000 to the northern and middle colonies, and 222,500 to the Caribbean. Probably fewer than 10,000 of the British immigrants who went to the mainland were not English. L. M. Cullen estimates that 30,000 Irish went to the Americas during this period, and both he and Nicholas Canny emphasize that many of them went to the Caribbean. My estimate of about 5,000 to the mainland is a guess. T. C. Smout estimates that about 7,000 Scots emigrated to the Americas in the seventeenth century, probably two-thirds of them to the Caribbean, which leaves about 2,300 immigrants to the mainland. (See table A.1.)[3]

The majority of British immigrants in the seventeenth century were indentured servants. James Horn estimates that 70 to 85 percent of the English immigrants to the Chesapeake were bound laborers. Richard S. Dunn, using 21 passenger lists, estimates that about 15 percent of the Puritan immigrants to New England in the 1630s were servants. Virginia De-John Anderson studied 7 passenger lists (including 1 not investigated by Dunn) containing

[1] E. A. Wrigley and R. S. Schofield used the residual method when calculating net migration in England, 1541–1871, and encountered this problem. See E. A. Wrigley and R. S. Schofield, *The Population History of England, 1541–1871* (London, 1981), 219–28.

[2] On the residual and counting methods for measuring early modern migrations, see Henry A. Gemery, "European Emigration to North America, 1700–1820: Numbers and Quasi-Numbers," *Perspectives in American History*, 1 (1984), 283–342; and Aaron Fogleman, "Migrations to the Thirteen British North American Colonies, 1700–1775: New Estimates," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 22 (Spring 1992), 691–709.

[3] See Henry A. Gemery, "Emigration from the British Isles to the New World, 1630–1700: Inferences from Colonial Populations," *Research in Economic History*, 5 (1980), 179–231, esp. 196–98 and 204; and Henry A. Gemery, "Markets for Migrants: English Indentured Servitude and Emigration in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," in *Colonialism and Migration: Indentured Labor before and after Slavery*, ed. P. C. Emmer (Dordrecht, 1986), 40. On the Irish, see L. M. Cullen, "The Irish Diaspora of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," in *Europeans on the Move: Studies on European Migration, 1500–1800* (Oxford, Eng., 1994), ed. Nicholas Canny, 139–49, esp. 139; and Nicholas Canny, "English Migration into and across the Atlantic," *ibid.*, 59. For the Scots, see T. C. Smout's estimate, in T. C. Smout, N. C. Landsman, and T. M. Devine, "Scottish Emigration in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," *ibid.*, 76–112, esp. 87.

Table A.1

Estimated European Immigration into the English Mainland North American Colonies by Ethnicity, Legal Status, and Condition of Servitude, 1607–1699 (to the Nearest 100 Immigrants)

| Ethnicity | Unfree by Condition of Servitude | | Free | Total |
	Indentured Servants	Convicts and Prisoners		
English / Welsh	89,500	500	57,800	147,800
Irish[a]	3,000	300	1,700	5,000
Scots	400	1,500	400	2,300
Dutch[b]	3,300	—	2,950	6,250
French	400	—	2,000	2,400
German[c]	—	—	1,000	1,000
Swedish / Finnish	—	—	350	350
Other	—	—	100	100
Total	96,600	2,300	66,300	165,200

NOTE: Adjustments were made for rounding errors.
[a] Includes northern and southern Irish.
[b] Includes 300 French-speaking Walloon immigrants.
[c] Includes immigrants from all German-speaking lands.

693 immigrants. She found that a majority of the emigrant families brought servants to New England and that about 17 percent of the colonizing population were servants. I have adopted Horn's estimates for the Chesapeake and extended the average of Dunn's and Anderson's estimate of servants in the Great Migration of the 1630s (16 percent) to all New England immigrants in the seventeenth century. Among the English servants who went to the colonies were about 500 convicts or prisoners, including Royalists in the 1650s and Quakers in the 1660s. Most of the Scottish immigrants to the mainland colonies were convicts or prisoners (about 1,500). I have estimated that one-half of the remainder were voluntary indentured servants. Perhaps one-third of the Irish immigrants were free passengers—less than among the English immigrants since there was no Irish counterpart to the mostly free Puritan migration to New England. Some Irish convicts and political prisoners (perhaps 300) were transported to mainland colonies in the second half of the seventeenth century, although most were sent to the West Indies. The rest of the Irish immigrants were voluntary indentured servants.[4]

Few non-British European colonists other than the Dutch and the French Huguenots arrived during the seventeenth century. Ernst van den Boogaart estimates that about 5,950

    [4] James Horn, "'To Parts beyond the Seas': Free Emigration to the Chesapeake in the Seventeenth Century," in "To Make America": European Emigration in the Early Modern Period, ed. Ida Altman and James Horn (Berkeley, 1991), 91; Richard S. Dunn, "Servants and Slaves," in Colonial British America: Essays in the New History of the Early Modern Era, ed. Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole (Baltimore, 1984), 160; Virginia DeJohn Anderson, New England's Generation: The Great Migration and the Formation of Society and Culture in the Seventeenth Century (Cambridge, Eng., 1991), 24–26, 108–12. My estimates of convicts and prisoners are based on Abbot Emerson Smith, Colonists in Bondage: White Servitude and Convict Labor in America, 1607–1776 (Chapel Hill, 1947), 110–203; Smout, Landsman, and Devine, "Scottish Emigration in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," 76–90; and David Dobson, Scottish Emigration to Colonial America, 1607–1785 (Athens, Ga., 1994), 9–80.

Table A.2
Estimated African Slave Imports into the English Mainland North American
Colonies by Ethnicity, 1607–1699

Coastal Region of Departure	Ethnicity	Number	Percentage
Senegambia	Mandinka, Fulbe, Jola, Serer, Wolof, and Bambara	7,300	22
Gold Coast	Ashanti and Fanti	3,700	11
Bight of Biafra	Ibo and Ibibio	8,000	24
Southeast Africa	Unclear	300	1
Other or Unknown		13,900	42
Total		33,200	100

Sample size = 5,660 (17%)

SOURCES: Table 1 and David Eltis et al., *The Transatlantic Slave Trade, 1562–1867: A Database Prepared at the W. E. B. DuBois Institute, Harvard University* (CD-ROM) (Cambridge, Mass., forthcoming). NOTE: Adjustments were made for rounding errors.

Dutch (including 250 immigrants from the Dutch West Indies and 300 Walloons) came to New Netherland from 1624 to 1664, about 55 percent of them servants. In addition, Boogaart estimates that about 350 Swedes and Finns settled along the Delaware River. Another 300 or so free immigrants settled in the Delaware Valley late in the century. Jon Butler estimates that 1,500–2,000 Huguenots arrived between 1685 and 1700. Bertrand Van Ruymbeke found additional Huguenot immigrants in South Carolina. My total estimate of 2,400 Huguenot immigrants, of whom 15 percent may have been servants, is based upon Van Ruymbeke's work.[5]

The only other numerically significant group was the German speakers, who in some cases were practically indistinguishable from "Dutch" immigrants. Don Heinrich Tolzmann lists over 600 pre-1683 German immigrants in the colonies. To this number must be added the radical pietist and other migrations to Pennsylvania after 1683. Perhaps 1,000 German immigrants came to all the colonies before 1700. Indentured servitude was not important in the early German-speaking migrations.[6]

The most widely accepted estimates for African slave importations to the mainland colonies in the seventeenth century are based upon residual methods. But a massive project on the Atlantic slave trade that uses the counting method roughly corroborates earlier findings. Moreover, the new evidence reveals the ports of origin of a large sample of slaves arriving in each period, from which the ethnicity of the peoples in the hinterland can be

[5] Ernst van den Boogaart, "The Servant Migration to New Netherland, 1624–1664," in *Colonialism and Migration,* ed. Emmer, 55–81, esp. 61. On the Huguenots, see Jon Butler, *The Huguenots in America: A Refugee People in New World Society* (Cambridge, Mass., 1983), 49; and Bertrand Van Ruymbeke, "L'émigration huguenote en Caroline du Sud sous le régime des Seigneurs Proprietaires: Etude d'une communauté du refuge dans un province britannique d'Amérique du Nord (1680–1720)" (The Huguenot emigration in South Carolina under the proprietary regime: A study of a refugee community in a British province of North America [1680–1720]) (2 vols., Ph.D. diss., La Sorbonne-Nouvelle, 1995), I, esp. 292–95, 316.

[6] Don Heinrich Tolzmann, ed., *The First Germans in America, with a Biographical Dictionary of New York Germans* (Bowie, 1992), n.p. My estimate for post-1683 migrations to Pennsylvania is based primarily on "Naturalizations, Germantown, PA, 3 / 7 / 1691 / 92," in *New World Immigrants: A Consolidation of Ship Passenger Lists and Associated Data from Periodical Literature,* ed. Michael Tepper (2 vols., Baltimore, 1980), I, 434–35.

inferred. I have applied the results from the sample to Robert W. Fogel's estimate of total African immigration for 1607–1699. This technique assumes that the distribution of the entire immigrant population by coastal region of origin matched that of the sample and that people sold as slaves in a coastal region all came from the hinterland of that region. Thus my estimates of African slave importations by ethnic group should be considered crude. (See table A.2.)[7]

These estimates of seventeenth-century immigration should be used with caution. The estimates of the proportions of immigrants in the different categories of servitude are probably more accurate but still tentative.

1700–1775

For the eighteenth century we have estimates based on both residual and counting methods. I have estimated that 307,400 Europeans and 278,400 Africans immigrated into the thirteen colonies from 1700 to 1775. My methodology is based primarily on work by historians of individual ethnic groups that uses the counting method (which I have explained at length in another article). These estimates fall within the range of the most widely accepted estimates made using the residual method.[8]

Individual historians' estimates of immigration, 1700–1775, from lowest to highest

Historian	Africans	Historian	Europeans
Galenson	171,983	Menard	206,000
Menard	225,000	Galenson	256,504
Fogleman	278,400	Fogleman	307,400
Fogel	328,860	Gemery	336,800

The figures in table A.3 are rough preliminary estimates. The estimates for Irish and Germans are more reliable than those for English / Welsh and Scots. The sources and methods for calculating the proportions of convicts, servants, and free passengers are described below for each ethnic group.

[7] On the project on the Atlantic slave trade, including the pitfalls of deducing the ethnicity of slaves from their ports of origin, see David Eltis and David Richardson, eds., *Routes to Slavery: Direction, Ethnicity, and Mortality in the Transatlantic Slave Trade* (Portland, 1997). For the database itself, on CD-ROM, see David Eltis et al., *The Transatlantic Slave Trade, 1562–1867: A Database Prepared at the W. E. B. Du Bois Institute, Harvard University* (CD-ROM) (Cambridge, Mass., forthcoming). I would like to thank Stephen D. Behrendt for providing me with data from this project before its publication. For estimates of slave importations, see Robert W. Fogel, "Revised Estimates of the U.S. Slave Trade and of the Native-Born Share of the Black Population," in Robert W. Fogel, Ralph A. Galantine, and Richard L. Manning, *Without Consent or Contract: The Rise and Fall of American Slavery: Evidence and Methods* (New York, 1992), 53–58, esp. 56–57. On the linkage of hinterlands to coastal regions, see Donald R. Wright, *African Americans in the Colonial Era: From African Origins through the American Revolution* (Arlington Heights, 1990), 9–11.

[8] My estimate of African immigration is based on Philip Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (Madison, 1969), 137; and Paul E. Lovejoy, "The Volume of the Atlantic Slave Trade: A Synthesis," *Journal of African History*, 23 (1982), 473–501, esp. 487. See Fogleman, "Migrations to the Thirteen British North American Colonies," 691–709. Sources for the following table are *ibid.*, 698; David Galenson, *White Servitude in Colonial America: An Economic Analysis* (Cambridge, Eng., 1981), 216–17; Russell R. Menard, "Migration, Ethnicity, and the Rise of an Atlantic Economy: The Re-Peopling of British America, 1600–1790," in *A Century of European Migrations, 1830–1930,* ed. Rudolph J. Vecoli and Suzanne M. Sinke (Urbana, 1991), 61; Fogel, "Revised Estimates of the U.S. Slave Trade and of the Native-Born Share of the Black Population," 56; and Gemery, "European Emigration to North America," 303.

Table A.3
Estimated European Immigration into the Thirteen Colonies by Ethnicity, Legal Status, and Condition of Servitude, 1700–1775
(to the Nearest 100 Immigrants)

Ethnicity	Unfree by Condition of Servitude		Free	Total
	Indentured Servants[a]	Convicts and Prisoners		
Irish[b]	39,000	17,500	52,100	108,600
English / Welsh	27,200	32,500	13,400	73,100
Scots	7,400	2,200	25,700	35,300
Germans[c]	30,000	—	54,500	84,500
Other	—	—	5,900	5,900
Total	103,600	52,200	151,600	307,400

NOTE: Adjustments were made for rounding errors.
  [a] Includes redemptioners.
  [b] Includes northern and southern Irish.
  [c] Includes German-speaking immigrants from Switzerland, Alsace, Lorraine, and all German territories.

Irish

Patrick Fitzgerald has modified A. Roger Ekirch's estimate of more than 13,000 Irish convict transportations to the colonies from 1718 to 1775. Lengthening the period covered to 1703–1789 and adding those leaving from English ports who, he believes, were Irish, Fitzgerald estimates 18,500 Irish transported to the Americas. I have subtracted 1,000 to account for those who arrived after 1775 and those transported to the Caribbean. I have estimated that about 48 percent of all Irish immigrants during this period were free, or paying, passengers. Marianne Wokeck found that the vast majority of pre-1730 immigrants to the Delaware Valley—in the peak immigration year of 1729, 80 percent—were paying passengers. I have applied that percentage to the entire pre-1730 immigration. About two-thirds of the Irish who arrived from 1730 to 1763 were servants, but from 1763 to 1775 two-thirds to three-fourths were again paying passengers. I have applied these proportions to my decennial estimates of Irish immigration, 1700–1775.[9]

English / Welsh

It is difficult to measure migration for these groups in the eighteenth century using the counting method, since there is little evidence available other than the London register of

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  [9] See Fogleman, "Migrations to the Thirteen British North American Colonies," 698, 704–7; Patrick Fitzgerald, "A Sentence to Sail: The Transportation of Irish Convicts to Colonial America in the Eighteenth Century," Working Paper, 96–22, 1996 (International Seminar on the History of the Atlantic World, 1500–1800, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.), 2–4; A. Roger Ekirch, *Bound for America: The Transportation of British Convicts to the Colonies, 1718–1775* (Oxford, Eng., 1987), 26–27; Marianne S. Wokeck, "Irish Immigration to the Delaware Valley before the American Revolution," *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy,* 96C (1996), 103–35, esp. 120–31.

1773–1775 and Ekirch's estimate of more than 36,000 convict transportations from 1718 to 1775. Canny estimates about 50,000 English immigrants but offers no new evidence to substantiate his claim. My estimate of 73,100 English and Welsh together is not extremely reliable. I have estimated that about two-thirds of the voluntary immigrants were servants, the approximate percentage of those in the London register.[10]

Scots

Most Scots arrived after 1760, and the great majority were free immigrants. Bernard Bailyn and Barbara DeWolfe found that 82 percent of those emigrating from 1773 to 1775 were free, a figure I have applied to all arrivals from 1760 to 1775. I have estimated that 50 percent of pre-1760 arrivals were free immigrants. Included among the unfree were convicts and political or military prisoners. Ekirch estimates that 700 convicts were transported between 1718 and 1775, and David Dobson believes about 2,000 Jacobites were transported involuntarily to the Americas after the rebellions of 1715 and 1745. I estimate that three-fourths of those were sent to the mainland. The remainder of the unfree were counted as indentured servants.[11]

Germans

My estimate of 84,500 German-speaking immigrants (including many from Switzerland) to the thirteen colonies, 1700–1775, is close to other recent estimates. Wokeck's figure (101,900 from 1683 to 1783) covers a longer period and a larger area—all of North America. Georg Fertig believes that about 101,000 Swiss and Germans immigrated from 1683 to 1800. My estimate of the number who were servants draws on Wokeck's work, which suggests that the indentured servant or redemptioner share in migration was very low before 1730, increased from the 1730s to the 1750s, and increased even further in the 1760s and 1770s. I have calculated that before 1720 none were servants, from 1720 to 1760 about one-third, and thereafter one-half.[12]

Other Europeans

I have estimated that about 5,900 other Europeans arrived. This is about 1 percent of total immigration during the period and includes some French, Dutch, and others. Indentured servitude probably did not play a major role in the immigration of these groups.[13]

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[10] Fogleman, "Migrations to the Thirteen British North American Colonies," 698, 708–9; Canny, "English Migration into and across the Atlantic," 59; Bernard Bailyn with Barbara DeWolfe, *Voyagers to the West: A Passage in the Peopling of America on the Eve of the Revolution* (New York, 1986), 170–71; Ekirch, *Bound for America*, 26–27. About 3,500 must be subtracted from Ekirch's figure to account for the Irish convicts transported from English ports identified by Fitzgerald.

[11] Fogleman, "Migrations to the Thirteen British North American Colonies," 698, 707–8; Bailyn with DeWolfe, *Voyagers to the West*, 170–71; Ekirch, *Bound for America*, 26; Dobson, *Scottish Emigration to Colonial America*, 92.

[12] Fogleman, "Migrations to the Thirteen British North American Colonies," 698, 700–704; Georg Fertig, "Transatlantic Migration from the German-Speaking Parts of Central Europe, 1600–1800: Proportions, Structures, and Explanations," in *Europeans on the Move*, ed. Canny, 192–235, esp. 193–203; Marianne S. Wokeck, "A Tide of Alien Tongues: The Flow and Ebb of German Immigration to Pennsylvania, 1683–1776" (Ph.D. diss., Temple University, 1983), 202–43; Marianne Wokeck, "Harnessing the Lure of the 'Best Poor Man's Country,'" in *"To Make America,"* ed. Altman and Horn, 225–26.

[13] Fogleman, "Migrations to the Thirteen British North American Colonies," 698, 709.

Table A.4
Estimated African Slave Imports into the Thirteen Colonies by Ethnicity, 1700–1775

Coastal Region of Departure	Ethnicity	Number	Percentage
Senegambia	Mandinka, Fulbe, Jola, Serer, Wolof, and Bambara	47,300	17
Sierra Leone, Windward Coast	Vai, Mende, Kpelle, and Kru	33,400	12
Gold Coast	Ashanti and Fanti	19,500	7
Bight of Benin, Bight of Biafra	Ibo and Ibibio	47,300	17
West-Central Africa	Kongo, Tio, and Matamba	44,600	16
Southeast Africa	Unclear	2,800	1
Other or Unknown		83,500	30
Total		278,400	100

Sample size = 195,428 (70%)

SOURCES: Table 1 and David Eltis et al., *The Transatlantic Slave Trade, 1562–1867: A Database Prepared at the W. E. B. Du Bois Institute, Harvard University* (CD-ROM) (Cambridge, Mass., forthcoming). NOTE: Adjustments were made for rounding errors.

Estimates of African immigration by ethnic group are more accurate for this period, since the sample compiled by David Eltis et al. is so large. (See table A.4.)

1776–1809

Gemery has demonstrated the inadequacies of the residual method for measuring European immigration in this period. His "hybrid" figure of c. 1,004,100 for 1780–1820 is surely much too high. I have used Hans-Jürgen Grabbe's estimates, based on the counting method, with modifications. Grabbe includes 5,000 Hessian soldiers who deserted during the Revolutionary War, for which I have substituted Rodney Atwood's more up-to-date figure of 3,000. Also, Grabbe estimates total passengers from France and Saint-Domingue but counts only one-half of them as emigrants. In contrast, I consider as immigrants all persons who came from somewhere else and lived in America (regardless of the reason). My final estimate is 273,200 total European immigrants. (See table A.5.)[14]

For the percentage who were servants I have applied estimates by Farley W. Grubb for Germans arriving in Philadelphia to the total of 17,600 Germans arriving in all ports estimated by Grabbe. (Grubb found that 30 percent of the Germans who arrived in Philadelphia, 1785–1809, were servants.) The result is 5,400 servants and 12,200 free immigrants.

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[14] Gemery, "European Immigration to North America," esp. 303; Henry A. Gemery, "Disarray in the Historical Record: Estimates of Immigration to the United States, 1700–1860," in *The Demographic History of the Philadelphia Region, 1600–1860*, ed. Susan E. Klepp (Philadelphia, 1989), 123–27, esp. 126; Rodney Atwood, *The Hessians: Mercenaries from Hessen-Kassel in the American Revolution* (Cambridge, Eng., 1980), 256; Hans-Jürgen Grabbe, "European Immigration to the United States," in *Demographic History of the Philadelphia Region*, ed. Klepp, 193–94.

Table A.5
Estimated European Immigration into the United States by Ethnicity,
Legal Status, and Condition of Servitude, 1776–1809
(to the Nearest 100 Immigrants)

Ethnicity	Unfree by Condition of Servitude		Free	Total
	Indentured Servants[a]	Convicts and Prisoners		
Irish[b]	11,300	1,000	137,200	149,500
English / Welsh / Scots	1,600	—	38,200	39,800
Germans[c]	5,400	—	15,200	20,600
French	—	—	6,800	6,800
Caribbean	—	—	51,800	51,800
Canada	—	—	2,200	2,200
Other	—	—	2,500	2,500
Total	18,300	1,000	253,900	273,200

NOTE: Adjustments were made for rounding errors.
  [a] Includes redemptioners.
  [b] Includes northern and southern Irish.
  [c] Includes German-speaking immigrants from Switzerland, Alsace, Lorraine, and all German territories.

The 3,000 soldiers who deserted during the war must then be added to the number of free immigrants.[15]

The only other significant group of indentured servants arriving in this period were British immigrants of the 1780s. Grabbe calculates 6,500 immigrants from England, Scotland, and Wales to the United States in the 1780s and 45,300 from Ireland. I have estimated that 25 percent of these were servants. Lastly, about 1,000 convicts, mostly Irish, may have arrived in the 1780s before American authorities began to crack down on the practice.[16]

Estimates of slave importations after American independence vary widely. Fogel's recent estimate of 291,090 for 1780 to 1810, obtained by a residual method, is extremely high and cannot be corroborated by other methods. Philip Curtin estimates 101,600 for 1780–1820 by analyzing imports and, when shipping data is lacking, long-term population increases. Allan Kulikoff found 96,000 African immigrants for 1790–1810 using a residual method. I have used Kulikoff's figures, which are close to Curtin's. For the 1780s (not investigated by Kulikoff), I have used Curtin's estimate. (See table A.6.)[17]

[15] Farley W. Grubb, "The End of European Immigrant Servitude in the United States: An Economic Analysis of Market Collapse, 1772–1835," *Journal of Economic History*, 54 (Dec. 1994), 818–19; Grabbe, "European Immigration to the United States," 194.

[16] Grabbe, "European Immigration to the United States," 194. On convicts transported to the United States after 1783, see Fitzgerald, "Sentence to Sail," 3–4.

[17] Fogel, Galantine, and Manning, *Without Consent or Contract*, 56–57; Curtin, *Atlantic Slave Trade*, 72–75, 139–40; Allan Kulikoff, "Uprooted Peoples: Black Migrants in the Age of the American Revolution," in *Slavery and Freedom in the Age of the American Revolution*, ed. Ira Berlin and Ronald Hoffman (Charlottesville, 1983), 149, 168–71. Curtin estimates that 91,600 slaves were imported from 1781 to 1810, 70,000 of them in 1791–1807. He believes that from 1808 to 1810 3,000 slaves were imported illegally. This leaves 18,600 for the 1780s. See Curtin, *Atlantic Slave Trade*, 72–75, 139–40.

Table A.6
Estimated African Slave Imports into the United States by Ethnicity, 1776–1809

Coastal Region of Departure	Ethnicity	Number	Percentage
Senegambia	Mandinka, Fulbe, Jola, Serer, Wolof, and Bambara	8,000	7
Sierra Leone, Windward Coast	Vai, Mende, Kpelle, and Kru	18,300	16
Gold Coast	Ashanti and Fanti	15,000	13
Bight of Benin, Bight of Biafra	Ibo and Ibibio	5,700	5
West-Central Africa	Kongo, Tio, and Matamba	37,800	33
Southeast Africa	Unclear	1,100	1
Other or Unknown		28,700	25
Total		114,600	100

Sample size = 65,168 (57%)

SOURCES: Table 1 and David Eltis et al., *The Transatlantic Slave Trade, 1562–1867: A Database Prepared at the W. E. B. Du Bois Institute, Harvard University* (CD-ROM) (Cambridge, Mass., forthcoming).
NOTE: Adjustments were made for rounding errors.

Table A.7
Estimated European Immigration into the United States by Ethnicity, Legal Status, and Condition of Servitude, 1810–1819
(to the Nearest 100 Immigrants)

Ethnicity	Unfree by Condition of Servitude		Free	Total
	Indentured Servants[a]	Convicts and Prisoners		
Irish[b]	—	—	49,800	49,800
English / Welsh / Scots	—	—	47,900	47,900
Germans[c]	5,300	—	8,800	14,100
French	—	—	6,000	6,000
Caribbean	—	—	19,800	19,800
Other	—	—	2,000	2,000
Total	5,300	—	134,300	139,600

NOTE: Adjustments were made for rounding errors.
  [a] Includes redemptioners.
  [b] Includes northern and southern Irish.
  [c] Includes German-speaking immigrants from Switzerland, Alsace, Lorraine, and all German territories.

1810–1819

Estimates for this period were calculated in much the same way as those for 1776–1809. The source for total European immigration is Grabbe, and that for German servants is Grubb. (See table A.7.) I have used Kulikoff's estimate of illegal slave importations. There is no evidence available on the coastal region of origin or the ethnicity of those slaves.[18]

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[18] Grabbe, "European Immigration to the United States," 194; Grubb, "End of European Immigrant Servitude," 818–19; Kulikoff, "Uprooted Peoples," 152, 168–71.