

**WHITE SERVITUDE IN THE
COLONY OF VIRGINIA: A STUDY
OF THE SYSTEM OF INDENTURED
LABOR IN THE AMERICAN
COLONIES**

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White servitude in the Colony of Virginia: a study of the system of indentured labor in the American colonies by James Curtis Ballagh

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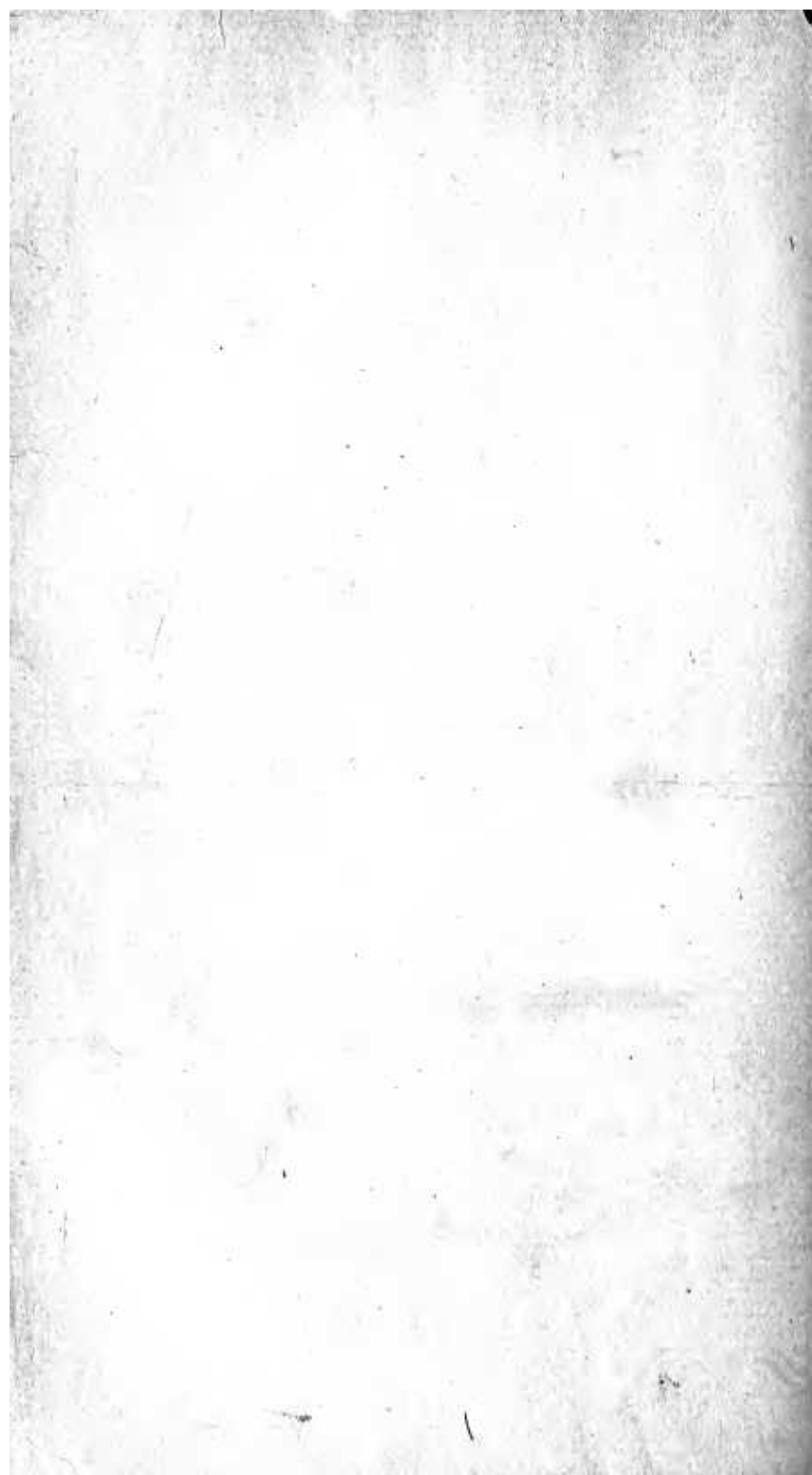
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JAMES CURTIS BALLAGH

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VI-VII

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History is Past Politics and Politics are Present History.—*Freeman*

THIRTEENTH SERIES

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WHITE SERVITUDE IN THE COLONY OF VIRGINIA

A STUDY OF THE SYSTEM OF INDENTURED
LABOR IN THE AMERICAN COLONIES

BY JAMES CURTIS BALLAGH, A. B.

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SOURCES.

The materials upon which this study is based are largely contained in:

I. The Records of the Virginia Company of London, of which two MS. copies are extant:

(a) The Collingwood MS. (1619-1624), 2 v. folio, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C., prepared for the Earl of Southampton from the original records of the Company, now lost, in 1624, and compared with them page by page by the secretary, Edward Collingwood, and attested by his signature. Through the copious abstracts by the late Conway Robinson, Stith's *History of Virginia* and the publications of the Rev. E. D. Neill, this MS. is largely accessible in print.

(b) The Randolph MS., formerly the property of John Randolph of Roanoke, now in the library of the Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, 2 v. folio, an 18th century transcript of the Collingwood MS.; and 1 v. folio of miscellaneous correspondence, orders, instructions, etc. (1617—).

II. Documents, correspondence, orders, instructions, proclamations, laws by the Company, Governors' commissions, etc., 1587-1730, to be found in Purchas, Hakluyt, Force, Brown's *Genesis of the United States* (1605-1616), Smith's works (1606-1624), *Calendars of English State Papers* (Colonial, East Indies, Domestic, 1578-1676), Jefferson MSS. (1606-1711), MacDonald, De Jarnette, Sainsbury and Winder collections (Virginia MSS. from the British Record Office, 20 v. folio, 1587-1730), *Colonial Records of Virginia* (1619-1680), *Land Books* (1621—), and reprints of valuable early papers in the *Virginia Historical Register* and the *Virginia Historical Magazine*.

III. (a) The Records of the General Court of Virginia (1670-76), the Robinson MS. (1633—), containing valuable

abstracts from the General Court records and other papers since destroyed, the MS. Letters of Wm. Fitzhugh (1679-1699), the MS. Letters of Wm. Byrd (1683-1691), and the Virginia Gazettes (1737—), all in the possession of the Virginia Historical Society.

(b) The MS. County Records of Accomac (1632—), York (1633-1709), Essex (1683-86), Henrico (1686-99), State Library, Richmond, Virginia.

(c) Hening, Statutes at Large of Virginia (1623-1792), and contemporary descriptions of Virginia; Whitaker (1613), Hamor (1614), Rolf (1616), "A Declaration," etc. (1620), Bullock (1649), Williams (1650), Hammond (1656), Blair, Chilton and Hartwell (1696), Beverley (1705), Jones (1724).

Such other authorities as have been referred to will appear in the appended bibliography.

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J. C. B.

INTRODUCTION.

The chief interest in the colonial history of America has always centered in the development of political institutions, which, from their importance and endurance, have become of wide significance. For this reason it has been customary to overlook, or to treat as processes subsidiary to the political evolution, many interesting social and economic developments, which were of great moment in the history of the colonial period as furnishing the material background of this political development and giving it its distinctive character.

In this paper an attempt has been made to trace the growth and significance of one such social institution as a result of the peculiar conditions under which the actual colonization took place. Though the study is limited to the experience of a single colony, that experience becomes, through the exceptional position occupied by that colony, broadly characteristic of the institution in general, and in all important particulars typical of the legal form which servitude assumed in the other colonies.

The main ideas on which servitude was based originated in the early history of Virginia as a purely English colonial development before the other colonies were formed. The system was adopted in them with its outline already defined, requiring only local legislation to give it specific character in each colony. Such legislation was in some cases directly copied from the experience of Virginia, and when of independent or prior origin was largely determined by conditions more or less common to all the colonies, so that in its general legal character the institution was much the same in all. The similarity was more striking, both in theory and in practice, in the agricultural colonies of Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania, and particularly in them was it of industrial importance.