

## Conflict and the Transition to Slave Labor in Chesapeake

### Chesapeake

- I. Economic, Political and Social Conflict in the Chesapeake
  - A. Tobacco Market Collapses
  - B. Govern William Berkeley
  - C. Vote Restricted 1670 and new taxes (1674)
  - D. Renewed Indian Conflict 1675
- II. Bacon's Rebellion
  - A. Nathaniel Bacon
  - B. Bacon's Laws
  - C. Aftermath
- III. Transition from Servant to Slave Labor
  - A. Status of Blacks in the Early Chesapeake
  - B. Anthony Johnson
  - C. New Legal Restrictions on Blacks

### Key Terms

Governor William Berkeley  
Nathaniel Bacon  
Bacon's Laws  
Anthony Johnson

- A. By 1660 price of tobacco falling due to over-production. Price was 3shillings per lb (31\$ today) to 70 cents a pound
- B. William Berkeley
  - 1. 1661-1676 WB called no elections
  - 2. Appointed friends to multiple offices in 1660s
  - 3. Small rebellions held throughout colonies by servants
  - 4. This made governor and ruling class nervous
  - 5. 1670 House of Burgesses voted to restrict vote to only those who owned land.
  - 6. ½ voters disenfranchised
  - 7.

- C. Few Years later House of B passes new taxes. 100 lb tobacco a year per head of household. No matter how small or large your land
- D. Really hit poor who only had labor of themselves and family
- E. Now angry servants and poor concerned that political power is increasingly in the hands of elite
- F. Some say laws, vote and tax bull crap
- G. Elite saw increase # of landless and they could vote. Policy and people turning against the elite who are in office
- H. Renewed Indian conflict 1675
- I. Since 1646 conflicts had diminished as colonial migration west conflict with Indians increase
- J. 1675 conflict breaks out because colonists who had arrived early in VA occupied all the land along the rivers and streams, the most fertile land with the best transportation.
- K. Further out land obtained greater increase in conflict with Indians.
- L. Colonists on frontier scared and isolated on farms
- M. 1675-1675
  1. Struggle between Indians and colonial militia
  2. Fierce atmosphere
  3. Frontier people plead to governor to raise/provide army
  4. Berkeley said no
  5. Why? Especially given the large # of unhappy people
  6. Because Berkeley had fur trade trading networks with the Indians and didn't want to lose \$ by sending army against his allies
  7. So frontier colonists are poor and several angry . on frontier colonists unite under Nathaniel Bacon

## II. Nathaniel Bacon

- A. Land owner from British upper classes
- B. Gotten into some trouble in England
- C. Tried to con a friend out of his inheritance

- D. Government caught him
- E. Well educated, etc
- F. His dad say you're out of here
- G. I will set you up on a plantation in VA
- H. You can learn to be self-sufficient man
- I. Bacon's plantation located on the frontier
  - 1. B/c status in England already well connected in VA
  - 2. His uncle with same name already in VA
  - 3. Bacon gets appointed to governor's council, @ 11 people out of entire colony
  - 4. Bacon made 1 request: to raise a militia to protect the frontier
    - a. Berkeley denied
    - b. Bacon raises a militia anyway and killed many Indians
- J. Berkeley furious
  - 1. Bacon disobeyed order and violated culture of deference
  - 2. Berkeley almost charges him with treason
  - 3. Removes Bacon from governors council
  - 4. Governor increasingly worried b/c sees so many people rallying behind Bacon
  - 5. People angry and ready to rebel
  - 6. Just need strong leader
  - 7. Berkeley decides to hold elections after 15 years in order to relieve tensions
  - 8. 40 members of HOB voted into office
  - 9. 1 of these is Bacon
  - 10. 31 of the 40 well-known sympathizers with bacon's cause
- K. Bacon emboldened
  - 1. Marches in with followers to take his seat

2. Berkeley seizes Bacon and Bacon drops to his knees and apologizes
3. Berkeley loved the groveling and having his ego fed
4. Berkeley pardoned him and let him go
5. Bacon concerned though and made an excuse to return to his plantation rather than serve on the HOB

#### IV. Bacon's Laws

##### A. In his absence Bacon's Laws Passed

1. Restored vote to free men who didn't own land
2. Prohibited multiple office holding
3. Local offices elective rather than appointed by the governor
4. Taxes cut
5. Eliminated special land grants and tax exemptions
6. All of these are an attempt to eradicate WB corruption, nothing radical about the laws

##### B. f

#### V. Bacon's Rebellion

- A. Bacon returns with 400-500 men
- B. Did so because didn't trust Berkeley
- C. Decides to attack Jamestown
- D. Afraid that now that laws passed WB will put him in jail
- E. Plus Indian policy hadn't really changed
- F. In rebellion Bacon supported by Frontier and indentured servants (all of who were servants of Berkeley's friends)
- G. Bacon promised freedom to them if they fought
- H. Berkeley's friends' frontier homes plundered
- I. Bacon and followers plunder BW and friends homes on 9/19/1676
- J. NB and followers burn Jamestown to the ground

- K. WB taking refuge across Jamestown River
- L. In October Bacon dies of bloody flux
- M. When it seemed war not over, rebellion collapse without leadership of Bacon
- N. Shortly after Bacon's death, British soldiers arrived to stop rebellion. They stifled the remaining rebellion and confiscated land from rebels.
- O. King recalled Berkeley for his abuses, dies a broken man
- N. \*\*\*\*\* Significance: fundamental changes in Chesapeake resulted, taxes, social conditions, rising expectations not being met, large # of servants without opportunities, limited opportunities, stripping of vote, tensions between poor and powerful increasing. Still group of elite in power but Bacon's laws exist, but realize rigid stratification threatens their power  
Transition to slave labor is ultimate political and social affect of the rebellion

### III. Transition from Servant to Slave Labor

- O. Some elite decide it is too dangerous to have us against them (poor) so try to tie their interests to all of white people together
- P. Decide this by examining colonial policy. Two groups sacrificed to achieve unity of whites.
  1. Native Americans: Immediately after Bacon's Rebellion sharp change in colonial policy towards Indians
    - a. Military and political: unlimited confiscation of Indian land
    - b. Exterminate all who came in contact with even if had been friendly Indian
    - c. Quell fears of those living on frontier and opens up land
  2. Africans
    - a. Ship records and documents reveal clear surge in Africans brought to colony after 1676
    - b. Why turn to African Slaves instead of indentured servants
      - i. Things in England improving: so fewer people willing to leave England
      - ii. Quell tensions of class difference in Virginia by bringing Africans
        - aa. unity between whites, poor and rich

indentured servants have to be set free and provided with freedom dues and then become competitors

plus i.s. have some rights in courts and protection in courts

slaves have for life and don't have to treat well

plus master owns slaves children for life or sell and never compete against them

before long both whites think I am more like the rich whites than like blacks,  
aspire to be slave owners , poor no longer at the bottom.

Q. Status of Blacks in Early Chesapeake

1. 1649 300 -400 Africans, 2% of population

2. 1670 5% of population

3. 1700 35% African

R. Most historians believe that first blacks arrived in Chesapeake in 1610 as indentured servants

S. 20 of them, also believe most Africans brought to Chesapeake til 1670 were indentured servants, not slaves. Although some brought as slaves

T. White and black indentured servants

U. But only black slaves

V. Many of the blacks received freedom when term served

1. Evidence shows court document and laws passed suggest that for most of the 17<sup>th</sup> century most black servants treated similarly to white indentured servants
2. The 2 got along because in similar circumstances
3. Black and white indentured servants ran way together, stole together, drank 2gethre, had sex together, mixed marriages
4. Legally rights black had especially indentured servants similar to white indentured servants and same rights
5. Slaves had similar rights to indentured servants

W. D

## I. Anthony Johnson

Example of economic and social mobility until late 1670s

Read book by TH Breen

Arrived in VA circa 1621 as a slave

Know this b/c in documents as Antonio a negro

Labored in tobacco fields

On the plantation where he worked there was a slave Mary a negro women, b/c his wife

b/c records sparse not a lot on A and M whereabouts between 1625 and 1640

But know about because free b/c by 1650 listed as Anthony Johnson in census records

He changed his name

### Anthony Johnson and Bacon's Rebellion:

Significance: What AJ tells us is that before Bacon's Rebellion whites and blacks treated similarly. At this time historians have a hard time distinguishing between racial and class discrimination, because race wasn't a barrier to social and economic development. However, race not irrelevant because only slaves could be black and because race was delineated in all records. After 1670, as Johnson shows us, opportunities for blacks disappear. By 1690 and 1700 slavery firmly established and indentured servitude is on its way out.

### New Laws for Blacks:

1680 Law preventing negro insurrection: blacks can no longer carry weapons; guns, clubs, knives, etc.

1691: Punish miscegenation, inside or outside of wedlock. Any white who marries black, mulatto or Indian will be banished.

Most mixed couples already married left the area around 1700, moving west. Many free blacks, like Johnson, left too. Since rising change any free white woman who had out of wedlock kid by black fined equivalent of \$800.00 today. If she could pay a free woman was sold into a 5 year term of indenture, children received a 30 year service to county, even if the mom could pay.

1691 HOB (House of Burgesses) passes masters could no longer free slaves unless the provided transportation for the slaves out of the colony. It is possible this law was passed to prevent masters from freeing slaves thereby keeping society separate, drawing distinct line between the races.

1705: Mandates dismemberment of slaves fingers, ears, etc, but not arms or legs, if they became unruly. Cracked down on insurrection at the same time it forbade whipping remaining white servants. This protected property owned by servants but the property of slaves was confiscated and given to parishes to sell for poor aid of parish.

Significance of Laws: By 1700 in VA, PA, and MD legal foundation for system of black slavery firmly in place.

Free Blacks: also suppressed under new laws. Political rights curtailed and economic opportunity limited as well, most chose to leave the Chesapeake and went to the southwest or to the more accommodating North.

Transition: Now that you see an image of how slavery and race changed over time in the Chesapeake and we've discussed the middle colony of Pennsylvania a bit, let's move briefly to New England