

LESSON 4: SLAVERY AND INDENTURED SERVITUDE

GRADE 5-8

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Objectives

- *Understand the difference between slavery and indentured servitude.*
- *Describe the motivation for a 19th-century individual to become indentured.*
- *Compare and contrast the rights and lives of indentured servants and slaves.*
- *Collect and analyze data to produce a bar graph.*
- *Make statements about data trends from a bar graph.*

INTRODUCTION

Before large-scale immigration to America, the American colonies were largely peopled with indentured servants. The indenture contracts under which people served generally paid for their passage to America and lasted for a term of years typically ending with a lump sum payment in money or goods. Such contracts were a very common labor practice in Britain, and their advent in America was simply an extension of British labor practices.

Indentured servants first arrived in America in the decade following the settlement of Jamestown by the Virginia Company in 1607. The idea of indentured servitude was born in the need for cheap labor. The earliest settlers soon realized that they had lots of land to care for, but no one to care for it. Passage to the North American colonies

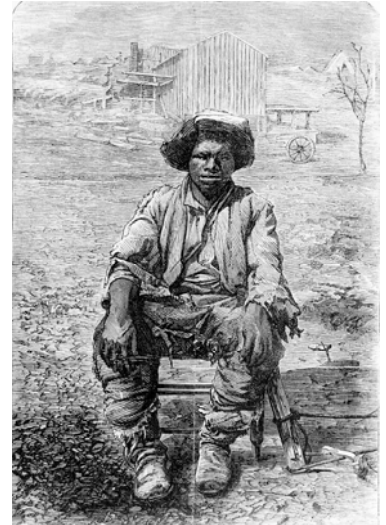
was expensive for all but the wealthy, and the Virginia Company developed the system of indentured servitude to attract workers. Indentured servants became vital to the colonial economy.

As demands for labor grew, so did the cost of indentured servants. Landowners turned to African slaves as a more profitable and ever-renewable source of labor and the shift from indentured servants to racial slavery had begun.

The French introduced slavery into the French-controlled Illinois country, in the mid-1700s. The British, who took control of the Illinois Country in 1765, permitted slavery to continue, and so did the Americans after George Rogers Clark's conquest in 1778. Although the Northwest Ordinance of 1787

prohibited slavery or involuntary servitude, territorial and later state laws and interpretations permitted the French to keep their slaves.

Arthur St. Clair, the governor of the Northwest Territory, arrived in the Illinois country and established American authority in 1790. Despite the Ordinance of 1787's prohibition of slavery, many African-Americans remained in a state of de facto slavery as indentured servants. After Illinois achieved statehood in 1818 the General Assembly began enacting a series of laws known as the "black codes." These restrictive laws continued the practice of indentured servitude, denied legal protection to African-Americans, and required local governmental officials to maintain registers of indentured servants and free blacks.



Materials

- *Slavery documents found in the "Slavery in Illinois Kit" (and on this CD)*
 - *#6 Indenture, 1807*
 - *#13 Indenture, Calep & Lucy*
 - *#18 Bill of Sale, Jane*
 - *#19 Bill of Sale, 1818*
 - *#20 Bill of Sale, 1819*
 - *#23 Indenture, Sary*
 - *#24 Bill of Sale*
 - *#38 Indenture, 1850*
- *Tri-Venn Diagram (in this lesson plan)*
- *Paper*
- *Colored pencils*
- *Markers*
- *Crayons*
- *Rulers*
- *Graph paper*
- *"Slavery in Illinois" Article (in this lesson plan).*

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PROCEDURE

1. Review "Slavery in Illinois" article.
 - Conditions of service (if any)
2. Divide the class into small groups.
3. Distribute the slavery documents between groups.
4. Student will examine each indenture record or bill of sale and record the following:
 - Location
 - Date
 - Name
 - Age
 - Amount paid
 - Gender
 - Length of service
5. Student will collect data and produce a bar graph.
6. Combine student graphs into a classroom graph.
7. Ask the class what generalizations can be made by reading the graph.
8. Distribute the Venn Diagram and instruct students to label circles Slave, Indentured Servant, Myself.
9. Using the information from the graph have students compare and contrast the lifestyle, liberty, and rules, etc., of Slaves, Indentured Servants and themselves.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What would motivate someone to indenture themselves for a term of 50 years?
2. Were there any benefits to indenture?
3. Did the nature of indenture change between the Illinois Territory and Statehood periods?
4. Was there a difference between indenture and enslavement?
5. What are some of the similarities?
6. How did indenture change from the colonial period to the mid-nineteenth century?
7. How would you learn a trade or acquire the skill, other than school, in today's job market? How does indentured servitude compare with this method of training, different or the same?
8. What do you think an individual who pledged as an indentured servant expected to get out of this pledge?
9. What types of skills were slaves allowed to learn?
10. What expectations did a slave have when they were forced into servitude?
11. Contrast the life of a slave with that of an indentured servant.

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SLAVERY IN ILLINOIS

Slavery was introduced to the Illinois Country as early as 1719 when Philip Francis Renault left France with two hundred miners and workmen and a plan to engage in the newly developing mining industry of Upper Louisiana. Along the way, Renault stopped at San Domingo where he purchased five hundred black slaves. He journeyed up the Mississippi and settled at a place he dubbed St. Philip, near today's Fort de Chartres. This was the first known introduction of slavery into the French settlements of the Upper Mississippi.

Renault was not very successful in his venture and, in 1744, he sold his slaves to the local inhabitants and left the Illinois Country. A French missionary reported in 1750 that there were some three hundred slaves dispersed among the five French villages of Cahokia, Kaskaskia, Fort de Chartres, St. Philip and Prairie du Rocher.

In early Illinois, all segments of society that could afford slaves owned them, including habitants, missionary priests, traders and military men. Slaves were used in lead and salt mines, as boatmen, field workers and domestic servants. "No one in the region ever dreamed of questioning the morality or legality of black slavery," states historian Carl Ekberg.

When the United States took control of the Illinois Country, French citizens were allowed to keep their possessions and to retain their ancient rights and liberties. The issue of slavery, however, was another matter. Although slaves were considered the real property of their owners, a clause prohib-

iting slavery was included as Article Six of the Ordinance of 1787, which laid out the governing laws for the newly created Northwest Territory. Almost immediately residents began to clamor for a suspension of the anti-slavery clause.

By this clause in the Ordinance of 1787, one would suppose that those enslaved would be freed. Yet this was not the case. Instead, local government officials chose to interpret the Ordinance, and its clause against slavery, to mean that new slaves could not be introduced into the Illinois Country. It did not require slaves already held to be emancipated. Slaves who were already contracted to serve their master could be brought into the state as "indentured servants." Under the code, all black males under fifteen years of age who were owned or acquired were forced to serve at least until the age of thirty-five; women, until the age of thirty-two. Most indentures, however, ran longer, even up to ninety-nine years. All slaves brought into the Territory were obliged to serve out their contract and all owners were required to register these slaves with the County Clerk. Transfers of slaves from one owner to the other were allowed so long as the slave gave her "consent" before a notary. Of course one can imagine that very few slaves were able to "object."

With the organization of the Illinois Territory in 1809, Illinois adopted the Indiana slavery statutes and added provisions of their own concerning free blacks and the hiring of slaves. Free blacks were not allowed in the new territory. It was also possible

to bring slaves into Illinois as laborers for up to twelve months with no limit to the number of consecutive twelve-month contracts allowed.

The 1818 state constitution stipulated that "neither slavery nor involuntary servitude shall hereafter be introduced into this state." The "hereafter" was interpreted to mean that slaves already in the state would not be freed. Also, all indentures made prior to 1818 would be recognized. The first state legislature also passed severe laws restricting the movement, immigration and labor of free blacks.

The next landmark decision on slavery in Illinois came in 1845 when the Supreme Court of Illinois decided the case of Jarrot v. Jarrot (2 Gilm., 1). In this case, Pete Jarrot sued his "master" for wages. Julie Jarrot (of the Jarrot Mansion in Cahokia, Illinois), Pete's owner, claimed he was a slave, descended from a woman who was enslaved in Illinois before the passage of the Northwest Ordinance. Therefore, he was not entitled to any wages. The court held that Article Six of the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, applied to all slaves in the territory at the time of its passage. The effect of this decision was to free all slaves and their children. In effect, Pete Jarrot was no longer a slave.

The Constitution of 1848 declared, "There shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in the state...." The adoption of the constitution effectively ended slavery in Illinois.

\$2,500 REWARD!

RANAWAY, from the Subscriber, residing in Mississippi county, Mo., on Monday the 5th inst, my Negro Man named GEORGE.

Said negro is five feet ten inches high, of dark complexion, he plays well on the Violin and several other instruments. He is a shrewd, smart fellow and of a very affable countenance, and is twenty-five years of age. If said negro is taken and confined in St. Louis Jail, or brought to this county so that I get him, the above reward of \$1,000 will be promptly paid.

JOHN MEANS,
Also, from Bradford E. Stanley,

A NEGRO MAN SLAVE, NAMED NOAH,

Full 6 feet high; black complexion; full eyes; free spoken and intelligent; will weigh about 180 pounds; 23 years old; had with him 2 or 3 suits of clothes, white hat, short blue blanket coat, a pair of saddle bags, a pocket compass, and supposed to have \$250 or \$400 with him.

ALSO--A NEGRO MAN NAMED HAMP,

Of dark copper color, big thick lips, about 6 feet high, weight about 175 pounds, 22 years old, very white teeth and a space between the center of the upper teeth. Had a blue blanket sack coat with red striped lining. Supposed to have two suits of clothes with him in a blue trunk in one side.

Also, Negro Man Slave named BOB,

Copper color, high cheek bones, 5 feet 11 inches high, weight about 150 pounds, 22 years old, very white teeth and a space between the center of the upper teeth. Had a blue blanket sack coat with red striped lining. Supposed to have two suits of clothes with him in a blue trunk in one side.

\$1,000 will be given for George--\$500 for Noah--\$450 for Hamp--\$450 for Bob; if caught in a free State, or a reasonable compensation if caught in a Slave State, if delivered to the Subscribers in Miss. Co., Mo., or confined in Jail in St. Louis, so that we get them. Make in

JOHN MEANS & R. E. STANLEY.
ST. LOUIS, August 23, 1852. (PLEASE STRIKE IT.)

TRI-VEEN DIAGRAM

