

1619: Virginia's First Africans

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Introduction

In late August, 1619, around 30 enslaved Africans were brought to Virginia aboard the English privateer ship *White Lion*. At Point Comfort, they were sold to Virginia Company officials in return for supplies. A few days later, 2-3 additional enslaved Africans were traded by the ship *Treasurer*. They were the first recorded Africans in mainland English America.

The enslaved Africans brought to Virginia in 1619 were probably from the Kingdom of Ndongo in West Central Africa. They were Kimbundu-speaking people who shared a common cultural identity and brought advanced agricultural and industrial knowledge. Between 1618 and 1620, Portuguese colonizers allied with local Imbangala mercenaries to conquer Ndongo and enslave thousands of the kingdom's inhabitants.

At Luanda, Angola, the slave ship *San Juan Bautista* departed with 350 enslaved captives from Ndongo. Its destination was Vera Cruz, Mexico, but before it arrived it was attacked by the English privateer ships *White Lion* and *Treasurer*. The English ships stole around 60 of the surviving Africans and sailed for Virginia.

In 1620, there were 32 Africans living in Virginia. However, by 1625, only around 25 Africans remained. Most had arrived in 1619, but at least five Africans arrived on other ships, and two children were born to African mothers. Virginia's First Africans were probably enslaved for life, though a few eventually became free.

The landing of the first Africans is one of the most significant events in early Virginia history, and its 400th anniversary commemoration in 2019 has provided the impetus for re-examination and new research, as well as the opportunity for interpretation to a wider public. Until recently, relatively little was known about the identities, origins, and experiences of Virginia's first "20 and odd" Africans. In the late 1990s, historians Engel Sluiter and John K. Thornton identified one of the English privateer ships, the *Treasurer*, and the Iberian slave ship *San Juan Bautista*, which carried the first Africans, as well as their likely origins in the Angola region of West Central Africa. In 2007, journalist Tim Hashaw identified the second English privateer ship as the *White Lion* and explored the lives of early Africans after arriving in Virginia. Most recently, documentary historian Martha McCartney has discovered documents confirming the arrival in Virginia of additional enslaved Africans from the *San Juan Bautista* aboard the *Treasurer*. Moreover, since the 1980s, important new works on the history of slavery in the early Chesapeake have added much to our knowledge of Virginia's First Africans by placing their arrival and experiences into more clearly defined Atlantic, cultural, and legal contexts.

This report seeks to make the best and most current scholarly research on Virginia's First Africans available to the general public, beginning with their West Central African origins, through their journey from West Central Africa to Virginia, and finally their identities and experiences in Virginia between 1619 and 1625. Following these narrative segments is an overview of the legal and cultural status of early Africans in Virginia.

Because of the paucity of extant primary source material, and a long and wide-ranging body of historiography on the wider context of their arrival and experiences, the story of Virginia's First Africans has taken many forms. In addition to offering a comprehensive overview of current scholarly research and consensus, this report also compares popular and traditional narratives relating the story of early Africans in Virginia with available source material, seeking to parse those aspects of the narrative that can be confirmed in extant primary source material without invalidating histories supplemented by local and family traditions.

West Central Africa: The Kingdom of Ndongo

The Africans brought to Virginia in 1619 were probably from the Kingdom of Ndongo, in the Angola region of West Central Africa. The kingdom's population was made up of Kimbundu-speaking people living in urban cities and towns surrounded by suburban farming settlements. Most residents of Ndongo possessed advanced agricultural and industrial skills.

Between 1618 and 1620, Portuguese invaders allied with Imbangala mercenaries to conquer Ndongo and enslave its residents. Thousands of captives were taken to the Portuguese port of Luanda, where they were sent to Spanish and Portuguese colonies in America. Unlike most enslaved Africans taken to America, Virginia's First Africans probably came from a single or closely related ethnic groups and shared a common culture and identity.

The People of Ndongo

The Kingdom of Ndongo was located on a high plateau between the Lukala and Kwanza Rivers, about 140 miles inland from the fortified Portuguese port of Luanda. West Central Africans, including those in Ndongo and the surrounding region, formed their identities within local family and social networks within a larger regional political structure. The Kingdom of Ndongo consisted of local territories, ruled by *sobas*, united under the king of the Ngola dynasty. Ndongo's capital city, Kabasa, was its royal seat of power. It and the neighboring city of Ngoleme had a combined population of up to 60,000. Kabasa and other urban centers were densely populated, and cities and towns were surrounded by regularly spaced agricultural settlements. Residents of cities engaged in trade or were skilled artisans and laborers, especially known for blacksmithing and textile weaving. The population of suburban farming communities grew crops such as sorghum and millet and raised cattle, poultry, goats, and other livestock. Many residents of Ndongo possessed both agricultural and industrial knowledge, since it was common for farm workers to produce other goods during less busy growing seasons.¹

Mbundu religious beliefs and practices were recorded by Jesuit missionaries attempting to convert West Central Africans to Christianity. At the core of Mbundu religion was the belief that the souls of the dead, especially ancestors (*zumbi*), influenced the living world and could be communicated with at grave sites. Deities, called *ilundu*, also influenced local life and were worshipped at local shrines or holy sites, called *iteke*. Theology or doctrine were decentralized, relying on an individual's or community's interpretation and revelation rather than a strict orthodoxy controlled by a clergy. Music and dancing were central to religious and secular life as well as military training, and West Central Africans had sophisticated musical traditions that used complex rhythms and included horns, stringed instruments, and marimbas and drums played with a high level of skill. Ndongo's neighbor, the Kingdom of Kongo, was allied with the Portuguese and had been partially Christianized for over a century, and adoption of the Portuguese language and elements of Portuguese dress were common. In contrast, before the 1620s most regions of Ndongo rejected Portuguese language, dress, and religion as part of their resistance to Portuguese conquest, but there was a nascent growing Portuguese influence in western regions of Ndongo near the border with Kongo. Portuguese culture and religion became more popular in Ndongo during the reign of Queen Njinga Mbandi, who ruled from 1624 to 1663.²

Ndongo-Portuguese Relations

The Kingdom of Ndongo was the largest and most powerful rival of the Portuguese colony of Angola. Ndongo's contact with the Portuguese began around 1518, when King Ngola Kiluanji sent ambassadors to Portugal and requested Catholic missionaries to visit Ndongo. A tentative alliance was established, though rulers of Ndongo were skeptical of strong Portuguese power and limited the influence of missionaries. In 1575, Portugal established the colony of Angola at the mouth of the Kwanza River. Its purposes were to export enslaved captives and serve as a base for Jesuit Catholic missionaries. From 1576 to 1605, the Portuguese fortified the city of São Paulo de Luanda, a large port through which thousands of captives were exported each year. In the 1580s and 1590s, Portuguese leaders based in the Angola colony attempted to conquer Ndongo by recruiting support from local sobas, and by seizing and fortifying territory along the Kwanza River inland from Luanda. Combined armies from Ndongo and Matamba, to the north, defeated a Portuguese invasion force in 1590. In 1599, Ndongo and Portugal agreed to a truce and formed a tentative alliance.³

European trade of enslaved Africans began in the 1400s and exploited an existing but quite different system of slavery practiced by Africans. European enslavement of Africans was race-based and closely tied to individual land ownership in ways that pre-colonial slavery in Africa was not, and some slaves in Africa had legal rights. Before European colonization, most slaves were captured as prisoners of war or were used as a form of tribute paid to rulers consolidating their power. Europeans purchased enslaved captives from African slave traders and began exporting enslaved Africans to replace Native American laborers in Spanish and Portuguese colonies. In doing so, Europeans massively broadened the scale of the slave trade and the areas and circumstances of their capture. The establishment and expansion of Portugal's colony at Angola coincided with the Iberian Union of 1580 to 1640, which united Spain and Portugal under one empire. During this period, with the bureaucracy managing the slave trade streamlined under one government, Portuguese slave traders dramatically increased their shipments of enslaved Africans from slave trading ports in West Africa and West Central Africa to Spanish and Portuguese colonies in the New World. Until 1618, Portuguese enslavers in Angola purchased captives through existing local networks of slave traders or exacted them as tribute from local sobas who had allied with the Portuguese. Some of these enslaved Africans may have come from the Kingdom of Kongo, or captured in Kongolese raids or military campaigns from regions to the east and north. Others may have come from Kimbundu-speaking areas to the south of the Portuguese colony of Angola. However, by 1618 the Portuguese set out to establish its own supply of enslaved captives for export by initiating another offensive against Ndongo. Virginia's First Africans, likely enslaved during this campaign, were captured more directly under Europeans' authority than most enslaved Africans.⁴

The Portuguese Invasion of Ndongo, 1618-1620

In 1618, Ndongo was in political crisis. The year before, Ndongo's king, Mbandi Ngola Kiluanji, was overthrown in a coup staged by a group of sobas. His son, Ngola Mbandi, had not yet secured his succession to the throne. Angola's Portuguese governor, Luís Mendes de Vasconcelos, determined to take advantage of the internal turmoil and allied with three bands of warrior mercenaries called Imbangalas to invade Ndongo. Though the Portuguese government discouraged use of African mercenaries, the practice was commonplace. The combined Portuguese-Imbangala forces swiftly progressed through Ndongo and pressed toward the capital city of Kabasa. By summer 1619, Ngola Mbandi had retreated to the Kindonga Islands on the Kwanza River, and Kabasa had fallen. Manuel

Bautista Soares, Bishop of Kongo, reported in 1619 that “in place of leaving off with the Jagas [Imbangalas], he [Vasconcelos] embraced them, and he has gone to war with them for two years, killing with them and capturing innumerable innocent people.” In the 1620s, Queen Njinga Mbandi, Ngola Mbandi’s sister, recovered Ndongo’s autonomy by consolidating power with neighboring Matamba to the north, garnering support of some of the Imbangalas, and deftly managing diplomatic relations with the Portuguese. Queen Njinga Mbandi ruled Ndongo and Matamba from 1624 to 1663.⁵

Ndongo’s defenses included a series of fortified positions and an infantry of professional soldiers called *quimbares*, supported by militias called up from the general population. Food and supplies were provided by large baggage trains that included women and slaves. Though firearms and archers were used on both sides, most combat was hand-to-hand fighting using swords, clubs, battle axes, spears, and shields. At the beginning of the invasion, the elderly, most women, and children were ordered to take refuge in nearby islands and hilly regions while militias of men remained behind to resist the advancing Portuguese and Imbangala forces. Those not able to evacuate before the swiftly advancing Portuguese-Imbangala invasion were enslaved, and the Portuguese forced surviving sobas to provide additional slaves as tribute. Captives were marched below Kabasa’s plateau to the Kwanza River, where they were shackled by the neck and loaded into boats to be taken to Luanda. Between 1618 and 1620, the Portuguese captured and exported 50,000 people. Slave ships leaving Angola were packed far beyond their capacity. The *San Juan Bautista* was one of 36 ships transporting captives from Luanda to Spanish and Portuguese colonies in 1619 alone, and though the *San Juan Bautista* was licensed to carry 200 slaves as its cargo, it left Luanda with at least 350 enslaved people aboard.⁶

Because the Portuguese-Imbangala invasion had targeted urban areas, Virginia’s First Africans brought with them a combination of agricultural and industrial expertise that made their labor a significant though involuntary contribution to Virginia’s output of tobacco and other agricultural goods. The Portuguese-Imbangala capture of entire civilian communities, while absorbing older boys and killing men of military age, also meant that those enslaved in Ndongo included a disproportionate number of women and younger children. Since the *San Juan Bautista* left Luanda in late 1618 or early 1619, most of the Africans onboard were probably captured as the Portuguese-Imbangala armies advanced through the western areas of Ndongo along the border with Kongo, or in the first waves of attack on Kabasa. Residents of the areas of Ndongo bordering the Kingdom of Kongo included some Kikongo-speaking people along with Ndongo Kimbundu speakers. Some sobas in this border region had been much more open to Portuguese influence than elsewhere in the kingdom, so some of the *San Juan Bautista* captives may have had more experience with Portuguese language, religion, and customs than people captured at Kabasa or other parts of Ndongo. Some historians have theorized that a “Charter Generation” of Africans, including those brought to Virginia in 1619, were “Atlantic creoles” who combined African identity with familiarity with Christianity and European languages and culture. However, not all historians agree with this thesis; Africans with Atlantic creole identities were not typically populations who were enslaved, and Africans captured and sold to European slavers tended to be from interior or other regions with far less regular contact with Portuguese colonial influence. Instead, West Central Africans taken to Virginia probably retained much of their African cultural identity but were much more isolated than later generations and may have voluntarily adopted English customs and religion as a means of empowering themselves in a hostile foreign environment.⁷

From Angola to Virginia

Virginia's First Africans endured capture and a forced journey of 200 miles from Ndongo to the Portuguese port of Luanda, where they were loaded onto the slave ship *San Juan Bautista*. The *San Juan Bautista* sailed for Vera Cruz, Mexico, with 350 enslaved Africans aboard. They endured extreme conditions during a voyage of several months on a ship packed well beyond its capacity.

Before reaching Vera Cruz, the *San Juan Bautista* was attacked by the English privateer ships *White Lion* and *Treasurer*. The two English ships stole around 60 of the surviving Africans and sailed for Virginia. The *White Lion* arrived at Point Comfort in late August, 1619, and sold 29-30 Africans for food and supplies. The *Treasurer* arrived at Point Comfort a few days later and sold 2-3 Africans.

The Ordeal on the *San Juan Bautista*

Virginia's First Africans were taken from Luanda aboard the slave ship *San Juan Bautista* (or *São João Bautista* in Portuguese;^a *St. John the Baptist* in English). In Spanish records, the *San Juan Bautista* is identified as a 115 ton "filibote," or *fluyt*, a Dutch-style cargo vessel. It was designed to make voyages as profitable as possible by maximizing cargo space while operating with a minimal crew.⁸

In late 1616, the *San Juan Bautista* made preparations in southern Spain for its voyage, and its captain, Manuel Méndez de Acuña, obtained a license in Seville to transport enslaved Africans from Angola to Vera Cruz, Mexico. The *San Juan Bautista* sailed from San Lucar, near Seville, on 12 or 13 October 1616. Most slave trade voyages during this period took 2-4 years to complete, and the *San Juan Bautista* probably either made stops between San Lucar and Angola or was docked in Angola for several months. The scale of the Portuguese-Imbangala conquest of Ndongo overwhelmed the port of Luanda with thousands of captives, and many slave ships took more enslaved Africans than their original licenses allowed. The *San Juan Bautista* was loaded far beyond its capacity; its license was to carry 200 enslaved people, and it sailed from Luanda with at least 350 captives on board.⁹

The experiences of enslaved people during the Middle Passage were horrific, and conditions on the *San Juan Bautista* must have been even more brutal due to extreme over-crowding. Tightly crowded ships led to a much higher mortality rate for the Africans on board, even while resulting in greater profit for slave traders. Spanish records indicate that, by the time the *San Juan Bautista* arrived in Jamaica, the ship "had many sick aboard, and many had already died."¹⁰

^a Between 1580 and 1640, the Iberian crowns of Spain and Portugal were united and operated as one empire. During this period, Portuguese personal and ship names appear in imperial records in Spanish-language forms. The ship appears in Spanish as *San Juan Bautista* in records from Spain and Spanish Mexico, but the ship was probably Portuguese, since most slave ships sailing from Angola were Portuguese and not Spanish (see endnote 8 for further discussion). Though there currently is no known evidence to decisively identify the *San Juan Bautista* as either Portuguese or Spanish, future research may reveal more about the origins of the ship and its captain, Manuel Méndez de Acuña (or Manuel Mendes da Cunha in Portuguese). The Spanish *San Juan Bautista* is used here as the more familiar version of the ship's name and the version that appears in all known original records.

In 1626, Spanish friar Alonso de Sandoval published the following report of conditions aboard slave ships, based on descriptions he gathered from enslaved Africans in Spanish colonies:

They are so tightly packed, so nauseated, and so maltreated. Six are chained together with rings around their necks, and in pairs of two with shackles on their feet. They lie with one head to another's feet and are imprisoned below deck, closed off from the outside, where they do not see sun or moon. There is no Spaniard who dares to put his head through the hatch without vomiting, nor stay below for an hour without the risk of serious illness. Such is the stench, oppressive crowding, and misery of that place. And they only refuge and comfort they have is to eat every 24 hours, no more than a small bowl of cornmeal or raw millet, and with it a small cup of water, and nothing else except much beating, whipping, and cursing.¹¹

The captives aboard the *San Juan Bautista* included a disproportionate number of women and young children, and families were separated by death, sale, and the English privateer attack. Approximately 143 of the 350 captives died during the voyage, a mortality rate of 41%. Many slave ships made stops at Jamaica to sell enslaved children, who were less profitable if sold in Vera Cruz and other mainland ports. The *San Juan Bautista's* captain, Manuel Méndez de Acuña, ordered a stop in Jamaica to "refresh." There, he sold 24 children, separating them from surviving parents. The approximately 60 captives stolen by the *White Lion* and *Treasurer* in July were also probably separated from surviving family members.¹²

After the English privateer attack, the 123 Africans remaining on the *San Juan Bautista* were transferred by local authorities to the frigate *Santa Ana*, captained by Roderigo de Escobar, and arrived in Vera Cruz on August 30, 1619. Captain Manuel Méndez de Acuña declared 147 enslaved Africans as the ship's cargo; this number included the 24 children already sold in Jamaica.¹³

The *White Lion* and *Treasurer*

After being stolen and enslaved during the Portuguese invasion of Ndongo, Virginia's First Africans were stolen a second time by the English privateers who attacked the *San Juan Bautista*. The English attack took place in the Bay of Campeche, in the southern Gulf of Mexico off the coast of Vera Cruz. In July, the 160-ton English privateer ship *White Lion*, captained by John Jope, met with the 100-ton *Treasurer*, captained by Daniel Elfrith. Jope took 25 men from both ships in a pinnace, a small maneuverable boat accompanying the *White Lion*, to search for a Spanish ship to plunder. A few days later, they returned with around 60 Africans, likely the healthiest of the *San Juan Bautista* survivors. Little is known of the conditions or treatment experienced by the Africans onboard the English ships.¹⁴

The English pirates probably hoped the *San Juan Bautista* was laden with gold and silver, since each summer Spanish ships transported valuable goods to Havana for an annual convoy to Europe. The *San Juan Bautista*, a "filibote" (*felibote*, or *flyut*, a Dutch-style vessel), was designed to maximize cargo space, was not very maneuverable, and was probably only lightly armed. When it left Spain, it had a crew of 18, fewer than the 25 English privateers on the pinnace. Designed for profit but not defense, the *San Juan Bautista* was an easy target. The hull of the *San Juan Bautista* probably did not sustain much damage, since privateers typically aimed to disable and seize ships without damaging cargo. However, the masts, sails, rigging, or rudder of the ship may have been damaged or taken by the privateers, rendering the *Bautista* inoperable. After the attack, 123 Africans remained on the slave ship.¹⁵

Though the privateers probably did not plan to capture a slave ship or steal enslaved people, English mariners were familiar with the slave trade, and they considered enslaved Africans a valid commodity to steal as their prize. Privateering was a form of legally sanctioned piracy in which ships obtained authorizations to prey on the ships of enemy or rival nations. Privateering against Iberian ships was popular during Elizabeth I's reign, but King James I's 1604 Treaty of London made peace with Spain and outlawed piracy. After 1604, English privateers had to secure commissions, called letters of marque, from other European heads of state. *White Lion's* letter of marque was issued from Maurice, Count of Nassau and Stadholder of Zeeland, the location of Flushing (now Vlissingen). *Treasurer's* letter of marque came from the Duke of Savoy (now part of northwestern Italy) and was probably issued by the Duke's ambassador in London, who was known to issue marques to ship captains. These letters of marque allowed privateers to sell stolen goods – and enslaved people – in English ports. However, the fates of the Africans stolen from the *San Juan Bautista* rested on each privateer ship's legal status.¹⁶

The Landing of Virginia's First Africans

In late August^b 1619, the *White Lion* arrived at Point Comfort and sold “20 and odd” (probably 29-30) Africans to Sir George Yeardley, Virginia's Governor, and Abraham Peirse, the colony's Cape Merchant (supply officer and trade agent), in return for food and supplies. The *White Lion* did not stay long at Point Comfort, probably sailing to Jamestown before the arrival of the *Treasurer* a few days later.^c The colony's officials saw the Africans as valuable commodities and their labor as profitable; food supplies were scarce in Virginia between 1618 and 1624, and the Africans from the *White Lion* were desirable enough that the Governor and Cape Merchant parted with the Company's dwindling stores.¹⁷

Three or four days later, the *Treasurer* arrived at Point Comfort with additional enslaved Africans from the *San Juan Bautista*. The *Treasurer* did not stay long, departing quickly to avoid an ensuing scandal and potential seizure. Before departing, “two or three negroes they caste at Virginia,” and the remaining 25-27 Africans were taken to Bermuda, where a friendly governor allowed the *Treasurer* to trade.^d Among the two or three Africans sold by the *Treasurer* was Angelo, a woman who was living near Jamestown by 1624. The identities of the other 1-2 Africans from the *Treasurer* and the 29-30 from the *White Lion* remain unknown, though most of the Africans who are identified by name in later records were probably brought in 1619 on the two English privateers.¹⁸

The Virginia Colony's first census, taken in March 1620, recorded 32 Africans, 17 female and 15 male, all probably from the *White Lion* and *Treasurer*. None of the Africans are identified by name in this census. They are described as “Others not Christians in the Service of the English.” Here, Christian refers to heritable ethnic identity (i.e. someone from Christendom, or in other words European) rather than religious belief or practice. Native people living with the English were listed separately.¹⁹

^b Writing five months later, John Rolfe dated the landing as “about the latter end of August.” Though sometimes observed as August 20th or 25th, no other record of the arrival appears in English or Spanish records, and the exact date remains unknown.

^c John Pory, Secretary of the colony, entrusted Marmaduke Raynor, the *White Lion's* pilot, with a letter addressed to Sir Dudley Carleton which described the *Treasurer's* exploits and arrival in Virginia. The letter is dated 30 September from James City, so the *White Lion* was in Virginia for at least a month and probably sailed to Jamestown. Carleton was ambassador to the United Provinces in the Netherlands, so the *White Lion* probably returned to Flushing after leaving Virginia.

^d Though *Treasurer* dealt with “the inhabitants of Kicotan,” the ship was at Point Comfort, since Kicotan did not operate as a port.

When Sir George Yeardley and Abraham Peirse purchased the Africans from the *White Lion*, they may have done so on behalf of the colony in their official capacities as Governor and Cape Merchant. Whether or not the colony became the temporary owners of the Africans before they were resold to individuals, Yeardley and Peirse retained for themselves the largest number of Africans, who in March 1620 were “in the service of several planters.” In censuses recorded in 1624 and 1625, over half the Africans remaining in Virginia were on property owned by either Yeardley or Peirse.²⁰

The *Treasurer* Scandal and the Fate of the *San Juan Bautista* Africans in Bermuda

When the *Treasurer* arrived at Point Comfort, Capt. Daniel Elfrith probably intended to sell all 29-30 Africans on board. However, the *Treasurer* was engulfed in a piracy and corruption scandal that meant 25-29 of the Africans were taken to Bermuda rather than remain in Virginia. These Africans’ fates were profoundly affected by the *Treasurer’s* legal and political entanglements. An investigation into the *Treasurer’s* illicit activities recorded details of the attack on the *San Juan Bautista*, the attempted sale of the Africans in Virginia, and the ultimate fate of most of the Africans in Bermuda.

John Rolfe reported that the *Treasurer* departed owing to the “unfriendly dealing of the Inhabitants of Keqnoughton [Kicotan],” the civilian settlement near Point Comfort. The *Treasurer* previously had been welcomed in Virginia, but a change in governance shifted the political tide against the ship and its owners. *Treasurer* was formerly captained by acting Virginia governor Samuel Argall. Argall, in league with part owner Sir Robert Rich (Earl of Warwick), regularly supplied the ship at Jamestown, which acted as a base for *Treasurer* to privateer. *Treasurer* had a long history of piracy in the West Indies as well as dishonest dealings with other ships, and in early 1619, the Virginia Company was in the process of recalling Argall and initiating investigations of corruption and previous exploits of the *Treasurer*.²¹

Between 1618 and 1620, a rival faction within the Virginia Company, led by Sir Edwin Sandys and Sir Thomas Wriothesley (Earl of Southampton), worked to expose Argall’s and Warwick’s corruption and illegal privateering. In 1618, the Virginia Company dispatched Sir George Yeardley to replace Argall as governor of Virginia, investigate his alleged corruption and piracy, and “send home the said Captain Argall in quality of a malefactor and to sequester all his goods there for restitution to the Company.” Yeardley arrived in Virginia in April 1619, but Argall had already escaped on a ship sent hastily from England. By June 1619, the Virginia Company wrote instructions to Yeardley to “order that the ship [*Treasurer*] be seized immediately upon her return, and examination taken of her course and proceeding.” It is unclear whether this letter reached Yeardley in Virginia before the *Treasurer’s* return in August/September, but even if not, Yeardley instructed John Rolfe and two other officials to bring the ship to Jamestown. At Point Comfort, Capt. Daniel Elfrith sent word of his arrival to Jamestown, expecting to be received by Argall, but he sailed hastily from Virginia after learning of the change in the colony’s governance and political climate, taking the remaining Africans to Bermuda.²²

In addition to the investigation of Argall’s corruption and the *Treasurer’s* notorious dealings, the ship encountered problems trading at Point Comfort because its letter of marque was no longer valid, making its attack on the *San Juan Bautista* illegal. The Africans’ enslavement by the Portuguese, and theft by privateers with letters of marque, were considered legal under European law, but without a valid letter of marque, the Africans on the *Treasurer* were now considered illicit goods. King James I had made peace with the Spanish, and his government’s policies worked toward improving diplomatic relations. English ships looked to other European heads of state for their letters of marque, and

colonial and royal officials maintained enough distance from privateering to preserve the appearance of disapproval. *White Lion* sailed from Flushing (Vlissingen), a Dutch port well-known as a base for English privateers. Records referring to the *White Lion* as “Dutch,” a “Flemish man of war,” or “of Flushing” do not mean the ship was Dutch, but rather referenced the ship’s foreign letter of marque and Flushing’s popularity as privateering port. In his letter describing the two privateer ships, John Pory calls the *White Lion* a “Flemish man of war” but refers to the *Treasurer* as “an English man of war also,” revealing a common understanding that English privateers used Flushing as a base. The *Treasurer*’s letter of marque came from the Duke of Savoy, whose ambassador in London was well known to distribute letters of marque. However, by the time of the attack on the *San Juan Bautista*, the Duke of Savoy had made peace with Spain, rendering the *Treasurer*’s letter of marque invalid. The *Treasurer* last left England in April 1618, and it is unclear whether Capt. Daniel Elfrith knew his letter of marque was invalid when the two ships attacked the *San Juan Bautista*. If Elfrith knew, he likely assumed he would meet a ready welcome from Argall and other friends in Virginia anyway.²³

In Bermuda, the Africans remained caught up in the ongoing fallout of the *Treasurer* scandal. Between 1618 and 1620, Warwick set about replacing white tenant farmers on his Bermuda lands with enslaved Africans so he would not have to pay the tenants their share of tobacco. After the *Treasurer*’s arrival, acting governor Miles Kendall put the Africans to work on land owned by Warwick. Bermuda’s new governor, Nathaniel Butler, arrived in October 1619. Butler directed the Africans from the *Treasurer*, and 14 others brought around the same time by privateer Capt. Kirby, to be seized and put to work for the colony until it was decided whether the Africans belonged to the colony, Warwick, or the privateers. However, privately Butler handled the matter to benefit Warwick, taking “great care of [the] business concerning the *Treasurer* and the negroes.” In return, Warwick gave two of the Africans to Butler, and the others labored on Warwick’s property. In 1620, further questions arose about the ownership of the Africans brought by the *Treasurer* and Capt. Kirby, and Butler moved seven of the group back to labor on the Company lands but promised to “silently deliver them over to your Lordship [Warwick]” the following year if he received no instructions from the Company. Butler wrote to Sir Nathaniel Rich, Warwick’s cousin, “If it were not for the accidental negroes [brought by *Treasurer* and Capt. Kirby], I were not able to raise one pound of tobacco this year for the defrayment of any public work....These slaves are the most proper and cheap instruments for this plantation that can be.”²⁴

The *Treasurer*’s exploits in the West Indies were reported by Sir Edwin Sandys to the Privy Council, where the Spanish ambassador lodged a complaint against the attack on the *San Juan Bautista*. The Virginia Company, anxious to distance itself from any appearance of complicity in an attack on a Spanish ship, disavowed Argall’s operations and the *Treasurer*’s part in the attack, and an investigation ensued. In 1622, two officers on the *Treasurer* in 1619 claimed they were owed one third of the 27-29 Africans as their share of the loot from the attack on the *San Juan Bautista* but that Bermuda governor Nathaniel Butler had seized all of the Africans. Between 1620 and 1623, Miles Kendall also claimed in court that he was owed nine of the 14 Africans brought by Kirby, and evidently he believed Warwick had combined them with the Africans from the *Treasurer*. In 1622, a London court ordered that the Africans brought by Capt. Kirby would belong to Miles Kendall and the Bermuda Company, but the order was deferred pending identification of which Africans arrived on which ship. That year, Bermuda’s new governor, John Harrison, ordered Bermuda’s sheriff to search for the Africans brought by the *Treasurer* and Capt. Kirby. The outcome of the search is not recorded, and the identities and fates of the Bermuda Africans from the *San Juan Bautista* remain unknown. Other than the two Africans given to Butler, most likely remained under Warwick’s control.²⁵

Early Africans in Virginia

Though there were 32 Africans living in Virginia in 1620, by 1625 there were only around 25 Africans in the colony. We know little about their individual experiences, but surviving court and census records tell us some of their names and where they lived.

Most of the Africans in Virginia in 1625 arrived in 1619 on the *White Lion* and *Treasurer*. However, at least five Africans arrived on other ships, and two children had been born to African mothers. After 1625, little is known about the lives of Virginia's First Africans.

Life in Virginia: The Censuses of 1620, 1624, and 1625

Very few documents survive to tell us about the individual lives of early Africans in Virginia, and most of what we know are some of their names, locations where they lived, and demographic information recorded in three census lists taken in 1620, 1624, and 1625. In 1620, there were 32 Africans in Virginia, making up about 3% of Virginia's non-native population; by 1625, there were around 25 Africans, or about 2%.²⁶

The "20 and odd" brought on the English privateer ship *White Lion* probably numbered 29-30, and an additional 2-3 Africans arrived a few days later on the *Treasurer*. In March 1620, a census recorded 32 Africans, 17 women and 15 men, living in Virginia, all probably from the *White Lion* or *Treasurer*. None of the Africans are identified by name or location in 1620. They were described as "in the service of several planters," so they had already been sold rather than laboring for the Virginia Company.²⁷

The next census, called the "Lists of the Living and Dead," was taken in February 1624. It recorded only 21 surviving Africans, at least one of whom arrived after 1619. Several Africans probably died of disease or in the 1622 Powhatan Indian assault on the English colony, but some may have escaped or been moved or traded out of Virginia. One unnamed African died at West & Shirley Hundred in Charles City County sometime in the year before the census was taken. Of the 21 surviving Africans in the 1624 census, 12 were recorded with first names but no surname, and 9 were unnamed; 6 were women, 9 were men, and 6 do not have a sex given.²⁸

While the 1624 census gives us the names of 12 of the 21 Africans, the 1625 "Muster of the Inhabitants of Virginia" recorded the names of only 8 of the 23 Africans it listed. These 23 included 11 men, 10 women, and 2 children (1 male) born to African mothers. The 1625 Muster recorded the ages of almost all English colonists, along with the year of their arrival in Virginia and the ships that brought them. Three Africans – Anthony, Mary, and John Pedro – are listed as arrived on English ships after 1619. John Pedro was 30 years old in 1625; he was the only African whose age was recorded.²⁹

Most of the Africans in the 1624 and 1625 censuses were located in four major settlement areas and labored for members of the colony's powerful and wealthy elite. Not all Africans in Virginia by 1625 are listed in the 1624 and 1625 censuses; court and ship records describe the arrival of at least three additional Africans – John, John Phillip, and Brase. The 1624 Lists of the Living and the Dead and the 1625 Muster missed an estimated 20% and 10% of Virginia's non-native population, respectively.³⁰

Africans at Elizabeth City (Hampton): Anthony, Isabella, William, and John Pedro

In 1624, Anthony and Isabella were located at Elizabeth City, on land belonging to Capt. William Tucker. Capt. Tucker was a burgess and military commander who may have been present when the *White Lion* or *Treasurer* were at Point Comfort. If Anthony and Isabella were with Tucker beginning in 1619, they may have lived with him on the eastern side of the Hampton River near Point Comfort. By 1622 however, Capt. Tucker owned land and had built a house along the James River on the western side of the Hampton River, and Anthony and Isabella likely moved with him; they appear in the 1624 census among the residents of Elizabeth City on the western side of Hampton River, and in 1625 as part of Capt. Tucker's household. By 1625, the couple also had a son, William. In the 1625 Muster, the family is identified as "Antoney Negro: Isabell Negro: and William their Child Baptised." The date and location of William's baptism are not recorded, but it probably took place Elizabeth City's parish church, built in 1624 on the eastern side of the Hampton River near today's Hampton University campus. William was one of the first two African American children born in Virginia, and he is often considered the first because the other child was not identified by name. In the early seventeenth century, the word "baptism" was used to denote the religious rite but not the giving of a name and legal status of personhood (which was denoted by the word "christening"), so William's baptism probably did not affect whether or not he was considered enslaved or free.³¹

Anthony, Isabella, and William disappear from the historical record after 1625, so details of their lives and experiences remain unknown. In 1633, Capt. William Tucker acquired 100 acres of land in Elizabeth City on the Back River, and in 1635, he patented another 200 acres on the south side of the James River. Anthony, Isabella, and William may have been moved from Tucker's original 150 acres on Elizabeth City's James River waterfront. The modern day Tucker family of Hampton and Newport News believes Anthony, Isabella, and William became or were free and took the last name Tucker, and ongoing research may reveal more about Anthony's, Isabella's, and William's lives in Virginia.³²

By 1625, John Pedro was also living in Elizabeth City, in the household of Francis West on the "Company Land" on the east side of the Hampton River. John Pedro, aged 30, arrived on the *Swan* in 1623 or 1624 and is the only African whose age was recorded in the census. The *Swan* sailed to Virginia from Massachusetts; Francis West was in Plymouth in 1623 and probably returned to Virginia on the same voyage, bringing John Pedro with him. John Pedro was free by the early 1650s. He briefly owned land in Lancaster, Virginia, before moving to Maryland. As an older man, John Pedro used "Pedro" as his surname, but historians disagree on whether it would have been considered a surname before he became free, since both the Kimbundu and Portuguese languages include double naming practices for first names. Double naming was more common among Mbundu nobles, and John Pedro may have been from a prominent family in Kongo or the eastern areas of Ndongo more heavily influenced by Portuguese religion and culture than the rest of the kingdom. John Pedro was eventually executed in Maryland for his involvement with a Catholic dissident faction, further evidence that he may have been a practicing Catholic before being enslaved. If so, his Catholic identity may have occasioned his move to Maryland during Cromwell's rule when Virginia's royalist colonial government expelled religious minorities.³³

Africans at Warraskoyak, Flowerdew, and Jamestown

In 1624 and 1625, the other early Africans in Virginia were living at “Warwick Squeake” (Warraskoyak, near present-day Smithfield), Flowerdew Hundred (near present-day Hopewell), and in a cluster of settlements at or near Jamestown. Some Africans lived in larger groups, while a few individuals were the only African living at a site.

Angelo, an African woman, was living in the household of William Peirce, an influential and wealthy merchant, burgess, and one of the men sent to meet the *Treasurer*. Angelo, who arrived on the *Treasurer* according to the 1625 census, is the only African named in later records who can be identified definitively as one of the first Africans who arrived in 1619. (Most other early Africans probably also arrived in 1619, but no documents survive to confirm the arrival date of any other individual on the *White Lion* or *Treasurer*.) In Kimbundu and Portuguese-Angolan naming practices, male and female names could be used interchangeably, so it may not have mattered to Angelo whether her name looked masculine by ending with an “o” versus a feminine “a.” Some historians have feminized and anglicized the name to the modern-sounding “Angela,” but since the name appears as “Angelo” in both censuses, it seems clear that was the name she used to identify herself.³⁴

In 1624 and 1625, an African man named Edward was living at Neck of Land near Jamestown, on property managed by Edward Kingsmill, an influential burgess and friend of Abraham Peirse. In 1624, another man named Jeso or Jiro was living at a plantation across the James River from Jamestown, but he is not identified in the 1625 Muster.³⁵

At Warraskoyak in 1624 were Peter, Anthony, Francis, and Margrett. Anthony was probably the Anthony who arrived in 1621 or 1622 on the *James* and later became known as Anthony Johnson. Warraskoyak was owned by Edward Bennett, a wealthy but mostly absentee merchant and investor whose property was managed by his brother and nephew. By 1625, Peter, Francis, and Margrett had disappeared from Warraskoyak, where Anthony (named Antonio in the 1625 Muster) was now living with Mary, who arrived in 1622 or 1623 on the *Margrett and John* but was not listed in the 1624 census. After 1622, Warraskoyak experienced a high death rate due to disease and conflict with the Warraskoyak Indians, and Peter, Francis, and Margrett may have been killed.³⁶

We know much more about Anthony and Mary than about any other early Africans in Virginia, because their experiences were remarkably exceptional. They were free by 1645, and as Anthony and Mary Johnson, they became comparatively prosperous landowners on Virginia’s Eastern Shore. Since Anthony and Mary arrived in Virginia on ships sailing from England, historians can only speculate about the location of their original home and how and when they were enslaved. However, like the ordeal of the *San Juan Bautista* Africans, Anthony and Mary were probably taken through the Portuguese port of Luanda. Though they were successful in integrating themselves with the Eastern Shore’s unusually tolerant white planter society, they may also have maintained a West Central African identity; their grandson was later associated with land in Maryland named “Angola.”³⁷

The largest groups of Africans were on land controlled by the two men who had purchased them from the *White Lion*: Sir George Yeardley and Abraham Peirse. In 1624, 11 Africans – Anthony, William, John, Anthony, an unnamed woman, and 6 unnamed “negors” – were located at Flowerdew Hundred, owned by Yeardley. At James City in 1624, 2 unnamed women were in Peirse’s household. Later in

1624, Yeardley completed the sale of Flowerdew Hundred to Peirse, who renamed it Peirse's Hundred. Peirse probably moved the two unnamed African women to Flowerdew, and several of the Africans at Flowerdew were apparently sold to Peirse as part of the sale, since there were 4 unnamed African men, 2 unnamed African women, and an unnamed child at Peirse's Hundred in 1625. The other Africans at Flowerdew in 1624 – 3 unnamed men and 5 unnamed women – were likely taken to James City with Yeardley.³⁸

In his will, written in 1627, Sir George Yeardley instructed his widow to sell his "goods, debts, servants, negars, cattle, or any other thing or things, commodities or profits to me belonging." Lady Temperance Yeardley married Francis West but died herself before completely settling Sir George Yeardley's estate. The Africans caught in Yeardley's estate may have been sold, claimed by Francis West, or claimed by the Yeardeleys' children on the Eastern Shore or at Lynnhaven. Abraham Peirse also made his will in 1627. In it, he instructed his widow to dispose of his estate among his heirs, but Frances Peirse also remarried before settling her husband's estate, and apparently many or all of the Africans went to the property of her new husband, Samuel Mathews, at Denbigh.³⁹

Africans Who Arrived in Virginia after 1619

At least six Africans in Virginia by 1625 were not from the *White Lion* or *Treasurer*. At Warraskoyak, Anthony arrived in the *James* in 1621 or 1622 and Mary arrived in the *Margrett and John* in 1622 or 1623. In Elizabeth City, John Pedro arrived on the *Swan* in 1623. Other Africans appear in court and other records but not in the 1624 or 1625 censuses. John, an African servant of William Evans (or Ewins), left England in 1622 and was brought to Virginia on the *James*. William Evans was a ship captain, and John may have accompanied him on voyages, which might account for his not appearing in the 1624 or 1625 censuses. Though he would have been at least in upper middle age, it is also possible John was the same man as John Graweere, an African servant of William Evans who in 1641 purchased the freedom of his son from Lt. Robert Sheppard.^e Graweere was still enslaved, for the court had to specify that "the child shall be free from the said Evans or his assigns." John Graweere was allowed by Evans to raise hogs, giving half the proceeds to Evans, and he used his profits to purchase his son's freedom.⁴⁰

John Phillip was probably a free black sailor, a "negro christened in England 12 years since," who gave testimony in the General Court in November, 1624, about the actions of an English privateer against a Spanish ship. He is probably the only African to arrive in Virginia free. He may not have stayed in Virginia for long, since he is not in the 1625 census; he probably departed on a ship as a sailor rather than settling in Virginia. In early modern England, the word "christening" or "christened" included the religious rite of baptism but also the conferment of a legal name and personhood. When John Phillip asserted in court that he had been christened, he offered proof of his legal status as a free man.⁴¹

^e Some genealogists have concluded Margaret Cornish, who was enslaved to Robert Shepherd, was the mother of John Graweere's son. Margaret Cornish may be the unnamed "negro woman servant" who bore the child of white settler Robert Sweet/Sweat around 1640, and their case appears just above Graweere's in the *Minutes of the Council and General Court of Colonial Virginia*. However, there is no evidence that Margaret Cornish was the mother of Graweere's son, since Robert Shepherd enslaved several people. Some genealogists have also suggested Margaret Cornish was the woman "Margrett, negro" at Warraskoyak in 1624, but this is not probable, since the Margrett at Warraskoyak was an adult in 1624 and would have been unlikely to have a child in 1640. Margaret Cornish was free by 1666, when she served as witness for an indenture in Surry County.

Another African man was brought to Virginia aboard a frigate captured by privateer Captain Jones. According to testimony to Virginia's General Court in July 1625, sometime around March of that year, the Flushing privateer *Black Bess* met with a small Spanish ship off the coast of Cuba and took "a negro and a Frenchman who came away with them willingly, and a Portugall [Portuguese man] to be their Pilot out of the West Indies." Capt. Jones and some of the *Black Bess*'s crew split off from Capt. Jones in a frigate and arrived at Jamestown on 11 July 1625. The General Court ordered that the crew, including the Frenchman, be sent to "such places in the Colony as they shall think fit," and ruled that Capt. Francis West could purchase the ship from its captain for 1,200 pounds of tobacco. The Portuguese pilot was ordered to go to the Neck of Land near Jamestown to "abide until further order." The fate of the African man was not determined in July, and he was apparently laboring for Capt. William Bass pending a sale by Capt. Jones. On 12 September, the court ordered that "Capt. Bass shall deliver some clothes to the Portugall [the Portuguese pilot also brought by Capt. Jones] out of Capt. Jones his chest of clothes for his present use which is to be satisfied out of the negro's labor." The court then immediately ruled that "the negro that came with Capt. Jones shall remain with the Lady Yeardley till further order be taken for him and that he shall be allowed by the Lady Yeardley monthly for his labor forty pound weight of good merchantable tobacco for his labor and service so long as he remaineth with her." However, on 3 October, the court "ordered that the negro called by the name of Brase shall belong to Sir Francis Wyatt, Governor &c., as his servant, notwithstanding any sale by Capt. Jones to Capt. Bass, or any other challenge by the ship's company, and that neither Capt. Bass shall be liable to his bill to Capt. Jones, nor Capt. Jones, to his covenant of making good the sale to Capt. Bass." Apparently, Capt. Jones planned to sell Brase to William Bass, but the Court intervened to cancel the sale and assign ownership of Brase to Governor Francis Wyatt instead. Wyatt sat on the court making the judgment.⁴²

The circumstances of Brase's case are mysterious, and it is difficult to determine his experiences and status from the court's records. Did the court interrupt Brase's sale by Capt. Jones to William Bass and order Brase to be paid forty pounds of tobacco for his own labor with Lady Yeardley, then three weeks later rule that Brase should be the property of Governor Francis Wyatt? The court's seemingly radical alteration in Brase's life requires close examination of the circumstances of the case. Since the court ordered that Capt. Bass be reimbursed for the value of clothes from the African man's labor, Brase was working unpaid for Capt. Bass's benefit and not his own. When the court ordered the African to go to Lady Yeardley, did the court mean that Capt. Jones should be paid the forty pounds of tobacco, not Brase? Was Brase initially considered a free man because he "came away with them willingly" from the West Indies, only to have his freedom stripped by the Court and Governor Francis Wyatt? Did the Court initially view Brase as free, but Capt. Jones asserted that Brase was his property instead? Were Brase and "the negro that came with Capt. Jones" not the same man? Brase's voice is not recorded in the General Court proceedings, either in giving testimony on the voyage of the *Black Bess* or in determining his ultimate fate.⁴³

Were Virginia's First Africans Enslaved?

Surviving records do not reveal the exact status of most African individuals brought to early colonial Virginia. However, legal, cultural, and Atlantic evidence points to most Africans being treated as enslaved beginning in 1619. They were clearly not indentured servants. A small but significant number of early Africans were able to become free after a long term of service. A very small number arrived in Virginia as free people.

Virginia's First Africans were enslaved by the Portuguese and traded in Virginia as commodities. English mariners and colonists were already familiar with the practice of slavery, and they emulated Spanish and Portuguese models of treating Africans as enslaved and profiting from enslaved labor. In spite of this, some early Africans may have had more opportunity to become free than was possible as racial lines hardened after the 1660s.

Virginia's First Africans in Atlantic Context

There is no "smoking gun" for enslavement in early Virginia records. However, there is overwhelming evidence from early Virginia court records, censuses, and wills, as well as from other English Atlantic colonies. Historian Alden T. Vaughan summarized it best: "The evidence from Virginia and elsewhere refutes the popular myth that slavery was rare or nonexistent before the legislation of the 1660s and 1670s, that free blacks were numerous, and that most blacks were indentured servants. The surviving records support a very different distribution: slavery from the outset for the vast majority, freedom for some (by a variety of means), and temporary servitude (rarely with a legal indenture) for the smallest number." Agreement among scholars began to coalesce around this conclusion in the 1960s, and this has been the dominant scholarly consensus since around 1990.⁴⁴

By 1619, slavery was a familiar institution in England, English colonies, and throughout the English Atlantic. Enslaved Africans were present in England, and Africans' status as commodities was assumed by everyone when they appeared in Virginia and Bermuda. English mariners had long been involved in the slave trade as pirates preying on Spanish or Portuguese ships and colonies. In 1562, pirate John Hawkins was the first Englishman to complete the "triangle trade" and transport captives from Africa to the Americas for sale. Along with Hawkins, Sir Francis Drake often stole and traded enslaved Africans. In the 1610s, English ships regularly traded captives raided or bought from Africa or Spanish settlements in America. Enslaved captives were one of the most common forms of loot for the Earl of Warwick's fleet of privateers, including *Treasurer*. Warwick founded the joint-stock Guinea Company in 1618 to encourage his privateers to capture and trade slaves. When Africans were brought to English colonies, English colonists and mariners adopted Spanish and Portuguese assumptions about race and slavery that they had already been familiar with for generations. Records from Bermuda, Barbados, the ill-fated Caribbean colony at Providence Island, and other English colonies in the 17th century Atlantic show that English colonists assumed enslavement was the default status for Africans at the outset of their arrival. There is no evidence that Virginia was an exception to this pattern. In 1616, Capt. Daniel Tucker, Bermuda's governor, sent Warwick's privateers to the West Indies, specifically to acquire enslaved Africans and on the official orders of the Somers Islands (Bermuda)

Company. Intimate trade, political, and family ties between Virginia and Bermuda ensured that cultural and legal attitudes toward enslaved Africans would be shared. Capt. Daniel Tucker was the brother of William Tucker of Elizabeth City; Warwick, in turn, encouraged his privateers to capture and trade in slaves, and he was the first English plantation owner to use enslaved labor on a large scale. The enslaved Africans from the *San Juan Bautista*, taken to Bermuda on the *Treasurer* by Daniel Elfrith, were clearly described as “slaves” in Bermuda records.⁴⁵

Slavery and Indentured Servitude

No evidence supports the myth that Africans were ever regarded or treated as indentured servants. They were captured in wars or slaving raids, unlike white indentured servants who negotiated written labor contracts. Indentures were a form of legal contract, evolved from the feudal system of the Middle Ages, in which an apprentice or servant was bound to a master for a set number of years. While under indenture, servants lacked some personal freedoms but still had legal protections. Indenture contracts could be bought and sold. In Virginia, indentures were a key component of migration; laborers bound themselves to landowners in return for their passage. Most laborers entered into indentures with merchants, ship captains, or planters’ agents before boarding ships in England, then their indentures were sold to planters when they arrived in Virginia.⁴⁶

A small number of early white servants arrived from England without contracts and negotiated indentures with planters once in Virginia. In 1619, before the African landing, the first General Assembly passed legislation requiring the registration of all indentures, to prevent uncontracted servants taking advantage of the widely circulated English Common Law dictum of a one year period of service for servants without a formal indenture contract. All records from Virginia indicate that Africans served far longer than their white indentured counterparts, so it is clear they were not treated as uncontracted indentured servants when they arrived. Moreover, there is no evidence Africans were included in the mandated registration of indentures. In 1643, the Assembly passed legislation setting standard terms of service for as-yet-unindentured servants based on age; this law suggests it never applied to Africans beforehand and clearly did not apply to Africans at the time, since no documents recorded Africans’ ages as they did for white servants. A very small number of Africans were known to come from England; some but not all of this group may have been able to negotiate regular indentures, though surviving evidence indicates this was an exceedingly rare practice.⁴⁷

Some Africans and African Americans attempted to sue for freedom by claiming they were indentured servants. However, they usually could not prove their claim. Seven examples survive in Virginia records of cases brought by Africans or African Americans claiming they had served finite terms of service and were due freedom, as under an indenture, but their masters claimed they were bound for life. Perhaps the most famous of these suits was over the freedom of John Casor, a black servant of Anthony Johnson. In 1655, Casor claimed he was due his freedom after completing an indenture of seven or eight years. However, the court ruled in favor of Johnson, probably because Casor could not produce a valid indenture contract or evidence an indenture was ever recorded in England or Virginia. Of the seven of these freedom suits brought by Africans and African Americans in early Virginia, six were unsuccessful, indicating the courts overwhelmingly viewed Africans and African Americans as enslaved for life rather than for specific terms of indentures. In contrast, three quarters of the white servants who sued for freedom in the seventeenth century Chesapeake won their suits. The seventh freedom suit was brought by Elizabeth Key, whose case is discussed in detail below.⁴⁸

Some proponents of the “indentured servant” theory of Africans’ status emphasize the use of “negro” as a signifier of nationality, akin to “Irishman” or other labels found in some very early Virginia records. However, these European ethnic labels all but disappear from the historical record in the 1620s, whereas they persisted for Africans. Moreover, there are no examples of ethnic labels applying to children of Europeans born in Virginia, whereas Africans’ descendants were labeled for generations as “negro.” In the 1624 census and 1625 muster, many Africans were not identified by any name. Of those with first names, only one had a potential surname. Rather, Africans were identified as “negro.” By the late 16th century, as English participation in the Atlantic slave trade grew, the words “negro” and “slave” were used interchangeably. 17th century English missionary Morgan Godwyn observed, “These two words, Negro and Slave, being by custom grown homogenous and convertible; even as Negro and Christian, Englishman and Heathen, are by the like corrupt custom and partiality made opposites; thereby as it were implying, that the one could not be Christians, nor the other Infidels.”⁴⁹

Slavery and Christianity

Until later in the 17th century, “Christian” had a heritable ethnic, cultural, and racial definition rather than referring to someone’s religious identity or beliefs. Non-European culture and skin color set Africans apart. From the 16th century until the early 20th century, English/British colonizers tended to consider non-whites not following Euro-centric cultural norms as “heathen,” regardless of whether they practiced Christianity as a religion. “Christian” meant someone from within Christendom (Europe). For example, the 1620 Virginia census identified Africans as “Others not Christians in the Service of the English.” In 1630, a white settler was whipped for “mixing his Christian body with a heathen one” by fornicating with a “Negro.” In 1662, a Virginia law prohibiting interracial sexual relationships fined “any Christian commit[ting] fornication with a negro man or woman.”⁵⁰

Africans’ baptism or conversion to Christianity did not seem to alter their status in English colonies. Two Virginia legal suits illuminate this problem further. In 1656, Elizabeth Key sued for her freedom, arguing that she had been baptized, she had been bound for a finite term rather than for life, and her father was a free white man (under English common law, children took the status of their father; a 1662 Virginia law confirmed children would take the status of their mother). A local jury decided in Key’s favor, but an appeal to the General Court ruled Key was enslaved. A further appeal to the General Assembly went unresolved, and the case was slated for retrial but ended when the overseers of Key’s enslaver apparently dropped their argument. In 1667, an enslaved man named Fernando sued for his freedom on the grounds that “he was a Christian and had been several years in England” and even had written documentation in Portuguese of his baptism. However, his suit was dismissed. Later in 1667, the General Assembly clarified that “conferring of baptism doth not alter the condition of the person as to his bondage or freedom.” The act explained that “some doubts have risen whether children that are slaves by birth...should by virtue of their baptism be made free,” indicating that some others in Virginia possibly wrestled with the same question, but there is no evidence of freedom for any baptized captives anytime between 1619 and 1667. In neither Key’s nor Fernando’s case did evidence of either baptism or Christian conversion provide enough support for a successful claim to freedom. The 1667 law was enacted five years after Key’s suit in 1662, indicating the General Assembly did not view baptism of enslaved people as a significant threat at the time. Most significant is that both enslaved individuals were held in bondage by their enslavers despite strong and publicly known evidence of their baptism, revealing that the universal practice and attitude among English colonizers in Virginia was that Christianity did not alter the status of enslaved people.⁵¹

Slavery and the Law

Between the 1640s and 1705, Virginia's legal codes gradually constructed the rigid system of slavery in place in the 18th and 19th centuries. These laws did not anticipate the existence of slavery; rather, they eliminated potential "loop holes" and reinforced a system already deeply embedded in Virginia's culture, society, and economy. No law prohibited English colonists from adopting Spanish or Portuguese models of slavery when Africans were brought to Virginia in 1619; the English were "free to enslave." As with most aspects of English law, the absence of written codes does not indicate the absence of a practical or legal reality. Slavery was legal in custom and in fact long before Virginia's Slave Codes were implemented. Court records indicate slavery was the norm from at least the late 1620s. After 1619, Virginia's courts imposed customary law, creating legal precedents that reflected common assumptions and practices. For example, the General Court created customary law, and reflected the reality of the practice of slavery already in effect, when it assigned Brase to the ownership of Governor Francis Wyatt in 1625. The General Court's denial of Elizabeth Key's 1660s freedom suit indicated that, by custom, it was legal and commonplace to enslave baptized Christians, and that children inherited the status of their enslaved mothers, before statutory law existed.⁵²

Surviving wills and other property records also indicate widespread consensus that slavery was legal and enforced by the law. These documents added to a growing body of common law and customary law precedents that reinforced legal support for slavery over time. Many wills, such as George Yeardley's (1627), listed Africans separately from (white) "servants," indicating Africans did not have the same status as indentured whites. In Virginia and other early English colonies, wills and other legal records consistently listed African laborers with valuations much higher than white servants, indicating a likely expectation of lifetime service. Over half of surviving wills and deeds conveying enslaved women also specifically conveyed rights to those women's children, before passage of the 1662 law confirming enslavement as a heritable condition based on the status of the mother. Similarly, one third of enslaved African Americans listed in estate inventories before 1662 were children given higher values than white indentured servants and without years remaining in terms of service, indicating the widespread assumption that enslavement was heritable and perpetual.⁵³

Free Early Africans in Virginia

Other than John Phillip, there is no evidence any Africans in Virginia by 1625 arrived as free people. However, at least three early Africans in Virginia became free after a long period of enslavement. Most free Africans purchased freedom by breeding and selling their own livestock. Antonio, later Anthony Johnson, arrived on the *James* in 1621, and his wife Mary (Johnson) arrived in 1622 on the *Margrett and John*. They were free by 1645 and herded livestock before acquiring land on Virginia's Eastern Shore, which had a free black population much larger than Virginia's mainland counties, made up mostly of former slaves who became free in the 1640s and 1650s. John Pedro arrived on the *Swan* in 1623 and was free by the early 1650s. He briefly owned land in Lancaster before moving to Maryland. Significantly, these Africans who became free arrived on English ships after 1619, rather than from the *San Juan Bautista*. Africans who had already spent time in England or on English ships perhaps had more familiarity with English language, culture, and legal systems that allowed them to do business and negotiate with English colonists. Free Africans appear disproportionately in the historical record, whereas the lives and stories of most enslaved Africans are hidden or lost. The experiences of these freed Africans were exceptional, not typical of the vast majority of Africans brought to early Virginia.⁵⁴

Conclusion: Legacy, and Other First Africans

The Africans brought to Virginia in 1619 were the first recorded Africans in mainland English North America. Over the seventeenth century, enslaved Africans replaced European laborers in Virginia and other English colonies. To uphold the system of slavery, enslavers developed legal, racial, and economic structures that maintained profit and inequality, with far-reaching impact on local, Virginia, and American history.

The thirty-two Africans brought to Virginia in 1619 were not the “First Africans in America.” Africans had been present in America for at least a century. However, their landing in Virginia was momentous, for it marked the seeds of the United States’ present-day African American population and their profound contributions to our nation’s culture, industry, labor, and economy over four hundred years.

Other “First Africans”:

- Several theories posit that America may have been “discovered” by Africans before the arrival of Europeans. Some Arab sources and oral accounts from Caribbean natives suggest that North Africans may have voyaged to America in the medieval period. Additionally, over the 20th century some anthropologists theorized that Africans may have crossed the Atlantic and influenced the ancient Olmec culture of central Mexico. Although there is no genetic or archaeological evidence to support this theory, the most compelling support comes from masks and sculptures of heads that seem to show African features. However, this theory is not widely accepted among scholars.⁵⁵
- Free (and possibly enslaved) Africans almost certainly made up part of the crews of Spanish Conquistador ships, including Columbus’ 1492 expedition.⁵⁶
- Spanish conquistadors first imported enslaved Africans to Hispaniola (present-day Haiti and Dominican Republic) in 1502. Spanish conquest depended on enslavement of native peoples, but forced labor, cultural and environmental disruption, and waves of devastating epidemics caused native populations to collapse. Within two decades, the Spanish relied on Africans to replace native enslaved labor.⁵⁷
- The first documented Africans in the present-day United States were part of a Spanish expedition to present-day South Carolina in 1526. There, the Africans staged a rebellion, and the Spanish abandoned the settlement. The Spanish brought enslaved Africans to St. Augustine (Florida) in 1565.⁵⁸
- Enslaved Africans may have been left at Roanoke Island (present-day North Carolina) by Sir Francis Drake. In 1586, Drake led an English fleet in pillaging Cartagena and other colonial Spanish settlements. Drake stole at least 200 enslaved Africans as part of his loot. Drake’s fleet then sailed to St. Augustine and on to the Roanoke colony. Three Africans left behind at St. Augustine reported that Drake intended to leave the remaining Africans at Roanoke to labor for the benefit of the colony there. However, surviving records do not confirm whether this plan was carried out.⁵⁹
- Mathieu Da Coste, an African or Afro-Creole interpreter, traveled to New France with Samuel Champlain in 1605.⁶⁰
- African sailors served on Dutch crews involved in founding New Netherland. One Afro-Caribbean man, Juan Rodriguez, may have been the first non-native settler of Manhattan from 1613 to 1614.⁶¹
- Enslaved Africans were imported to Bermuda in 1616.
- The landing of the “20 and odd” Africans in Virginia in 1619 is the most significant beginning for African Americans who lived enslaved between 1619 and 1865, as well as today’s African American population.
- John Pedro may have been the first African in New England in 1623.

Timeline: 1618 to 1625

1618-1620	Portuguese and allied Imbangala warriors invade and conquer Ndongo; 50,000 people are enslaved.
Late 1618 or Early 1619	The <i>San Juan Bautista</i> leaves Luanda, Angola, carrying 350 enslaved Africans, and bound for Vera Cruz, Mexico. Approximately 150 Africans die during the voyage.
Spring or Summer 1619	Captain Manuel Méndez de Acuña orders the <i>San Juan Bautista</i> to stop in Jamaica to “refresh.” There, he trades 24 enslaved children in return for supplies.
July 1619	English privateers from <i>White Lion</i> and <i>Treasurer</i> attack the <i>San Juan Bautista</i> in the Bay of Campeche. They steal approximately 60 of the remaining Africans on board.
Late August 1619	<i>White Lion</i> arrives at Point Comfort and trades around 30 Africans for supplies.
Late August? (a few days later), 1619	<i>Treasurer</i> arrives at Point Comfort with additional enslaved Africans. The ship illicitly trades 2-3 of the captives, including Angelo, before sailing for Bermuda.
30 August 1619	The frigate <i>Santa Ana</i> arrives in Vera Cruz with the remaining 147 captives from the <i>San Juan Bautista</i> .
Late September or early October 1619	<i>White Lion</i> leaves Virginia to return to Flushing.
March 1620	A census lists 32 Africans in Virginia, 17 female and 15 male.
1621 (1622?)	Anthony/Antonio (Anthony Johnson) arrives on the <i>James</i> .
1622 (1623?)	Mary (Johnson) arrives on the <i>Margrett and John</i> .
July 1622	John departs England for Virginia on the <i>James</i> .
1623 (1624?)	John Pedro arrives in Virginia on the <i>Swan</i> .
February 1624	A census records 22 Africans in Virginia, including Anthony and Isabella at Elizabeth City, and Angelo at Jamestown.
November 1624	John Phillip testifies in Virginia’s General Court.
1624 or January 1625	Anthony and Isabella’s son, William, is born and baptized. A second unidentified African child is also born at Flowerdew Hundred.
January and February 1625	A muster records 23 Africans living Virginia. This muster is the first record of William’s birth and baptism, as well as Angelo’s arrival on the <i>Treasurer</i> in 1619.
July 1625	An African man, probably Brase, arrives from the Caribbean with privateers.
October 1625	Brase is given to Governor Francis Wyatt by Virginia’s General Court.

Principal Primary Sources

(N.B. Spellings have been modernized, but no word changes have been made.)

Excerpt from letter of John Rolfe to Sir Edwin Sandys, January 1620 (old calendar 1619). *Ferrar Papers, Document 151. Transcription in Susan Myra Kingsbury, ed., Records of the Virginia Company Vol. 3, pp. 241-248.*

About the latter end of August, a Dutch man of war of the burden of 160 tons arrived at Point Comfort, the commander's name Capt. Jope, his pilot for the West Indies one Mr. Marmaduke an Englishman. They met with the *Treasurer* in the West Indies, and determined to hold consort ship hitherward, but in their passage lost one the other. He brought not anything but 20. and odd Negroes, which the Governor [Sir George Yeardley] and Cape Merchant [Abraham Peirse] bought for victuals (whereof he was in great need as he pretended) at the best and easiest rates they could. He had a large and ample Commission from his Excellency to range and to take purchase in the West Indies.

Three or 4. days after the *Treasurer* arrived. At his arrival he sent word presently to the Governor to know his pleasure, who wrote to him, and did request myself and Lieutenant Peace and Mr. Ewins to go down to him, to desire him to come up to James City. But before we got down he had set sail and was gone out of the Bay. The occasion thereof happened by the unfriendly dealing of the inhabitants of Kecoughtan, for he was in great want of victuals, wherewith they would not relieve him nor his Company upon any terms.

Excerpt from John Smith, *The Generall Historie of Virginia, New England, & the Summer Isles, 1624*

About the last of August [1619] came in a Dutch man of war that sold us twenty Negars.

[John Smith likely copied this information from Rolfe's letter, above, misquoting "Negars," since the original manuscript of Rolfe's letter clearly says "Negroes."]

Excerpt from letter of John Pory to Sir Dudley Carleton, 30 September 1619, written at Jamestown. *From Susan Myra Kingsbury, ed., Records of the Virginia Company Vol. 3, pp. 219-222.*

The occasion of this ship's [*White Lion's*] coming hither was an accidental consortship in the West Indies with the *Treasurer*, an English man of war also, licensed by a commission from the Duke of Savoy to take Spaniards as lawful prize. This ship, the *Treasurer*, went out of England in April was [last?] twelvemonth, about a month, I think, before any peace was concluded between the King of Spain and that prince. Hither she came to Captain Argall, then governor of this Colony, being part owner of her. He more for love of gain, the root of all evil, than for any true love he bore to this Plantation, victualled and manned her anew, and sent her with the same commission to range the Indies. The event thereof (we may misdoubt) will prove some attempt of the Spaniard upon us, either by way of revenge, or by way of prevention; lest we might in time make this place *sedem belli* against the West Indies....

...This packet I delivered to one Marmaduke Rayner, an Englishman, who goes entertained as Pilot in this Flemish man of war [*White Lion*]. If he come to your lordship, as he hath promised, he will be the fittest messenger....

Accounts of the privateer attack on the *San Juan Bautista*. *Archivo General de Indias [or AGI; Seville], quoted in Engel Sluiter, "New Light on the '20. and Odd."*

Enter on the credit side the receipt of 8,657.875 pesos paid by Manuel Mendes de Acunha, master of the ship *San Juan Bautista*, on 147 slave pieces brought by him to the said port on August 30, 1619, aboard the frigate *Santa Ana*, master Rodrigo Escobar. On the voyage inbound, Mendes de Acunha was robbed at sea off the coast of Campeche by English corsairs [privateers]. Out of 350 slaves, large and small, he loaded in said Loanda (200 under license issued to him in Sevilla and the rest to be declared later) the English corsairs left him with only 147, including 24 slave boys [or children] he was forced to sell in Jamaica, where he had to refresh, for he had many sick aboard, and many had already died. (*AGI, Contaduría 883*)

[*San Juan Bautista* was] robbed by corsairs on the coast of Campeche, and from there the civil authorities transported them [the 147, to Vera Cruz] on the frigate, master Roderigo Descobar, who entered the said port on August 30, 1619. (*AGI, Indiferente General 2795*)

Virginia Muster, March-May 1620. *Ferrar Papers, Document 159.*⁶²

The Sums total of all the Persons, Cattle, Corn, Arms, Houses, and Boats Contained in the general Muster of Virginia taken in the beginning of March 1619[1620]

The number of all the Persons men women and children English and other Christians in Virginia

Able men	670
Women	119
Boys serviceable	039
Younger Children	057
[Total]	885

Others not Christians in the Service of the English

Indians in the service of several planters	04
Negros in the service of several planters	32
Negro men	15
Negro women	17

[Total population] 921

Passengers Sent in the James for Virginia the last of July 1622. *Ferrar Papers, Document 400.*

John the negro – for m' Wm Ewins

Testimony of John Phillip, General Court, November 1624. *H.R. McIlwaine, ed., Minutes of the Council and General Court of Colonial Virginia: 1622-1632, 1670-1676 (Richmond, Va.: The Colonial Press, 1924), 33.*

A Court held the last day of November 1624

John Phillip A negro christened in England 12 years since, sworn & examined sayeth, that being in a ship with Sir Henry Maneringe, they took a Spanish ship about Cape St. Mary, and carried her to Mamora [Antigua] in which ship was a Spanish lady and divers other, and being in Mamora Mr. Symon Tuckinge came into Mamora

in a small ship, and after some conference had by the said Tuckinge with the Spaniards taken as afroresaid, he was by them employed in the said small ship to Lisbon to fetch money for the ransoming of the said lady, which accordingly he performed.

Brase's Case. *McIlwaine, ed.*, Minutes of the Council and General Court of Colonial Virginia, 66-73.

A Court held the 11th of July 1625

William Barnes, born in in Fawley in the County of South[ampton], sworn and examined sayeth, that Capt. John Powell shipped him at the Isle of Wight in the good ship called the *Black Bess* of Flushing of the burthen of one hundred tons [with Capt. Jones in the West Indies].... With them they left the frigate which they had first taken and their own and took a negro and a Frenchman who came away with them willingly, and a Portugall to be their pilot out of the West Indies.... [See the following for a similar, complete account.]

Andrew Roe of Holt in Norfolk sworn and examined sayeth that he was shipt in Flushing by Capt. Powell and Capt. Jones in the *Black Bess*, and having victualed at the Isle of Wight they put out to sea and went first to the Western Island, and from thence to the West Indies, where they lighted upon a frigate, but he this examined was not aboard the shallop that took her. So they manned the frigate and took her along with them, and after because Capt. Powell would not allow them sufficient water and victuals and required them to set their hands to certain articles, the company grew discontented, and so Capt. Powell bid them that would go for their country to take the frigate and go with her, whereupon they chose Capt. Jones for their Captain and Master and parted from him, intending to go immediately for their country, but their provisions and water being spent, they were forced to put in for relief, and having got some provisions they could not find the way out of the Islands, the captain being unacquainted with those parts, and after being up and down they lighted upon a frigate where they found 60 turtles and some tobacco and meal and other small mater, and taking her with them, afterwards lighted upon a Spanish frigate which came under their lee, and they gave them their first frigate, taking out of her some raw hides and some tobacco and a negro and a Frenchman who were desirous to go along with them, and a Portugall [Portuguese man] to be their pilot out of the Islands, intending to set him ashore upon Cape Florida or thereabouts and after they got some fresh water and provisions ashore, they left two of their company ashore, and the weather growing foul they lost two cables and anchors and their boat sunk at the ship's stern, by means whereof they could not go for their men but were driven out to sea. And after had no opportunities to set the Portugall ashore but came directly to Virginia, where they arrived on Monday the eleventh of July 1625.

A Court held the 12th of September 1625

It is ordered that Capt. Bass shall deliver some clothes to the Portugall [the Portuguese pilot] out of Capt. Jones his chest of clothes for his present use which is to be satisfied out of the negro's labor.

It is ordered that the negro that came with Capt. Jones shall remain with Lady Yeardley till further order be taken for him and that he shall be allowed by the Lady Yeardley monthly for his labor forty pound weight of good merchantable tobacco for his labor and service so long as he remaineth with her.

A Court held the third day of October 1625

It is ordered the negro called by the name **Brase** shall belong to Sir Francis Wyatt Governor &c., as his servant, notwithstanding any sale by Capt. Jones to Capt. Bass, or any other challenge by the ships company, and that neither Capt. Bass shall be liable to his bill to Capt. Jones, nor Capt. Jones, to his covenant of making good the sale to Capt. Bass.

A List of the Names of the Living in Virginia⁶³

February the 16th 1623[1624]

At Flowerdieu [Flowerdew] Hundred

--- VI }
--- }
--- }
--- }
--- }
--- }
Negors
Negors
Negors
Negors
Negors
Negors

Anthony
William
John
Anthony }
Negors men
an Negors woman

At James Cittye and with the Corporation thereof

--- Negro }
--- Negro } women
Angelo a Negar

The Neck of Land

Edward a Negro

At the Plantation over against James Cittie

Jeso [or Jiro] a Negro^f

At Warwick Squeake [Warraskoyak]

Peter
Anthony
Franc's
Margrett }
negres

More at Elizabeth Cittie

Anthony
Isabella }
Negres

A List of the Names of the Dead in Virginia

Since April Last, February 16 1623[1624]

At West and Sherlow Hundred

one Negar

Musters of the Inhabitants of Virginia 1624[1625]⁶⁴

The Muster of the Inhabitants of Peirseys Hundred taken the 20th of January 1624[1625]

The Muster of m' Abraham Peirseys Servants

Negro }
Negro }
Negro } 4 Men
Negro }
Negro Woman
Negro Woman and a young Child of hers

The Muster of the Inhabitants of James Cittie taken the 24th of January 1624[1625]

The Muster of Sir George Yeardley Kt &ct.

Negro Men. 3
Negro Women. 5

The Muster of Capt. William Pierce

Angelo a Negro Woman in the *Treasurer*

The Muster of the Inhabitants of the Neck-of-Land neare James Cittie taken Febr the 4th 1624[1625]

[Household of Richard Kingsmell]

Edward a Negro

The Muster of the Inhabitants at Wariscoyack taken the 7th of Febr 1624[1625]

The Muster of m' Edward Bennett's servants

Antonio a Negro in the *James* 1621
Mary a Negro Woman in the *Margrett & John* 1622

[Elizabeth City]

Capt William Tucker his Muster

Antoney Negro: **Isabell** Negro: and **William** their Child Baptised

A Muster of the Inhabitants of Elizabeth Cittie beyond Hampton River Being the Companyes Land

Capt. Francis West his Muster

John Pedro a Neger aged 30 in the *Swan* 1623

^f See endnote 35 for transcriptions of the name "Jeso."

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⁵ Thornton, "African Experience," 425-430; John K. Thornton, "Legitimacy and Political Power: Queen Njinga, 1624-1663," *The Journal of African History* 32, no. 1 (1991), 31-33; Heywood and Thornton, "Central African Leadership," 209-211; Thornton, *Cultural History*, 185; Wheat, *Atlantic Africa*, 80-81, 95-96; Heywood and Thornton, "1619 African Arrivals," 207-208.

⁶ Thornton, "African Experience," 425-431; John K. Thornton, "The Art of War in Angola, 1575-1680," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 30, no. 2 (1988), 362-363, 370; Archivo General de Indias (hereafter AGI), Seville, Contratación 2878; Wheat, *Atlantic Africa*, 72, 95-97; Heywood and Thornton, "1619 African Arrivals," 207-208.

⁷ Thornton, "African Experience," 431-432; Miller, "Central Africa," 49-53; James H. Sweet, "African Identity and Slave Resistance in the Portuguese Atlantic," in *The Atlantic World and Virginia, 1550-1624*, ed. Peter C. Mancall (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 226-227, 246-247; Heywood and Thornton, *Central Africans, Atlantic Creoles*, 299; Vila Vilar, *Hispanoamérica*, 139; Wheat, *Atlantic Africa*, 95-99; Rebecca Anne Goetz, "Rethinking the 'Unthinking Decision': Old Questions and New Problems in the History of Slavery and Race in the Colonial South," *The Journal of Southern History* 75, no. 3 (2009), 602-605; John C. Coombs, "Beyond the 'Origins Debate': Rethinking the Rise of Virginia Slavery," in *Early Modern Virginia: Reconsidering the Old Dominion*, eds. Douglas Bradburn and John C. Coombs (Charlottesville, Va.: University of Virginia Press, 2011), 254-256; John C. Coombs, "Building 'the Machine': The Development of Slavery and Slave Society in Early Colonial Virginia" (PhD diss., College of William and Mary, 2004), 120-125; Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998), 17-46; T.H. Breen and Stephen Innes, *Myne Owne Ground: Race & Freedom on Virginia's Eastern Shore, 1640-1676* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 32-35; Philip D. Morgan, "Virginia Slavery in Atlantic Context, 1550 to 1660," in *Virginia 1619: Slavery and Freedom in the Making of English America*, eds. Paul Musselwhite, Peter C. Mancall, and James Horn (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2019), 104-105. In developing the "Atlantic creole" thesis, Berlin relied heavily on surviving records from Northampton County, on Virginia's Eastern Shore; Thornton and Heywood used Northampton records to expand Berlin's argument in *Central Africans, Atlantic Creoles*. However, subsequent studies have demonstrated significant differences between Northampton and Virginia's mainland counties, and it is now widely accepted that the experiences of free and enslaved African Americans on the Eastern Shore are not representative of the colony as a whole.

⁸ AGI, Contratación 2878; Vila Vilar, *Hispanoamérica*, 134-135; Huguette Chauvu and Pierre Chauvu, *Seville et l'Atlantique, 1504-1650*, Vol. 4 (Paris: A. Colin, 1955-1959), 508-506. In theory, the Spanish *asiento* system gave Portuguese merchants a monopoly on the slave trade from Africa; whether the Portuguese holder of the *asiento* contracted with only Portuguese ships, or a combination of Portuguese and Spanish ships, requires further research. John K. Thornton assumed the *San Juan Bautista* was Portuguese and changed the ship's and captain's names to their Portuguese spellings (John K. Thornton, personal communication, 23 April 2019; Thornton, "African Experience," 421n2). Other scholars have variously estimated the proportion of Portuguese slave ships from Angola at 67-99%, depending on the period and method of analyzing sources. For discussion of Spanish and Portuguese slave ships sailing from Angola, see: Vila Vilar, *Hispanoamérica*, 137; Ernst Van Den Boogaart, "The Trade Between Western Africa and the Atlantic World, 1600-90: Estimates of Trends in Composition and Value," *The Journal of African History* 33, No. 3 (1992), 376; David Eltis, "The Volume and Structure of the Transatlantic Slave Trade: A Reassessment," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 58, No. 1 (Jan. 2001), 23n25; Filipa Ribeiro da Silva and Stacey Sommerdyk, "Reexamining the Geography of Merchants of the West Central African Slave Trade: Looking Behind the Numbers," *African Economic History* 38 (2010), 86; J.H. Parry, *The Age of Reconnaissance* (London: Trinity Press, 1963), 67; Fernando Riaño Lozano, "Antecedentes Sobre los Medios Navales de Farnesio," *Revista de Historia Naval* 2, No. 5 (1984), 116-118; "Estimates," *Voyages: The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database*, <https://www.slavevoyages.org/assessment/estimates>.

⁹ AGI, Contratación 2878 and 5780; Vila Vilar, *Hispanoamérica*, 58-61, 65-66, 142-143, 148-152, 260-261; *Voyages: The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database*, voyage ID number 29529, <https://www.slavevoyages.org/voyage/database> (accessed 11 September 2017). N.B. *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database*, or slavevoyages.org, lists five entries for slave-trading ships named *San Juan Bautista* or *São João Bautista* reaching their destinations in 1619: voyage ID numbers 29251, 29252, 29529, 40678, and 40699. *San Juan Bautista* was a common ship name, and voyages described under entries 29251, 40678, and 40699 are different ships, not the *San Juan Bautista* described in this paper. Entries 29252 and 29529 both describe the voyage of the *San Juan Bautista* that carried Virginia's First Africans. The data in 29252 come entirely from secondary sources: Engel Suiter's "New Light," Vila Vilar's *Hispanoamérica*, and John K. Thornton's "African Experience." This entry gives the names of the ship and master in Portuguese rather than Spanish, as in Thornton's article (see endnote 8). The data in 29529 are based solely on primary sources and are more

accurate, though this entry does not include the number of enslaved people stolen by the English privateers and so miscalculates the voyage's mortality rate. A sixth record in the database, voyage ID number 29651, includes data, from a primary source not included in 29529, on the *San Juan Bautista* before it departed from Spain in 1616, though this entry does not include information on the voyage to Angola or New Spain and implies the privateer attack took place early and ended the voyage. Chaunu and Chaunu also note that this primary source describes the *San Juan Bautista* as "robbed before arriving in Angola" (*Seville et l'Atlantique*, 515n120; translation mine); however, this is almost certainly a clerical error, and "Angola" should be "Vera Cruz" or "Nueva España," since it would not have made sense for privateers to attack a Spanish or Portuguese vessel on the voyage between Spain and Angola.

¹⁰ Thornton, *Africa and Africans*, 154-156; AGI, Indiferente General 2795, in Engel Sluiter, "New Light on the '20. and Odd Negroes' Arriving in Virginia, August 1619," *William and Mary Quarterly* 54, no. 2 (1997), 397; Vila Vilar, *Hispanoamérica*, 260-261; Gregory E. O'Malley, *Final Passages: The Intercolonial Slave Trade of British America, c.1619-1807* (Chapel Hill, N.C., and Williamsburg, Va.: University of North Carolina Press for Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, 2014), 70-76.

¹¹ Alonso de Sandoval, *De Instauranda Aethiopia Salute*, quoted in Vila Vilar, *Hispanoamérica*, 138 (translation mine).

¹² Thornton, *Africa and Africans*, 159; Sluiter, "New Light," 397; AGI, Contaduría 883; AGI, Indiferente General 2795; Wheat, *Atlantic Africa*, 97-102; Vila Vilar, *Hispanoamérica*, 260-261.

¹³ AGI, Contaduría 883; AGI, Indiferente General 2795; Sluiter, "New Light," 397; Wheat, *Atlantic Africa*, 97-99.

¹⁴ John Rolfe to Sir Edwin Sandys, January 1619 [1620], Ferrar Papers, Document 151; John Pory to Sir Dudley Carleton, 30 September 1619, in Susan Myra Kingsbury, ed., *Records of the Virginia Company*, Vol. 3 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office for the Library of Congress, 1933), 219-222; Sluiter, "New Light," 397; Martha W. McCartney, "New Light on Virginia's First Africans," *Archaeological Society of Virginia Quarterly Bulletin* 74, no. 1 (2019), 13-19; Heywood and Thornton, *Central Africans, Atlantic Creoles*, 6; Tim Hashaw, *The Birth of Black America: The First Africans and the Pursuit of Freedom at Jamestown* (New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, 2007), 71-73, 277-281; O'Malley, *Final Passages*, 48-57; Peter Wilson Coldham, *English Adventurers and Emigrants, 1609-1660: Abstracts of Examinations in the High Court of Admiralty with Reference to Colonial America* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1984), 182.

¹⁵ Vila Vilar, *Hispanoamérica*, 135-136, 260-261; AGI, Contratación 2878; Parry, *The Age of Reconnaissance*, 67; Riaño Lozano, "Antecedentes Sobre los Medios Navales de Farnesio," 116-118; Michael C. Krivor et al., "Archival Investigations for Potential Colonial-Era Shipwrecks in Ultra-Deepwater within the Gulf of Mexico," OCS Study BOEMRE 2011-004 (Southeastern Archaeological Research, Inc., for U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement, Gulf of Mexico OCS Region: 2011): 9-10, 15; ; Mark G. Hanna, *Pirate Nests and the Rise of the British Empire, 1570-1740* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 37-38; Benerson Little, *The Sea Rover's Practice: Pirate Tactics and Techniques, 1630-1730* (Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, Inc., 2005), 97-99, 132-137.

¹⁶ Rolfe to Sandys, Ferrar Papers 151; Pory to Carleton, Kingsbury Vol. 3, 219-222; N.W. Stephenson, "Some Inner History of the Virginia Company," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 22, no. 2 (Oct. 1913), 96; Heywood and Thornton, *Central Africans, Atlantic Creoles* 6-7, 7n6; Sluiter, "New Light," 396-398; McCartney, "New Light," 13-15; Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 35-36; John C. Coombs, "The Phases of Conversion: A New Chronology for the Rise of Slavery in Early Virginia," *William and Mary Quarterly* 68, no. 3 (2011), 339-340.

¹⁷ Martha W. McCartney, *Virginia Immigrants and Adventurers, 1607-1635: A Biographical Dictionary* (Baltimore: The Genealogical Publishing Company, 2007), 548-549, 771-773; Edmund S. Morgan, "The First American Boom: Virginia 1618-1630," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 28, no. 2 (Apr. 1971), 172-175.

¹⁸ "Lists of the Names of the Living and the Dead in Virginia" 1623/24, Public Record Office, National Archives (United Kingdom), CO 1/3; "General Musters of the Inhabitants of Virginia," 1624/25, Public Record Office, National Archives (United Kingdom), CO 1/3; Martha W. McCartney, "An Early Virginia Census Reprised," *Quarterly Bulletin of the Archaeological Society of Virginia* 54 (1999), 178-179, 192; Susan Myra Kingsbury, ed., *Records of the Virginia Company*, Vol. 2 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1906), 402.

¹⁹ 1623/24 "Lists of the Living and the Dead"; 1624/25 "General Musters"; "General Muster of Virginia 1619 [1620]," Ferrar Papers, Document 159. For a transcription, see William Thorndale, "The Virginia Census of 1619," *Magazine of Virginia Genealogy* 33, no. 3 (Summer 1995): 155-167, and McCartney, "An Early Virginia Census Reprised," 186-191; Winthrop D. Jordan, *White Over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550-1812* 2nd ed. (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 73-75, 91-98; Alden T. Vaughan, "The Origins Debate: Slavery and Racism in Seventeenth-Century Virginia," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 97, no. 3 (1989), 325-326; Rebecca Anne Goetz, *The Baptism of Early Virginia: How Christianity Created Race* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012), 62-64. The date on this census is labeled as March-May 1619, and Thorndale concluded that 32 Africans were already present in Virginia before the arrival of the *White Lion* and *Treasurer*. However, the census was actually taken in 1620; it bears the date of 1619 because it is dated by the old Julian calendar, in which the new year did not occur until spring. See McCartney, "An Early Virginia Census Reprised," 178-196.

²⁰ 1623/24 "Lists of the Living and the Dead"; 1624/25 "General Musters"; 1620 "General Muster," Ferrar Papers 159.

²¹ McCartney, *Virginia Immigrants*, 88-89; Stephenson, "Inner History," 96-97; Rolfe to Sandys, Ferrar Papers 151; Pory to Carleton, Kingsbury Vol. 3, 219-22, 418-425; McCartney, "New Light," 18.

²² McCartney, *Virginia Immigrants*, 88-89, 771-772; Stephenson, "Inner History," 93-97; Rolfe to Sandys, Ferrar Papers 151; Pory to Carleton, Kingsbury Vol. 3, 219-222; Virginia Company to Sir George Yeardley, 21 June 1619, Kingsbury Vol. 3, 146-148; Kingsbury Vol. 2, 404; Kenneth R. Andrews, *Trade, Plunder and Settlement: Maritime Enterprise and the Genesis of the British Empire, 1480-1630* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 325-326; John C. Coombs, "'Others Not Christians in the Service of the English': Interpreting the Status of Africans and African Americans in Early Virginia," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 127, no. 3 (2019), 222-223.

²³ Rolfe to Sandys, Ferrar Papers 151; Kingsbury Vol. 2, 402; Pory to Carleton, Kingsbury Vol. 3, 219-222; McCartney, "New Light," 13-15. For another example of English privateer ships commonly sailing from Flushing, see the testimony given in Brase's case, on page 25 of this report and originally found in McIlwaine, ed., *Minutes of the Council and General Court of Colonial Virginia*, 66-73.

²⁴ Vernon A. Ives, ed., *The Rich Papers: Letters from Bermuda, 1615-1646* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1984), 121-123, 140-154, 170-177, 184-188, 201-205, 226-231, 233-234; McCartney, "New Light," 16-22; Nathaniel Butler, *The Historie of the Bermudaes or Summer Islands*, ed. John Henry Lefroy (London: Hakluyt Society, 1882), 243; Kingsbury Vol. 2, 402; Michael J. Jarvis, "Bermuda and the Beginnings of Black Anglo-America," in *Virginia 1619: Slavery and Freedom in the Making of English America*, eds. Paul Musselwhite, Peter C. Mancall, and James Horn (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2019), 122-123. See also Virginia Colonial Records Project (hereafter VCRP), Survey Reports 0987b and 4526; Coldham, *English Adventurers*, 12-13, 181-182.

²⁵ McCartney, "New Light," 16-22; Kingsbury Vol. 2, 404-407; "Extracts Made by John Ferrar from the Court Books of the Somers Islands Company, 5 July 1620 – 14 August 1622," Ferrar Papers, Document 403; Butler and Lefroy, *Historie of the Bermudaes*, 211; Edward Duffield Neill, *Virginia Vetusta: During the Reign of James the First, Containing Letters and Documents Never Before Printed: A Supplement to The History of the Virginia Company* (Albany, N.Y.: Joel Munsell's Sons, 1885), 115-116; Jarvis, "Bermuda," 122-126; Douglas Bradburn, "The Eschatological Origins of the English Empire," in *Early Modern Virginia: Reconsidering the Old Dominion*, eds. Douglas Bradburn and John C. Coombs (Charlottesville, Va.: University of Virginia Press, 2011), 40-41. See also VCRP, Survey Reports 0987b and 4526; Coldham, *English Adventurers*, 12-13, 181-182.

²⁶ 1620 "General Muster," Ferrar Papers 159; 1624/25 "General Musters"; Irene W. D. Hecht, "The Virginia Muster of 1624/25 as a Source for Demographic History," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 30, no. 1 (Jan., 1973), 70; McCartney, "New Light," 24; McCartney, "An Early Virginia Census Reprised," 178-179.

²⁷ 1620 "General Muster."

²⁸ 1623/24 "Lists of the Living and the Dead."

²⁹ 1624/25 "General Musters."

³⁰ 1623/24 "Lists of the Living and the Dead"; 1624/25 "General Musters"; Morgan, "First American Boom," 170-171 n4; Hecht, "Virginia Muster," 69, 77; Coombs, "The Phases of Conversion," 338.

³¹ 1623/24 "Lists of the Living and the Dead"; 1624/25 "General Musters"; McCartney, *Virginia Immigrants*, 43-46, 103-704; Martha W. McCartney et al., "A Study of the Africans and African Americans on Jamestown Island and at Green Spring, 1619-1803" (Williamsburg, Va.: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation for Colonial National Historical Park, 2003), 36-37; Martha W. McCartney, "The Environs of the Hampton River: A Chronological Overview" (unpublished manuscript, July 1983), 8-9; Sarah Lawrence, "Christening and the Giving of a Name in Baptism: Some Linguistic Reflections," *Practical Theology* 9, no. 1 (2016), 46-47, 51-54. More research is needed to determine the location of Capt. William Tucker's land, though it appears to be in the vicinity of the modern-day Olde Wythe neighborhood or near Newport News Point (for example, see George Carrington Mason, "The Earliest Known Church of Elizabeth City Parish," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 54, no. 1 [1946], 18-20). Tucker had probably claimed this land before 1622, since after the March 1622 Powhatan Indian assault, Tucker was put in command of "the plantation adjoining Elizabeth City at Kicotan that is to say from Newport News to Edward Hill his house, on the west side of Southampton River" (Kingsbury Vol. 3, 664). This is probably the same patented 150 acres, described as "within the Corporation of Elizabeth City...eastward upon land of Richard Boulton, westward upon a great swamp parting it from land of John Powell &c.," documented in September 1624 as part of the Virginia Assembly's order in March of that year to formally survey and document land patents (Nell Marion Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers: Abstracts of Virginia Land Patents and Grants, 1623-1800* [Richmond, Va.: Press of the Dietz Print Co., 1934], xxiii, 5). Anthony and Isabella may have been moved away from this location; in 1624 Capt. William Tucker also claimed ownership of 680 acres of land on the southern side of the James River, in 1633 patented land on the Back River in Elizabeth City, and in 1635 patented land on the Elizabeth River on the southern side of the James River (Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, 7, 16, 27; Susan Myra Kingsbury, ed., *Records of the Virginia Company*, Vol. 4 [Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office for the Library of Congress, 1935], 558).

³² McCartney, *Virginia Immigrants*, 703-704; Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, 5, 16, 27; Nancy Feigenbaum, "Tucker Family Rich in Oral History," *Daily Press*, 7 February 1998.

³³ 1624/25 "General Musters"; McCartney, *Immigrants*, 45-46, 543, 731; Heywood and Thornton, *Central Africans, Atlantic Creoles*, 283-284; John Thornton, "Central African Names and African-American Naming Patterns," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 50, no. 4

(Oct. 1993), 732-740; Louis Atwood Cook, ed., *History of Norfolk County, Massachusetts, 1622-1918*, Vol. 1 (New York: The S.J. Clarke Publishing Company: 1918), 291; Samuel Eliot Morison, "The Plymouth Colony and Virginia," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 62, no. 2 (1954), 163; Kolb, "Early Passengers," 413; Edward D. Neill and Nath. Butler, "Virginia Carolorum: The Colony during the Days of Charles the First and Second," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 9, no. 2 (1885), 138-139; Alden T. Vaughan, "Blacks in Virginia: A Note on the First Decade," *William and Mary Quarterly* 29, no. 3 (1972), 475.

³⁴ 1623/24 "Lists of the Living and the Dead"; 1624/25 "General Musters"; McCartney, *Virginia Immigrants*, 545-546; Heywood and Thornton, *Central Africans, Atlantic Creoles*, 8n11; McCartney, "New Light," 24; McCartney, "A Study," 27, 36-37. As of 2019, Jamestown Rediscovery archaeologists are excavating the site of Peirce's dwelling in the "New Town" area of Jamestown Island; earlier excavations took place in the 1930s. See also: National Park Service, *Jamestown Archeological Assessment* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1996).

³⁵ 1623/24 "Lists of the Living and the Dead"; 1624/25 "General Musters"; McCartney, *Virginia Immigrants*, 446-447; McCartney, "A Study," 36-37. Edward may have belonged to Richard Kingsmill, or to the estate Kingsmill was managing at Neck O' Land on behalf of the heirs of Richard Buck. Richard Kingsmill owned land at Jamestown, and also land that later became known Farley's Neck, to the east of Jamestown Island on the Kingsmill tract. Richard Kingsmill's estate passed to his daughter, Elizabeth, who married William Tayloe before marrying Col. Nathaniel Bacon and living on his land in York County. For detailed information on Richard Kingsmill's property and estate, see Martha W. McCartney, "A Study of the Africans and African Americans on Jamestown Island and at Green Spring, 1619-1803"; Lorena S. Walsh, *From Calabar to Carter's Grove: The History of a Virginia Slave Community* (Charlottesville, Va.: University Press of Virginia, 1997); and William M. Kelso, *Kingsmill Plantations 1619-1800: Archaeology of Country Life in Colonial Virginia* (San Diego: Academic Press, Inc.: 1984). Jeso is transcribed as "Jiro" in Hotten and "John" in *Colonial Records of Virginia*. An examination of the original 1623/24 "Lists of the Living and the Dead" manuscript shows that the name is certainly not "John," and other instances of the name John are spelled out rather than "Jno." "Jiro" is a possible transcription, but, to this author, it looks much more like "Jeso."

³⁶ 1623/24 "Lists of the Living and the Dead"; 1624/25 "General Musters"; McCartney, *Virginia Immigrants*, 50-51, 125-126; McCartney, "New Light," 23-25; McCartney, "A Study," 36-37; James H. Brewer, "Negro Property Owners in Seventeenth-Century Virginia," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 12, no. 4 (1955), 576-579; Breen and Innes, *Myne Owne Ground*, 8-10. For discussion of inconsistencies in ship arrival dates recorded in the 1624/25 Muster, and estimates of more accurate dates, see Avery E. Kolb, "Early Passenger Arrivals to Virginia: When Did They Really Arrive?," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 8, no. 4 (1980): 401-414.

³⁷ 1624/25 "General Musters"; Brewer, "Negro Property Owners," 576-579; McCartney, "New Light," 25; Martha W. McCartney, "Anthony and Mary Johnson of Virginia's Eastern Shore" (unpublished manuscript, May 2012), 7-10, 14, 21-22; Breen and Innes, *Myne Owne Ground*, 11-12, 17.

³⁸ 1623/24 "Lists of the Living and the Dead"; 1624/25 "General Musters"; McCartney, *Virginia Immigrants*, 62, 548-549, 771-774; McCartney, "New Light," 25; McCartney, "A Study," 36-37. For a detailed history of Flowerdew Hundred and results of archaeological excavations, see: James Deetz, *Flowerdew Hundred: The Archaeology of a Virginia Plantation, 1619-1864* (Charlottesville, Va.: University Press of Virginia, 1993).

³⁹ McCartney, "New Light," 25; Vaughan, "First Decade," 476-477; McCartney, *Virginia Immigrants*, 48-49, 62, 548-549, 483-485, 771-774; McCartney, "A Study," 36-37.

⁴⁰ H.R. McIlwaine, *Minutes of the Council and General Court of Colonial Virginia, 1622-1632, 1670-1676* (Richmond, Va.: The Colonial Press, 1924), 477; "Passengers Sent in the James for Virginia the last of July 1622," Ferrar Papers, Document 400; McCartney, *Virginia Immigrants*, 45-46, 286; Robert McColley, "Slavery in Virginia, 1619-1660: A Reexamination," in *New Perspectives on Race and Slavery in America*, eds. Robert H. Abzug and Stephen E. Maizlish (Lexington, Ky.: University Press of Kentucky, 1986), 21-22.

⁴¹ McIlwaine, *Minutes of the Council and General Court*, 33; Lawrence, "Christening and the Giving of a Name in Baptism," 46-47, 51-54; Paul D. Halliday, "Brase's Case: Making Slave Law as Customary Law in Virginia's General Court, 1619-1625," in *Virginia 1619: Slavery and Freedom in the Making of English America*, eds. Paul Musselwhite, Peter C. Mancall, and James Horn (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2019), 253.

⁴² McIlwaine, *Minutes of the Council and General Court*, 66-73; Halliday, "Brase's Case," 236-255; Morgan, "First American Boom," 194-195; Thomas D. Morris, *Southern Slavery and the Law, 1619-1860* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 39-40.

⁴³ McIlwaine, *Minutes of the Council and General Court*, 66-73; Halliday, "Brase's Case," 236-255; Vaughan, "First Decade," 470-471; McColley, "Slavery in Virginia," 15-16; Morris, *Southern Slavery and the Law*, 39-40.

⁴⁴ Vaughan, "Origins Debate," 341; Thomas D. Morris, "'Villeinage... as It Existed in England, Reflects but Little Light on Our Subject': The Problem of the 'Sources' of Southern Slave Law," *The American Journal of Legal History* 32, no. 2 (1988), 104; Morgan, "Virginia Slavery in Atlantic Context," 86-87; April Lee Hatfield, *Atlantic Virginia: Intercolonial Relations in the Seventeenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 137-139; Goetz, "Rethinking the 'Unthinking Decision'," 612; McColley, "Slavery in Virginia," 11-12, 23; Sweet, "African Identity," 225-227, 246-247; Heywood & Thornton, *Central Africans, Atlantic Creoles*,

299; Philip D. Morgan, "Virginia's Other Prototype: The Caribbean," in *The Atlantic World and Virginia, 1550-1624*, ed. Peter C. Mancall (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 377-378; Coombs, "Beyond the 'Origins Debate,'" 254; Coombs, "Building 'the Machine,'" 138-142; James Horn, *1619: Jamestown and the Forging of American Democracy* (New York: Basic Books, 2018), 103-112; Thornton, *Africa and Africans*, 146-147; Anthony S. Parent, *Foul Means: The Formation of a Slave Society in Virginia, 1660-1740* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 43; Lorena S. Walsh, *Motives of Honor, Pleasure, and Profit: Plantation Management in the Colonial Chesapeake, 1607-1763* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 116-117; Halliday, "Brase's Case," 254-255; Edmund S. Morgan, "Slavery and Freedom: The American Paradox," in *Virginia Reconsidered: New Histories of the Old Dominion*, Kevin R. Hardwick and Warren R. Hofstra, eds. (Charlottesville, Va.: University of Virginia Press, 2003), 58-59; Guasco, *Slaves and Englishmen*, 197-200, 203-204; Kathleen M. Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches & Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 109; Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 29, 38-40; Wesley Frank Craven, *White, Red, and Black: The Seventeenth-Century Virginian* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1977), 75-76; Breen and Innes, *Myne Owne Ground*, 8, 72; J. Douglas Deal, "Race and Class in Colonial Virginia: Indians, Englishmen, and Africans on the Eastern Shore During the Seventeenth Century" (PhD diss., University of Rochester, 1981), 198; Coombs, "'Others Not Christians,'" 216, 229-230.

⁴⁵ Morgan, "Slavery and Freedom," 56-58; Coombs, "The Phases of Conversion," 341-342; Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 66-70; Guasco, *Slaves and Englishmen*, 59-73, 77-82, 92-120, 197-209; Morgan, "Virginia's Other Prototype," 356-357, 376-378; Hatfield, *Atlantic Virginia*, 137-142; Heather Miyano Kopelson, "'One Indian and a Negroe, the first thes llands ever had': Imagining the Archives in Early Bermuda," *Early American Studies* 11, no. 2 (2013), 272-276; Heywood and Thornton, *Central Africans, Atlantic Creoles*, 11-28; Walsh, *Motives of Honor*, 112-116; Morgan, "Virginia Slavery in Atlantic Context," 88-90, 93-99, 102-; Jordan, *White Over Black*, 56-71; Vaughan, "Origins Debate," 341; Jarvis, "Bermuda," 114-118, 122-125; Alden T. Vaughan and Virginia Mason Vaughan, "Before *Othello*: Elizabethan Representations of Sub-Saharan Africans," *William and Mary Quarterly* 54, no. 1 (1997), 32-33; Bradburn, "Eschatological Origins," 39-41; O'Malley, *Final Passages*, 86-88; Joyce E. Chaplin, "Race," in *The British Atlantic World, 1500-1800*, eds. David Armitage and Michael J. Braddick (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 162-164; Andrews, *Trade, Plunder and Settlement*, 133-134, 116-134, 280; Heywood and Thornton, "1619 African Arrivals," 202-204; Coombs, "'Others Not Christians,'" 216-224.

⁴⁶ Warren M. Billings, "The Law of Servants and Slaves in Seventeenth-Century Virginia," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 99, no. 1 (1991), 45-49; Walsh, *Motives of Honor*, 109-112; Misha Ewen, "'Poore Soules': Migration, Labor, and Visions for Commonwealth," in *Virginia 1619: Slavery and Freedom in the Making of English America*, eds. Paul Musselwhite, Peter C. Mancall, and James Horn (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2019), 134-149; Vaughan, "Origins Debate," 339-341.

⁴⁷ Virginia General Assembly, Act XXVI, March 1642/43, William Waller Hening, ed., *The Statutes at Large; Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia from the First Session of the Legislature in the Year 1619*, vol. 1 (New York: R. & W. & G. Bartow, 1823), 257; Billings, "Law of Servants and Slaves," 45-62; Ewen, "'Poore Soules,'" 134-149. The exception to the recording of Africans' ages was John Pedro, who was 30 years old according to the 1625 Muster.

⁴⁸ Northampton Court Order Book 1655-1668, transcribed in Warren M. Billings, ed., *The Old Dominion in the Seventeenth Century: A Documentary History of Virginia, 1606-1700* (Chapel Hill, N.C., and Williamsburg, Va.: University of North Carolina Press for Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, 2007), 180-181; Heywood and Thornton, *Central Africans, Atlantic Creoles*, 320; Breen and Innes, *Myne Owne Ground*, 13-15, 92-93; Vaughan, "Origins Debate," 340n86; Coombs, "Beyond the 'Origins Debate,'" 257-25; McCartney, "Anthony and Mary Johnson," 15-17, 20-21; Taunya Lovell Banks, "Dangerous Woman: Elizabeth Key's Freedom Suit – Subjecthood and Racialized Identity in Seventeenth Century Colonial Virginia," *Akron Law Review* 41 (2008), 821; Deal, "Race and Class," 260-262.

⁴⁹ James H. Sweet, "The Iberian Roots of American Racist Thought," *William and Mary Quarterly* 54, no. 1 (1997), 143-145, 150-155; Heywood and Thornton, *Central Africans, Atlantic Creoles*, 312-318; Guasco, *Slaves and Englishmen*, 171-187; Jordan, *White Over Black*, 97; Vaughan, "Origins Debate," 325, 341-342; McColley, "Slavery in Virginia," 12; Halliday, "Brase's Case," 253; Brown, *Good Wives*, 112-113.

⁵⁰ Jordan, *White Over Black*, 73-75, 91-98; Vaughan, "Origins Debate," 325-326; Goetz, *The Baptism of Early Virginia*, 73-74, 78-79; Morris, "'Villeinage,'" 101-102; Hening, *Statutes at Large*, vol. 1, 146; 1620 "General Muster," Ferrar Papers 159; William Waller Hening, ed., *Statutes at Large; Being a Collection of all the Laws of Virginia, from the First Session of the Legislature, In the Year 1619*, vol. 2 (New York: R. & W. & G. Bartow, 1823), 170; Coombs, "'Others Not Christians,'" 223-224.

⁵¹ "The Case of Elizabeth Key, 1655/56," Northumberland County Record Books 1652-1658 and 1658-1660, and Northumberland County Order Book 1652-1665, transcribed in Billings, *The Old Dominion in the Seventeenth Century*, 195-199; "Fernando Appeals His Suit to the General Court, 1667," Lower Norfolk County Order Book 1666-1675, transcribed in Billings, *The Old Dominion in the Seventeenth Century*, 200; Virginia General Assembly, Act III: "An act declaring that baptisme of slaves doth not exsept them from bondage," Hening, *Statutes at Large*, vol. 2, 260; Coombs, "Beyond the 'Origins Debate,'" 260-262; Coombs, "Building 'the Machine,'" 142-145; Warren M. Billings, "The Cases of Fernando and Elizabeth Key: A Note on the Status of Blacks in Seventeenth-Century Virginia," *William and Mary Quarterly* 30, no. 3 (1973), 467-474; Banks, "Dangerous Woman," 825-828; Morris, *Southern*

Slavery and the Law, 44-45; Goetz, *The Baptism of Early Virginia*, 98-101, 108-110; Guasco, *Slaves and Englishmen*, 222. Key's case appears to have rested mostly on her white father's carefully documented stipulation that Elizabeth not be treated as enslaved; he left instructions that she be treated as his daughter rather than a "common servant or slave" and indentured her at the age of six for nine years. Very little testimony in the courts relates to Elizabeth Key's status as a Christian, which may have only served to legitimize her acceptance in Virginia society. Indeed, freedom suits after the passage of the 1667 baptism law continued to mention baptismal status, indicating religion was used as evidence of good character and served to improve a claimant's image by emphasizing their social and cultural assimilation into the local community, rather than providing a legal basis for determining free or enslaved status. Elizabeth Key's unnamed mother may be the earliest person to have been clearly documented as enslaved in Virginia records; she is called the "Woman slave" of Thomas Key in the court records of Elizabeth Key's freedom suit. Based on the dates of Key's birth, this would date the enslavement of Key's mother to the 1620s. Her experience appears to have been typical.

⁵² Halliday, "Brase's Case," 236-255; Jonathan A. Bush, "Free to Enslave: The Foundations of Colonial American Slave Law," *Yale Journal of Law & the Humanities* 5, no. 2 (2013), 417-470; Morris, "'Villeinage'," 105-107; Vaughan, "Origins Debate," 322; Brown, *Good Wives*, 132; Coombs, "Building 'the Machine'," 139-142; Eltis, *Rise of African Slavery*, 26; Chaplin, "Race," 162-164; Morris, *Southern Slavery and the Law*, 7, 10, 38-44; Guasco, *Slaves and Englishmen*, 199-201, 206-209; Jordan, *White Over Black*, 81; Coombs, "'Others Not Christians'," 224-226.

⁵³ Morris, "'Villeinage'," 100; Coombs, "Beyond the 'Origins Debate'," 258-260; Coombs, "'Others Not Christians'," 226-228; McColley, "Slavery in Virginia," 22-23; Vaughan, "Origins Debate," 319, 322; Deal, "Race and Class," 198-201; Morris, *Southern Slavery and the Law*, 40-44.

⁵⁴ Coombs, "Beyond the 'Origins Debate'," 255-257; Coombs, "'Others Not Christians'," 228-229; Vaughan, "Origins Debate," 328-331; 1624/25 "General Musters"; Brewer, "Negro Property Owners," 576-579; Heywood and Thornton, *Central Africans, Atlantic Creoles*, 283-284; Morgan, "Virginia Slavery in Atlantic Context," 97; Breen and Innes, *Myne Owne Ground*, 10-11, 81-83; Deal, "Race and Class," 254-257; Coombs, "Building 'the Machine'," 158. In *Myne Owne Ground*, Breen and Innes speculate that the Johnsons' experience may indicate racial discrimination was less severe in early colonial Virginia than after the transition from indentured servitude to slavery in the 1660s and 1670s; however, in "Race and Class in Colonial Virginia," J. Douglas Deal shows that the Johnsons' relative prosperity remained modest and tenuous and that the family were not exempt from race-based discrimination from white neighbors or in the legal system.

⁵⁵ Gabriel Haslip-Viera, Bernard Ortiz de Montellano, and Warren Barbour, "Robbing Native American Cultures: Van Sertima's Afrocentricity and the Olmecs," *Current Anthropology* 38, no. 3 (1997), 419-441.

⁵⁶ Matthew Restall, "Black Conquistadors: Armed Africans in Early Spanish America," *The Americas* 57, no. 2 (2000), 175-189; University of Wisconsin-Madison, "Archaeologists Find Evidence of Earliest African Slaves Brought to New World," *Science Daily*, 1 February 2006; Guasco, *Slaves and Englishmen*, 94.

⁵⁷ Hugh Thomas, *The Slave Trade: The Story of the Atlantic Slave Trade: 1440-1870* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997), 90-102; Restall, "Black Conquistadors," 176.

⁵⁸ Douglas T. Peck, "Lucas Vásquez de Ayllón's Doomed Colony of San Miguel de Gualdape," *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 85, no. 2 (2001), 189, 194; Jane Landers, "Black Frontier Settlements in Spanish Colonial Florida," *OAH Magazine of History* 3, no. 2 (1988), 28; Restall, "Black Conquistadors," 182-183.

⁵⁹ Karen Ordahl Kupperman, *Roanoke: The Abandoned Colony*, 2nd ed. (New York: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007), 87, 91-92; David B. Quinn, *Explorers and Colonies: America, 1500-1625* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1990), 197-204; Guasco, *Slaves and Englishmen*, 109-115; Coombs, "'Others Not Christians'," 218-219.

⁶⁰ Heather Macleod-Leslie, "Archaeology and Atlantic Canada's African Diaspora," *Acadiensis: Journal of the History of the Atlantic Region* 43, no. 1 (2014), 141.

⁶¹ Anthony Stevens-Acevedo, Tom Weterings, and Leonor Alvarez Francés, "Juan Rodriguez and the Beginnings of New York City," *CUNY Academic Works* (2013), 1. Juan Rodriguez was a mixed-race man born in Santo Domingo.

⁶² Ferrar Papers 159. Transcribed in McCartney, "An Early Virginia Census," 179.

⁶³ Public Record Office, National Archives (United Kingdom), CO 1/3. Transcribed in *Colonial Records of Virginia*, 37-60, and in Hotten, *The Original Lists of Persons of Quality*, 169-196. See also VCRP, Survey Report 0624.

⁶⁴ Public Record Office, National Archives (United Kingdom), CO 1/3. Transcribed in Hotten, *The Original Lists of Persons of Quality*, 201-265. See also VCRP, Survey Report 0624.