

Virtual Jamestown

Selected Virginia Statutes relating to Slavery

The following selections indicate that Africans and their descendants received unequal treatment in the years before the General Assembly decided that children of enslaved women would be slaves for life. The documents also reveal that relations between English and Africans had a degree of fluidity during the seventeenth century as Virginia developed into a society where race, instead of status, determined one's place in the social hierarchy.

- [October 1629-ACT IX](#): An act distinguishing between the work of English and African women.
- [September 17, 1630](#): The punishment of Hugh Davis
- [January 1639/40-ACT X](#): An act creating a legal distinction between white and black men.
- [March 1642/3-ACT I](#): An act creating the first legal distinction between English and African women.
- [February 1644/5-ACT VIII](#): An act counting African women and their descendants were counted among the tithes.
- [October 1649-ACT II](#): This act concerning tithes does not mention African women.
- [March 1655/6-ACT I](#): An act creating a distinction between Africans and Native Americans
- [March 1657/8-ACT XLVI](#): An act denoting which African and Native American female slaves are tithable
- [March 1659/60-ACT XVI](#): An act prohibiting Dutch ships from trading in the English colonies
- [March 1660/1-ACT XXII](#): An act punishing English servants running away with negroes.
- [March 1661/2-ACT CII](#): An act discouraging white indentured servants from running away with enslaved blacks.
- [March 1661/2-ACT CV](#): An act prohibiting trading among servants and slaves.
- [March 1661/2-ACT CXXXVIII](#): An act stating that Native American and English servants were to serve their masters the same length of time.
- [March 1661/2](#): A ruling providing freedom for a Native American slave.
- [December 1662-ACT XII](#): An act applying the status of the mother on children.
- [December 1662-ACT XIII](#): An act placing a tithe on all female servants.

- [September 1663-ACT XVIII](#): An act prohibiting servants from traveling without a licence.
- [September 1667-ACT III](#): An act declaring that baptism did not alter the status of slaves.
- [September 1668-ACT VII](#): An act declaring that Negro women were taxable.
- [October 1669-ACT I](#): An act legalizing the punishment and killing of slaves.
- [October 1670-ACT IV](#): An act prohibiting Free blacks and Native Americans from owning white servants.
- [October 1670-ACT XII](#): An act creating further additional distinction between African Americans and Native Americans.
- [1670](#) - Enquiries to the Governor of Virginia from the Lords Commissioners of Foreign Plantations; Answered by Sir William Berkeley in 1671.
- [September 1671-ACT IV](#): An act allowing the courts to be responsible for orphans' estates.
- [September 1672-ACT III](#): An act requiring all slave children to be registered for tithes.
- [September 1672-ACT VIII](#): An act to suppress the rebellious activities of slaves.
- [June 1676-ACT I](#): An act declaring Indians captured in war slaves for life.
- [February 1676/7](#) - An act by the Royal Commissioners discouraging the treatment of Native Americans as slaves.
- [April 1679-ACT I](#): An act for the defence of the country from Indians.
- [June 1680-ACT V](#): An act encouraging trade and manufacture.
- [June 1680-ACT VII](#): An act declaring the time when slave children are tithable.
- [June 1680-ACT X](#): An act attempting to prevent slave revolts.
- [November 1682-ACT I](#): An act repealing a former law making Indians and others free.
- [November 1682-ACT II](#): An act declaring Indian women servants tithables.
- [November 1682-ACT III](#): An additional act to prevent slave revolts.
- [April 1691-ACT XVI](#): An act attempting to suppress runaway slave communities.
- [April 1692-ACT III](#): An act stating the procedure for a slave brought to trial for a capital offense.
- [April 1699-ACT VI](#): An act establishing the punishment of slaves for Hog stealing.
- [April 1699-ACT XII](#): An act that established a tax on servants and slaves imported into this country.
- [August 1701-ACT II](#): An act that offered a reward for the apprehension of a notorious runaway slave.

- [August 1701-ACT V](#):An act that continued taxes on liquors, servants and slaves.
 - [October 1705-CHAP. I](#):An act that reestablished taxes on Liquors and Slaves.
 - [October 1705-CHAP. IV](#):An act that contains the first definition of a mulatto in Virginia's laws.
 - [October 1705-CHAP. VII](#):An act concerning Tithables.
 - [October 1705-CHAP. XI](#):An act denoting further procedures used in prosecuting slaves committing capital crimes.
 - [October 1705-CHAP. XII](#):An act preventing the clandestine transportation of persons in debt, servants, or slaves out of this colony.
 - [October 1705-CHAP. XIV](#):An act providing a punishment for stealing Hogs.
 - [October 1705-CHAP. XIX](#):An act establishing the General Court.
 - [October 1705-CHAP. XXII](#):An act declaring the Negro, Mulatto, and Indian slaves real estate.
 - [October 1705-CHAP. XXIV](#):An act for settling the Militia.
 - [October 1705-CHAP. XLIX](#):An act that provides a definition of who would become a slave upon entering Virginia.
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