

Indentured servants were persons obliged by contract to work for a stated number of years. During the early settlement of Maryland, many newcomers were indentured servants who wanted to immigrate to the colony, but could not pay for passage. Those people could agree to exchange time in service for the cost of the voyage. The servant might have accompanied his master to Maryland, or signed papers with a sea captain who then sold the contract after landing in the colony.¹

How good was life for indentured servants living in colonial Maryland? In this activity, you are going to read primary source documents to gather evidence that will help you answer this focus question. You will have a chance to work with a partner to discuss your ideas. Then you will use your prior knowledge and details from the primary sources to summarize what you have learned from this historical investigation.

¹Taken from Maryland State Archives “Indentured Servants,” 2000.