

Slavery in the Chesapeake

An Online Professional Development Seminar



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GOALS

- To explain why the English displayed no compunction about enslaving Africans.
- To make clear the advantages that slavery afforded Chesapeake planters over alternative forms of bound labor that developed in the region such as indentured servitude.
- To explain why, given its recognized advantages, the growth of slavery in the Chesapeake occurred so slowly.
- To examine patterns of slave ownership in the Chesapeake and how they changed over time.
- To provide some insight into the diversity of Chesapeake slavery.
- To discuss the long-term consequences of slavery's development in the region.

FROM THE FORUM

- Were those “twenty odd negroes” who came to Jamestown in 1607 slaves or indentured servants?
- What was the difference between slavery and indentured servitude?



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Co-editor with Douglas Bradburn:

*Early Modern Virginia: Reconsidering the Old
Dominion* (2011)

A collection of essays including “Beyond the Origins Debate:
Rethinking the Rise of Virginia Slavery.”

Forthcoming: *The Rise of Virginia Slavery* (2014)

Why does the story of Chesapeake slavery matter?

- Critical in the rise of an established planter elite that provided many of the most important early leaders of the United States such as George Washington, Richard Henry Lee, George Mason, James Madison, and Thomas Jefferson.
- The regional variety of slave society that emerged in the Chesapeake exerted a profound influence over the development of African-American culture in the southern United States.

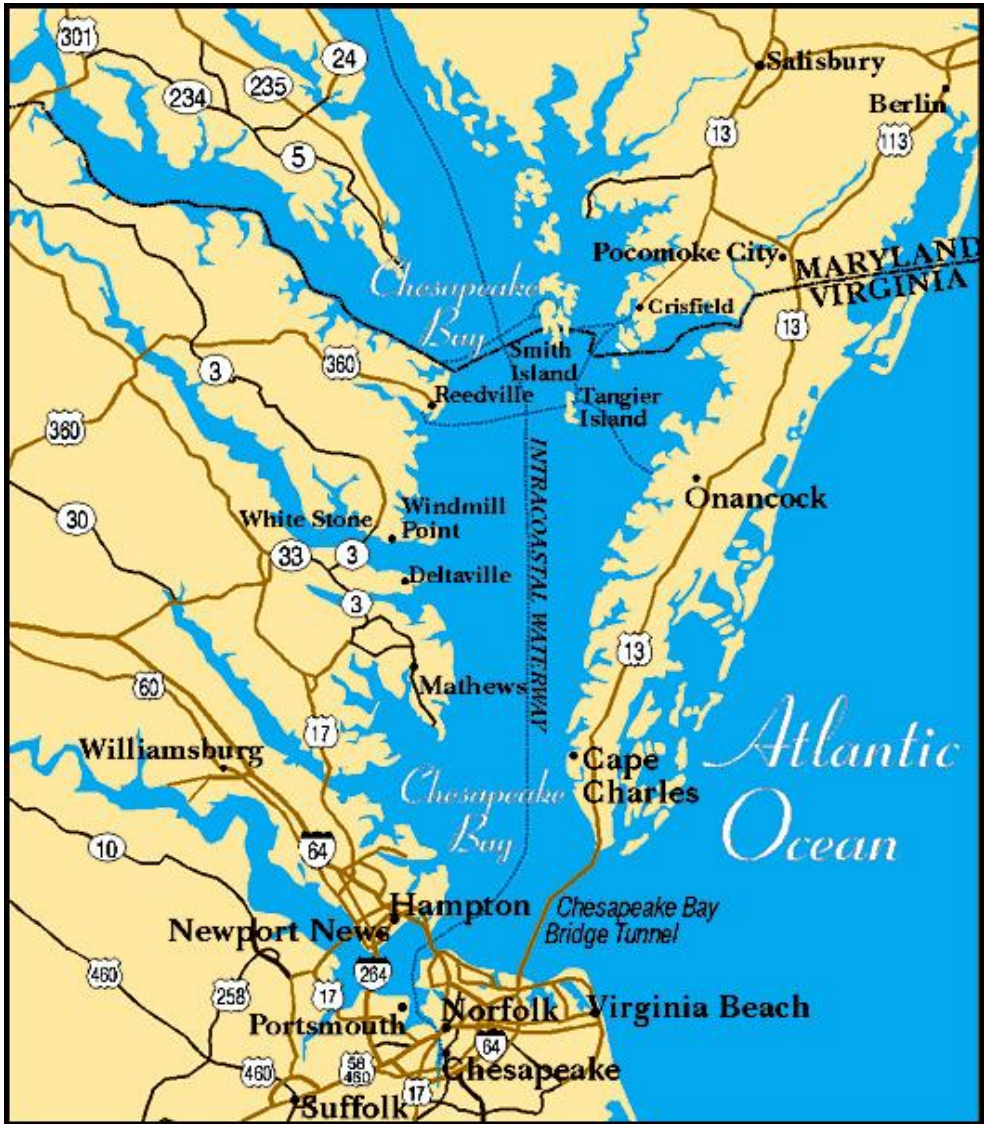
The development of Chesapeake slavery was shaped by events and developments in the broader Atlantic world.

- Political and institutional change in England and the rest of Great Britain.
- Shifting geopolitical situation in Europe.
- Economic development of the West Indies.
- Expansion of European activity along the coast of west and west-central Africa.
- Evolving geopolitical situation in Africa and the growth of slavery and slave trading.

The importance of recognizing the region's position within the transatlantic slave trade.

- Chesapeake was a marginal market for transatlantic slave traders.
- Throughout the seventeenth century, the scarcity of direct deliveries rendered it difficult for Virginians and Marylanders to obtain slaves.
- Access perhaps even more important than price in shaping patterns of slave ownership.

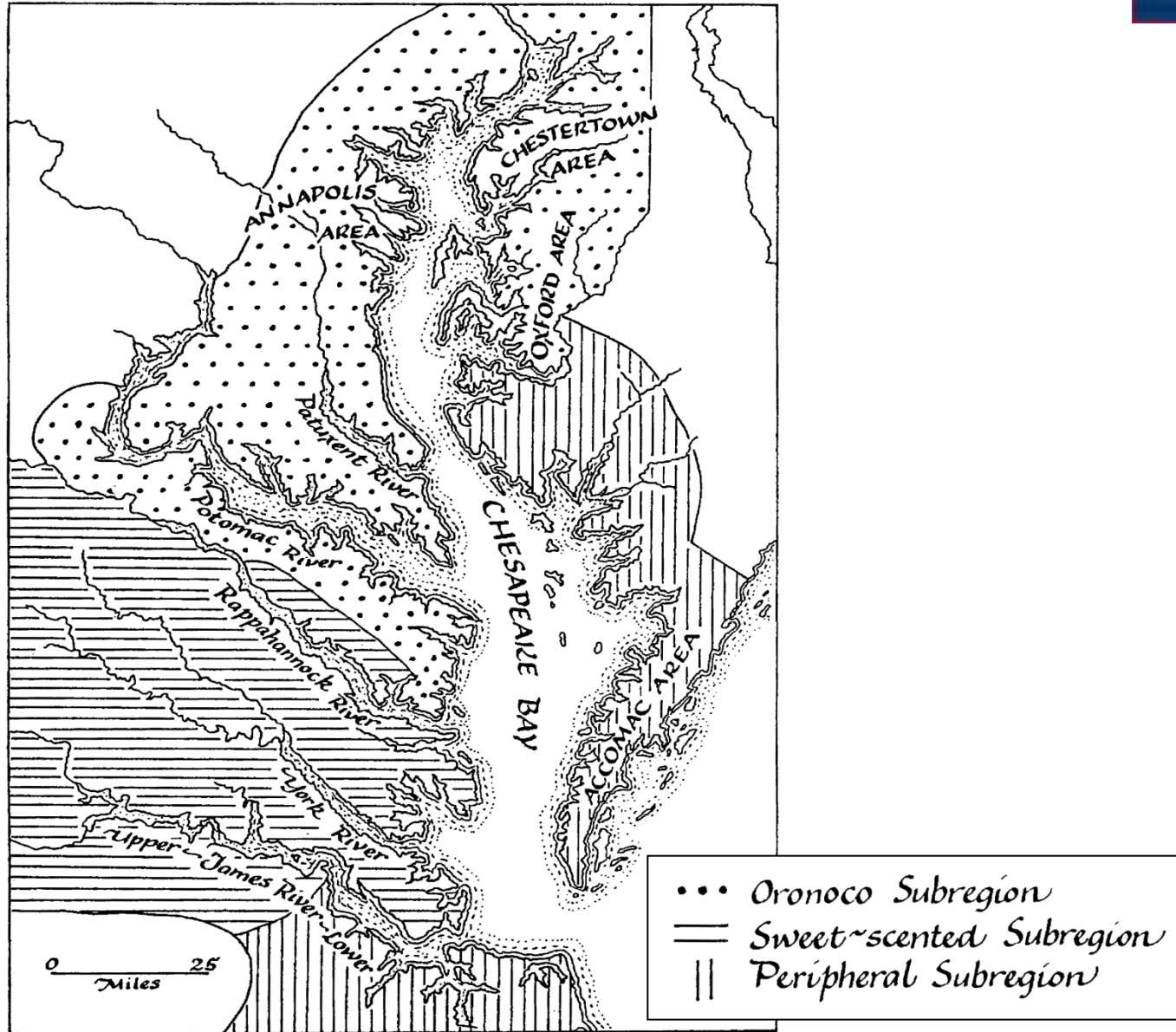
Chesapeake Bay, 2013



Chesapeake Bay, 1681



Subregions of the Colonial Chesapeake



From an account of John Hawkin's first voyage to Africa:

And being amongst other particulars assured, that Negros were very good merchandise in Hispaniola, and that [a] store of Negros might easily bee had upon the coast of Guinea, resolved with himselfe to make triall thereof, and communicated that devise with his worshipfull friendes of London: namely with Sir Lionell Ducket, Sir Thomas Lodge, M. Gunson his father in law, Sir William Winter, M. Bromfield, and others. All which persons liked so well of his intention, that they became liberall contributers and adventurers in the action.

Discussion Question

- What does Hawkins's account of his slave trading voyage to Sierra Leone reveal about how the English perceived Africans in the middle decades of the sixteenth century?

Anglo-Spanish War (1585-1604)

- Connected with Europe's "Age of Religious Wars"
- Preceded by a prolonged "Cold War" between England and Spain between 1568 and 1584
- Begins with the signing of a formal treaty of alliance (Treaty of Nonsuch) in 1585 between England and the rebellious United Provinces
- Annual average of around 5,000 English and Welsh troops deployed to the Low Countries to fight alongside the Dutch during the conflict
- English naval strength largely directed to defending the home islands from the threat of invasion; Armadas sent in 1588, 1596-97, and 1599
- An average of between 100 and 200 English privateers sent against Spanish and Portuguese shipping each year; Caribbean most profitable hunting ground for these corsairs
- Ends with Treaty of London, 1604

Elizabethan Precedents (1601)

From the account of Captain William Parker's 1601 Caribbean Cruise:

This done I proceeded on my journey, sayling directly for Cape de la Vela, and there meeting with a Portugall shippe of two hundred and fiftie tuns laden with three hundred and seventie Negros, brought from Congo or Angola, and going to Cartagena with little resistance I tooke the same. And sayling along with my prize Westward, not able to double the Iles, called Las Cabecas, I was driven farre downe to the Southward into the Gulfe of Acle, in Spanish called Eusenada de Acle, where we landed all our Portugals and Negros, keeping only the Captaine which afterward paid me five hundred pounds for his owne and their ransomes.

Discussion Questions

- How important was the acquisition of slaves to corsair captains such as Newport and Parker?
- To what extent did their perceptions of Africans differ from those of Hawkins a generation earlier?

Elizabethan Precedents (1601)

Royal Proclamation Deporting Blacks from the Kingdom:

Whereas the Queen's Majesty, tendering the good and welfare of her own natural subjects, greatly distressed in these hard times of dearth, is highly discontented to understand the great Numbers of Negroes and blackamoors which (as she has been informed) are carried into this realm since the troubles between her highness and the King of Spain; who are fostered and powered here, to the great annoyance of her own liege people that which co[vet] the relief which these people consume, as also for that most of them are infidels having no understanding of Christ or his Gospels.

Discussion Questions

- How familiar were ordinary Englishmen with Africans by the end of Queen Elizabeth's reign?
- What attributes distinguished "Blackamores" from other inhabitants of the kingdom?

Changes in English Foreign Policy under James I (r. 1603-1625)

- Embraces the Latin phrase “*Beati Pacifici*” as a personal motto
- Maintains support for the Dutch rebels until the twelve-year truce between Spain and the United Provinces (1609-1621); average of 5,400 English volunteers were employed abroad as mercenaries in France and the Low Countries between 1605 and 1609
- Increasingly adopts a pro-Spanish policy following the deaths of Henry, Prince of Wales and Secretary Sir Robert Cecil in 1612, culminating in his pursuit of the so-called “Spanish Match” between 1616 and 1624
- Through numerous proclamations, takes a hard-line attitude toward piracy or any activity that might potentially offend Spain
- Resists becoming involved in the Thirty Years’ War (1618-1648) despite the Hapsburg invasion of the Palatinate, ruled by his son-in-law Frederick

“20. and odd Negroes”

John Rolfe to Sir Edwyn Sandys, January, 1620:

About the latter end of August, a Dutch man of Warr of the burden of 160 tunes arrived at Point-Comfort, the commando^{rs} name Capt. Jope, his Pilott for the West Indies one M^r Marmaduke an Englishman. They mett wth the Trer. in the West Indyes, and deternyed to hold consort shipp hetherward, but in their passage lost one the other. He brought not any thing but 20. and odd Negroes, w^{ch} the Govenor and Cape Marchant bought for victualle (whereof he was in greate need as he pretended) at the best and easyest rate they could. He hadd a lardge and ample Comysson from his Excellency to range and to take purchase in the West Indyes.

Discussion Questions

- How do John Rolfe’s remarks regarding the circumstances surrounding the arrival of the “20. and odd” compare with other accounts of their capture and delivery?
- Why was the incident so controversial at the time?

“20. and odd Negroes”

Bermuda Governor Nathaniel Butler to Sir Nathaniel Rich, 1621:

If it were not for the accidentall Negroes (a fortune cast upon my selfe by all due), I wer not able to rayse one pound of Tobacco this yeare for the defrayeing of any publicke worck. Cap: Kendall pretendeth an interest by waye of gyft to 14 of them and I have give waye unto it untill I heare from the Company. But the truth is, that it wer fitter that he wer rewarded (if he have deserved any) some other waye. For thes Slaves are the most proper and cheape instruments for this plantation that can be, and not safe to be any wher but under the Governours eye.

The development of the English transatlantic slave trade:

- Begins around 1640 in response to the sugar boom on Barbados
- Largely directed toward the Caribbean islands as sugar cultivation spreads to the Leewards and Jamaica over the second half of the seventeenth century
- Placed under monopoly control of the Company of Royal Adventurers in 1660; reorganized as the Royal African Company in 1672
- monopoly weakened by the 1688 Glorious Revolution
- Trade opened up to all Englishmen by Parliament's passage of the 1698 Africa Act

Declaration of the Royal African Company (1672)

The declaration of H.RH. James Duke of York and Albany, Governor, and the rest of the Royal African Company of England, to all his Majesty's subjects, especially to those inhabiting the plantations in America. That their request of Fras. Lord Willoughby, Lt.-Gov. of the Caribbee Islands, to publish their orders to the company's factors to sell negroes at £17 per head found not that good acceptance by the planters as was hoped for. The Royal African Company do resolve and declare they will deliver, upon the conditions within named, negroes from 12 to 40 years old at the following prices, at Barbadoes, £15 per head; Leeward Isles, £16; Jamaica. £17; and Virginia, £18 per head.

Slave Trading to Virginia (1708)

Acting Governor Edmund Jennings to the Board of Trade:

...before the year 1680 what negros were brought to Virginia were imported generally from Barbados for it was very rare to have a Negro ship come to this Country directly from Africa since that time, and before the year 1698, the Trade of Negros became more frequent, tho not in any proportion to what it hath been of late, durjng which the Affrican Company sent several Ships and others by their Licence (as I have been informed) having bought their Slaves of the Company brought them in hither for Sale, Among which I remember the late Alderman Jeffrys and Sr Jeffry Jeffrys were principally concerned...

Sources of Slaves for Virginia (1640-ca.1700)

- Intercolonial trade with the Caribbean
- Transatlantic trade via the Caribbean
- Contracted direct shipments from Africa arranged by English tobacco merchants

Black Headright Distribution in Virginia Land Certificates (1671-1699)



Number of black headrights claimed (% of total)

<u>Sweet-Scented</u>	<u>n = 783</u>
Officeholders	585 (75)
Ordinary Planters	198 (25)
<u>Oronoco</u>	<u>n = 25</u>
Officeholders	24 (96)
Ordinary Planters	1 (4)
<u>Peripheral</u>	<u>n = 562</u>
Officeholders	364 (65)
Ordinary Planters	198 (35)
<u>All Subregions</u>	<u>n = 1367</u>
Officeholders	973 (71)
Ordinary Planters	394 (29)

Source: Data from Virginia Black Headright Files

Slave Ownership Trends in Virginia Officeholder Inventories (1650-1700)

Decade	No. officeholder inventories with labor^a	% officeholders with slaves^a	% officeholders' bound laborers enslaved
1651-60	17	47.1	32.0
1661-70	26	53.8	48.8
1671-80	38	89.5	54.3
1681-90	23	69.6	76.2
1691-1700	45	91.1	90.9

Source: Data from Virginia Probate Files

From the will of Colonel Richard Lee I (1664)

Item. To my wife, during, her life, I give the plantation whereon I now dwell, ten English servants, five negroes, 3 men and 2 women, 20 sows and corn proportionable to the servants; the said negroes. I give to her during her widowhood and no longer, and then presently to return to those of the five youngest children, also the plantation Mocke Nock.

Item. I give to my son John and his heirs forever, when he comes to the age of 18 years, all my land and plantation at Machotick, all the stock of cattle and hogs thereupon, 10 negroes, viz., five men and five women, and 10 English servants for their times, all the corn that shall be found there, all tools, household stuff, and utensils thereupon.

Item. To Richard and his heirs forever, when he come to the age aforesaid, I give my Plantation called Paradise, with all my servants thereupon, all my stock of cattle and hogs, all working dung tools and utensils, and corn that shall be found thereupon to be for the provision of the said servants.

Item. To Francis and his heirs forever, when he comes to the age aforesaid, I give the Pipe-makers Neck and the War Captains Neck, with five negroes, three men and two women., and 10 English servants. and the stock of cattle and hogs, corn, and tools, and utensils upon the said necks.

Discussion Question

- What was Lee trying to accomplish by dividing his estate in the manner he did?

From the will of Surry County justice Robert Caufield (1692)

I give & bequeath to my neece, the wife of James Bruton, and the heirs of her body forever all yt my plantation or tract of land by me purchased of Joseph Rogers scituate in the parrish and County aforesd and commonly called Pokasink And I likewise give to my said neece my two Negroes on the sd plantation called Jack and Jude to her & to the heires of her body forever.

Discussion Question

- In what way does the wording of Caufield's bequest to his niece differ from those made by Richard Lee to his wife and children?

The Plantation where I now live contains a thousand Acres, at least 700 Acres of it being rich thicket, the remainder good hearty plantable land, without any waste either by Marshes or great Swamps the Commodiousness, conveniency, & pleasantness your self well knows, upon it there is three Quarters well furnished, with all necessary houses, ground & fencing, together with a choice crew of Negroes at each plantation, most of them this Country born, the remainder as likely as most in Virginia, there being twenty nine in all, with stocks of cattle & hogs at each Quarter... & the Negroes increase being all young, &: a considerable parcel of breeders, will keep that Stock good for ever.

Discussion Question

- How did ownership of slaves figure in the ambitions of wealthier Chesapeake planters?

Negro womens children to serve according to the condition of the mother:

Whereas some doubts have arisen whether children got by any Englishman upon a negro woman should be slave or free, be it therefore enacted and declared by this present grand assembly, that all children borne in this country shalbe held bond or free only according to the condition of the mother, and that if any christian shall committ fornication with a negro man or woman, hee or shee so offending shall pay double the fine imposed by the former act.

An act declaring that baptisme of slaves doth not exempt them from bondage:

Whereas some doubts have arisen whether children that are slaves by birth, and by the charity and piety of their owners made partakers of the blessed sacrament of baptisme, should by vertue of their baptisme be made free; It is enacted and declared by this grand assembly, and the authority thereof, that the conferring of baptisme doth not alter the condition of the person as to his bondage or freedome; that diverse masters, freed from this doubt, may more carefully endeavour the propagation of christianity by permitting children, though slaves, or those of greater growth if capable to be admitted to that sacrament.

An act about the casual killing of slaves:

Whereas the only law in force for the punishment of refractory servants resisting their master, mistress, or overseer cannot be inflicted upon negroes, nor the obstinacy of many of them by other than violent means suppressed, be it enacted and declared by this grand assembly, if any slave resist his master (or other by his masters order correcting him) and by the extremity of the correction should chance to die, that his death shall not be accounted felony but the master (or that other person appointed by the master to punish him) be acquitted from molestation, since it cannot be presumed that premeditated malice (which alone makes murder felony) should induce any man to destroy his own estate.

Law of Slavery (September 1672)

An act for the apprehension and suppression of runaways, negroes and slaves:

...that if any negroe, molatto, Indian slave, or servant for life, runaway and shalbe persued by warrant or hue and crye, it shall and may be lawfull for any person who shall endeavour to take them, upon the resistance of such negroe, mollatto, Indian slave, or servant for life, to kill or wound him or them soe resisting; *Provided always*, and it is the true intent and meaning hereof, that such negroe, molatto, Indian slave, or servant for life, be named and described in the hue and crye which is alsoe to be signed by the master or owner of the said runaway. And if it happen that such negroe, molatto, Indian slave, or servant for life doe dye of any wound in such their resistance received the master or owner of such shall receive satisfaction from the publique for his negroe, molatto, Indian slave, or servant for life, soe killed or dyeing of such wounds.

Discussion Question

- What were the problems and concerns that Virginia's planter elite sought to ameliorate with the various laws they passed to govern the enslaved population?

- Clearly established slavery as an hereditary condition even in cases of inter-racial sexual pairing
- Prevented the enslaved from challenging their status on the basis of Christian baptism
- Provided masters with almost unlimited authority over their enslaved bondsmen and bondswomen
- Committed the government to policing the privately-owned enslaved population

Probate Inventories: Maj. Robert Beverley, 1687

Att Bald Eagle Neck Quarter, George Keeble Overseer, 1687

One Negro Man Named Peter	27. --
One Negro woman Named, Moll	26. --
One Negro woman Named Joan	18. --
One Negro woman Named Betty	20. --
One Negro woman Named Betty and a sucking child	25. --
One Boy Named Coffee	5. --
One Boy Named Tim B---ton	10. --
English Servants	
John Pearse two yeares and four } Months to Serve	9. --

Discussion Question

- What information about the individual workers at this quarter can we glean from this listing?
- What can such documents tell us about the shift from servitude to slavery and the lives of the enslaved?

Estimates of Net Slave Migration from the Former Colonial South (1790-1829)

State	1790-1799	1800-1809	1810-1819	1820-1829	1790-1829
Virginia	-22,767	-41,097	-75,562	-76,157	-215,583
Maryland	-22,221	-19,960	-33,070	-32,795	-108,046
North Carolina	+3,671	-407	-13,361	-20,113	-30,210
South Carolina	+4,435	+6,474	+1,925	-20,517	-7,683
Georgia	+6,095	+11,231	+10,713	+18,324	+46,363
Colonial South Total	-30,787	-43,759	-109,355	-131,258	-315,159
Chesapeake Total	-44,988	-61,057	-108,632	-108,952	-323,629
Chesapeake %	[100]	99.3	89.0	72.8	[100]

Source: Michael Tadman, *Speculators and Slaves: Masters, Traders, and Slaves in the Old South* (Madison, WI, 1989), 12

Thank you.

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