

## Indentured migration and the servant trade from London to America, 1618-1718: there ist great want of servants

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### Abstrak

The central role played by indentured servants in the settlement and development of the English colonies in the West Indies and the North American mainland in the first century of English colonization has been overshadowed by the much larger later trade in African slaves. This book provides the first examination of the English end of the trade in the four sorts of indentured servant that delivered the majority of an estimated 457,000 white people to the American colonies before 1720. Colonization created new Englands out of England to enlarge trade and plantation, but settlement required people to be transported over 4,000 miles of ocean. Adults and children paid for their transportation and keep with four or more years of unpaid service in a new system of indentured servitude. The system was not benign in the sugar, tobacco, and rice plantations of the West Indies and southern Continental colonies, nor at the centre of the trade in London and other migrant ports where merchants, procurers, and masters of ships often used illicit methods to recruit servants. Measures to reduce spiriting by making the offence a felony punishable by hanging, or by registering servants in new offices, had a limited effect. New legislation in the 1718 Transportation Act eased the problem, but more important was the increasing substitution of slaves for servants to supply the soaring demand in Britain and Europe for the addictive products of the sugar and tobacco colonies.