

**Title of the Podcast:** Indentured Servitude And Bacon's Rebellion

**Historic Period it Covered:**

This podcast covered the years from 1607 to 1677, which is period 2 (1607-1754) of the AP US History curriculum. The podcast provides information about the lives of the European indentured servants in the colonial ages before 1700 and how such practices led to Bacon's Rebellion. Furthermore, the podcast explains the long-term effects of Bacon's Rebellion on US History.

**Two Things You Learned Watching it:**

One thing I learned while watching this podcast is that many indentured servants were shipped to America in inferior conditions, and even their children were sold out without the consent of their parents. The indentured servants who decided to head to the New World through a contract were mostly beggars and poor people in Old England with no opportunities for a rise in status. They were shipped in massive numbers like cargos. They could not lie or sleep well on the two-month voyage to North America because the ship was too crowded. Also, the indentured servants would suffer from fatal diseases such as dysentery due to old, salty foods and the putrid conditions of the vessels. Moreover, there were even cases where food was insufficient for people onboard the ship. For instance, on the vessel named *Seaflower*, about 40 among 106 passengers died of starvation. The dead were thrown into the seas. If both parents died and only their children were left, those children were indebted to pay for their parents' passage until they were 21 years old. Additionally, even if the families arrived safely in North America, families have often been split apart and sold to different employers, which made the family unable to meet each other again.

Another thing I learned while watching this podcast is that the conflict between the wealthy and poor classes was very severe within colonial America. The indentured servants were guaranteed to acquire fifty acres of land per person when their contract was completed, which was usually from five to seven years. However, even though the indentured servants finished their years of the contract, the wealthy landowners or employers did not keep their promises. The ruling class thought that there was not enough land to give those lands to all indentured servants. Furthermore, since there was a distinct social stratification, the ruling class felt no responsibility or need to keep the promises of indentured servants. This resulted in a significant conflict between the haves and the have-nots. Numerous boycotts and protests were held against the wealthy landowners and the colonial government that only tried to benefit those landowners and themselves. The ruling class, including the House of Burgesses, feared servants would join the forces of African slaves and revolt. Eventually, Bacon's Rebellion, a rebellion of the have-not indentured servants, occurred when Governor Berkeley decided to maintain peaceful relationships with the Native Americans for the consistent fur trade benefits instead of giving lands to the poor colonists by taking away native lands. The poor colonists were outraged that

the colonial government prioritized itself over the colonists, eventually leading to a major rebellion.

**One Thing You Knew But Was Interesting:**

One thing I already knew but was interesting was that the colonies of the New World had formed a type of new social caste system during that period, which eventually led the wealthy class to mistreat the indentured servants. Prominent and wealthy landowners who also mostly owned plantations were the highest social class. The small farmers who had their land followed subsequently. The next class was the indentured servants, who were primarily laborers of the wealthy class. Finally, the bottom class was the enslaved Africans. As clearly depicted in the social caste system of the North American colonies, most indentured servants were mistreated by their employers. Although the indentured servants signed a formal contract that ensured them the exact period of servitude and was granted fifty acres of land per person, most landowners did not keep the promise. The employers extended the servitude period for ridiculous reasons and considered that indentured servants were not people with equal rights. Thus, the indentured servants who went to North American colonies, especially New England, had to take unfair disadvantages.

**Information That Could Show Up in the AP® US History Exam:**

One piece of information that could show up in the AP US History Exam is the background of Old England and the formation of indentured servants. It is because the socioeconomic situations of Old England at that time made many citizens landless and poor, leading them to head to America by becoming indentured servants. Since indentured servants were a major labor force before the widespread use of enslaved Africans, this piece of information would be essential in understanding US History.

Another piece of information that could show up in the AP US History Exam is the conflicting interests of the colonists and the colonial government. The primary reason for Bacon's Rebellion was because the poor colonists sought to take land from the Native Americans, while the colonial government led by Governor Berkeley wanted to maintain peaceful relationships with the Native Americans for the stable fur trade, which benefited the government and the English Crown. Since Bacon's Rebellion was a significant event that led African slaves to become major labor forces in America, this information related to the causes of it could be on the AP US History Exam.