

Throughout the 1660s, the Virginia House of Burgesses passed a series of statutes for the purpose of socially separating white settlers from black slaves. Below are some of those statutes.

December, 1662

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 shall be held bond or free only according to the condition of the mother, *And* that if any christian shall commit fornication with a negro man or woman, hee or shee soe offending shall pay double the fines imposed by the former act. . . .

September, 1667

Whereas some doubts have risen 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 virtue 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 freedom; 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. . . .

September, 1668

Whereas it has been questioned whether servants running away may be punished with corporall punishment by their master or magistrate since the act already made gives the master satisfaction by prolonging their time by service, *It is declared and enacted by this assembly* that moderate corporall punishment inflicted by master or magistrate upon a runaway servant, shall not deprive the master of the satisfaction allowed by the law, the one being as necessary to reclayme them from persisting in that idle course, as the other is just to reapeire the damages susteyned by the master. . . .

October, 1669

Whereas the only law in force for the punishment of refractory [resistant] servants (a) resisting their master, mistress or overseer cannot be inflicted upon negroes, nor the obstinacy of many of them by other than violent means suppresst, *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 acquit from

molestation, since it cannot be presumed that premeditated [premeditated] malice (which alone makes murder felony) should induce any man to destroy his own estate.

William Waller Hening, ed., *The Statutes at Large; Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia*, vol. 11 (New York: R. & W. & G. Bartow, 1809–1823), 170, 260, 266, 270.

PRACTICING Historical Thinking

Identify: Describe in one sentence each of what these four laws sought to do.

Analyze: What interest would Virginian colonists have in ensuring that children born of a white father and an enslaved African mother remained enslaved?

Evaluate: How might these laws influence the self-identity of white residents of the colony, both rich and poor?

DOCUMENT 2.14 Enslaved Africans to the Western Hemisphere 1450–1900

An estimated eleven million Africans were brought to the Western Hemisphere as slaves during nearly five hundred years of European colonialism. The chart below traces the growth of the slave trade over these years.

Period	Number of people	Percentage of total number of slaves who traveled to the Western Hemisphere
1450–1600	367,000	3.1%
1601–1700	1,868,000	16%
1701–1800	6,133,000	52.4%
1801–1900	3,330,000	28.5%
Total	11,698,000	100%

Paul E. Lovejoy, "The Volume of the Atlantic Slave Trade: A Synthesis," *Journal of African History* 23, no. 4 (1982): 473–501.

PRACTICING Historical Thinking

Identify: What was the greatest period of growth in the number of slaves who traveled to the Western Hemisphere between 1450 and 1900?

Analyze: What economic and political factors could have accounted for this growth?

Evaluate: How might the expansion of the slave economy in colonial North America have influenced colonies like Virginia and Barbados?