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Submission date: 10-Feb-2021 06:09PM (UTC+0500)

Submission ID: 1506222949

File name: US_history_essay.edited.docx (18.79K)

Word count: 1326

Character count: 6538

US History

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The discussion of this paper is based on a letter titled "Our Plantation Is Very Weak." In essence, the letter recounts the experiences confronted by an indentured servant in Virginia. In 1623, the planters of this era who lived in Virginia owned large land tracks besides practicing tobacco farming, which proved to be profitable (Frethorne, 1623). Nonetheless, these agronomists were in dire need of labor to till their fields. Since the local Indian folks posed much resistance to them, these planters were unable to enslave them. As a result, they reverted to recruiting deprived English grownups as their servants. In exchange for their passage to North America, these English men and women had to sign contracts or indenture to serve the planters for four to seven years as the agreement's underlying terms. In the same early seventeenth century, Richard Frethorne arrived at Jamestown colony as an indentured servant. Frethorne thus writes this letter after three months post-arrival in Jamestown. In the letter, which dates 20 March 1623, Frethorne describes the death and illnesses surrounding him.

The conditions that the English men and women had to endure and put up with to be granted a passage to North America stands out as the most disheartening aspect of life described in the letter and from which I am shocked with awe. All these sojourners from England seeking entry into the early United States were continually confronted with sundry diseases. No one lends a helping hand to them to salvage them from their plights. Thus, many more men continued to get sick with each day that passed. It is equally depressing to imagine the "meals" served to English men. Four people had to depend and survive on a mouthful of bread. That is extraordinarily outrageous and insane since conventionally, at no instance will we have people on earth quench their pangs of hunger with only a mouthful of bread. That leads to further amusement when the oppressed men opt to cry to go back to their motherland England. It is

shocking that these men had faced mammoth hardships in their homeland and were out to seek entry into North America for a new beginning only to experience many more intense problems than what England had brought their way. All these experiences prompt Frethorne to state, "And I have nothing to comfort me, nor is there nothing to be gotten here but sickness and death." This implies that while he pursued the indentured servant life with a hopeful mindset, he has come to the harsh realization that he cannot earn enough to be happy. Instead, he is surrounded by death and illness- and is describing all of this to his parents.

In the deliberations of this letter, Richard Frethorne describes other indentured servants by their actions. He equally describes acts of theft against one another. Despite combating their enemy and managed to seize two of them alive and enslaved them, Frethorne still considers other indentures who still have a breath of life to be in great danger (Frethorne, 1623). They are anxious to find a way out of Jamestown, even if that would mean getting to England without their limbs. The picture that Richard Frethorne paints among other indentured servants is desperation that always reigns among them. Frethorne explains that they have surpassed other slaves by one step up to emphasize this state of despair. Concerning other colonists, Frethorne has a sort of distaste for them. His aversion stems from the fact that these colonists have hired them based on the fact that he understands that they have employed the servants to make them as much money as possible, without giving a damn or regard to their wellbeing at any given time throughout their servitude life.

Despite the odds of survival and getting into North America being against Richard Frethorne and his fellow compatriots, Richard Frethorne still has something to say about his life at Jamestown colony. He recounts the times he came to Jamestown colony and the hard times that befall him. For instance, when it did rain, they were bound to remain in the boat and share a

loaf of bread amongst two men as they lingered enough for the storm to pass by. Their waiting period would ultimately take almost two days while their stomachs held on nothing but the above loaf. Nonetheless, the positivity Richard Frethorne recalls so well came when these days were over and a good-willed and a kind-hearted man by the appellation Goodman Jackson would empathize with him and make him a cabin every time he visited the Jamestown colony as well as some fish that comforted him more than the peas and water gruel. Goodman Jackson represents some of the specific individuals that Frethorne describes in the letter as those that treated him with kind-heartedness and compassion along his expedition (Frethorne, 1623).

As a consequence, he speaks of them positively and in a positive light. For instance, Frethorne says that his parents have dished out more than his daily allowance to a mendicant that called at their door, and had it not been that Mr. Jackson had relieved him, he articulates that he should have been in a low case. "But he like a father, and she like a loving mother doth still help me." The latter description demonstrates that Mr. Goodman Jackson has been a friend that Frethorne desperately needed while at Jamestown colony. Therefore, it is ostensibly straightforward that Frethorne acknowledges and submits to his parents that he does not think that he could have made it at any cost had the type of Mr. Jackson been out of his life. As a result, Mr. Jackson is grateful and appreciates them. Conceivably, marking the only positive thing that he has to say about his life in the Jamestown colony.

Although Richard Frethorne is aware that they are not safe as long as they are still in Jamestown colony, he downplays the reality that they lie in their adversary's teeth with an expression of hope in the Supreme Deity – God. He holds onto a full inherent conviction that the merciful God will save them even if they are fewer in number, as in the case of the soldiers of Gilead. This troop lapped water as they currently do, but they were still empowered to prevail in

the fight and emerged victorious at the end. Frethorne perpetuates the latter conviction by hoping that he will return home to England after his indentured servitude has been carried out.

The final requests Richard Frethorne makes at the end of his letter demonstrates the uncertainty he has to come back to England in one piece and to kick. For want of provisions, Frethorne offers his parents a glimpse into his strength and agility by letting them know that he is a lot feebler than a quarter of the strength he had in England. Therefore, he is making these requests to his parents because he genuinely does not know if he will live long enough to see their response.

The idea that Frethorne pursued the indenture servitude life with hope for a happy end but ended up realizing he was surrounded by death and diseases is the most unfortunate aspect of his life that strikes me. Correspondingly, he describes other indentured servants by their actions to express his attitude towards them. The specific individuals counting Mr. Goodman Jackson is the only positive thing Frethorne says about his life. His hope is fixed on the optimism that he will go back to England when indenture servitude is over. Finally, the requests Frethorne makes at the end of the epistle could be a great way of him expressing uncertainty about his ability to hold on long enough to see a response from his parents.

Reference

Frethorne, R. (1623). *"Our Plantation Is Very Weak": The Experiences of an Indentured Servant in Virginia, 1623*. Government Printing Office, 1935. History Matters.

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