

## EVOLUTION OF SLAVE LAWS IN VIRGINIA

### I. THE CHARTER GENERATION: 1619-1680

- 1619 - First documented Africans arrive in VA
- 1635 - Headright system expanded to include Africans imported into VA
- 1639 - All persons except Negroes to be provided with arms and ammunition
- 1640 - John Punch Case: African given servitude for life as punishment for running away
- 1644 - All Negro men and women and all other men (ages 16-60) adjudged tithable
- 1655 - Anthony Johnson Case: gained possession of slave John Casor
- 1656 - Elizabeth Key sues for her freedom and wins
- 1662 - Negro women's children to serve according to the condition of the mother
- 1663 - Servants not to go abroad without a "lycence" (permission)
- 1667 - Baptism of slaves does not exempt them from bondage
- 1669 - Death of a slave during punishment is not deemed a felony
- 1672 - Birth of Negro and mulatto children to be recorded in parish within one year
- 1672 - Legal to wound or kill a slave resisting arrest
- 1679 - Hog stealing: 1<sup>st</sup> offence, 39 lashes; 2<sup>nd</sup> offence, ears nailed to the pillory for two hours and then cut off; 3<sup>rd</sup> offence, felony prosecution
- 1680 - Ages of Negro children imported into VA to be adjudged with in three months of their arrival
- 1680 - Negroes forbidden to carry weapons
- 1680 - Negroes forbidden to lift a hand against a Christian

1682 - Slaves forbidden to gather for more than four hours off their master's plantation.

## II. THE PLANTATION GENERATION: 1680-1750

1691 - Master required to transport emancipated slave out of the colony within six months

1692 - Slaves not allowed to own horses, cattle, or hogs

1705 - Definition of a mulatto: child, grandchild, or great-grandchild of a Negro

1705 - No Negro, mulatto or Indian shall hold office

1705 - Dismemberment made a legal punishment for incorrigible slaves

1705 - Slaves adjudged to be real estate

1705 - Slaves not to serve in the militia

1705 - If slave put to death as punishment, master reimbursed from the public funds

1723 - No slave shall be set free except for some meritorious service to be adjudged by the Governor and Council

1723 - No Negro, mulatto, or Indian to be sworn as a witness in any court except in the trial of a slave for a capital offense.

1754 - Slave patrols requires to visit all slave quarters once a month

## III. THE REVOLUTIONARY GENERATION: 1750-1780

1776 - Act to end the practice of entail

1778 - Act to end the importation of slaves into VA

1779 - Slave Kitt emancipated for meritorious service

1782 - Act authorizing the manumission of slaves

IV. THE NEW NATION

1784 - Northwest Ordinance excluded slavery permanently from the NW Territory

1793 - First fugitive slave law passed by Congress

1806 - Manumission of slaves restricted in VA

1831 - Illegal to teach slaves to read or write in VA

1832 - VA votes against gradual emancipation of slaves