

Name: _____

Date: _____

The Indentured Servants

Spanish, English, French, and Dutch colonists began to settle on the Caribbean islands. The settlers grew tobacco, spices, and indigo, a plant used to make blue dye. They imported indentured servants to work.

Indentured servants were people who worked without pay. Europeans who owned money they could not pay back were often sent to prison. The servants signed contracts that required them to work from three to seven years in exchange for paying off their debts. The services of these immigrants were sold to the highest bidders after their arrival in the colonies. Their life

on the Caribbean plantations was one of hard, physical labor and abusive conditions. At the end of their period of indenture the former servants were absorbed into the general population.

The tobacco grown in Virginia was superior to the Caribbean crop, so plantation owners turned to sugar, which became the primary crop of the Caribbean. Sugar cultivation requires a great deal of backbreaking labor. The plantation owners lowered their cost of labor by replacing their indentured servants with African slaves.

Fill in the Blanks

European c_____ hired i_____ servants to help them grow t_____, spices, i_____ and s_____ on the C_____ islands. The s_____ signed c_____ that r_____ them to w_____ for t_____ to s_____ years. Their life on the Caribbean p_____ was *d_____ c_____l_____, but at the end of their i_____, they were a_____ into the general p_____.

Answer in complete sentences

1. Why would someone agree to become an indentured servant?

2. Why did the Caribbean plantation owners decide to grow sugar instead of tobacco?

*This is a higher order learning question. You must answer the question to the best of your ability, but any reasonable answer will be graded as correct.

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