

Thesis on letter of elizabeth sprigs: a primary source analysis

[Countries](#), [England](#)



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Elizabeth Sprigs talks about how slaves are treated in America. This is the content of the letter she wrote to her father in September 22, 1756. In the succeeding paragraphs, this writer explains the conditions Elizabeth Sprigs endured as regards to food, hours of work, and her master's attitude.

Elizabeth Sprigs

The document states the letter writer is an indentured servant, an English, female indentured servant. The phrases such as " former conduct," " my undutifullness," " had offended" seem to suggest that Elizabeth had done something wrong in England. Perhaps she had been convicted of some crime and sent to America as her punishment. Indentured servants serve their masters for a specific number of years, thus their status is different from the Negro slaves who would not ever gain freedom. The phrase " Nay, many Negroes are better used" could refer to this difference in category.

Conditions at work

" What we unfortunat English People suffer here is beyond the probability of you in England to Conceive." The slaves and servants working in American

plantations are treated so badly. Elizabeth says the conditions are so much worse than what would ever take place in England. Then she relates that they were only fed with bread and water and the master even feels resentful that they have to be fed at all. Elizabeth says she works day and night with very little rest. Since she is a female servant, she is also subject to sexual abuses of the master as indicated in the phrase “ after slaving during Masters pleasure.”

Contrast between Father and Master

Elizabeth speaks of her father who shows “ caring and tenderness” to her as long as she is an obedient daughter. In contrast, her master does not show compassion. She is beaten and tied up and the treatment she received in his hands was worse than anyone can give to an animal. The phrase “ you bitch, you do not half enough” shows how low she is being looked down by the master.

Conclusions

This letter is a personal account of an English female servant working in America. From this document the reader is given a first-hand view of what took place in America during those times. The reader experiences Elizabeth Sprigs suffering through the clear images provided by the description of her experience.