

Guide ~ Source I (Richard Ligon)

Title of your primary source: *The True and Exact History of the Island of Barbados*

Type of source & date: **book, 1657**

Author/creator: **Richard Ligon**

What do you know about the creator of this source?

Ligon lived in Barbados for three years and then returned to England.

What information does this source give you about the living conditions of servants or what it was like to be an indentured servant in the colonies?

- **servants' fates are in the hands of their masters—their lives will be tolerable if they have nice masters, awful if they have cruel masters**
- **life with a cruel master:**
 - **servants have to construct their own homes, which they do not know how to do**
 - **their cabins are made of sticks, branches, and plantain leaves**
 - **dinners might consist of a few potatoes and water or sweet potato liquor**
 - **work from 6 a.m. to 11 a.m.**
 - **lunch, 11-1: cornmeal mush or potatoes**
 - **work again from 1 to 6**
 - **dinner—same as lunch**
 - **if it rains, they have no extra shirt, but must wear their wet clothes**
 - **if they complain, they will be beaten**
- **Ligon has seen a servant be beaten very badly for doing almost nothing wrong**

Does this source present a **positive**, **negative**, or **neutral** view of indentured servitude? Explain why?

- **encourage students to give their views of this and ask them to explain them/provide support**
- **negative**
 - **servants who have cruel masters will have a miserable life—inadequate food, clothing, and housing and harsh beatings**