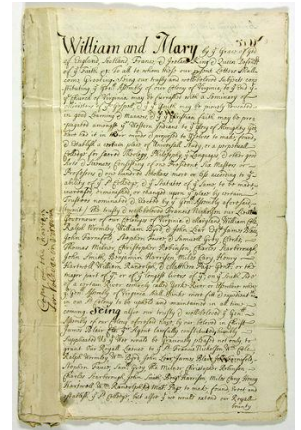


Black History 1600s – 1700s A Detailed Timeline

1693

William & Mary receives a charter from King William & Mary. The money provided comes from the labor of enslaved people. The charter states that a penny per pound on tobacco exported from Virginia and Maryland would be used to support a president and professors. The joint monarchs had a long history of slavery: “When William and Mary came to the throne, the Royal African Company held a crown monopoly that had been granted under Charles II. In 1698 William answered to the entreaties of England’s merchants who also wanted to participate in the African trade. Merchants from England’s port cities soon turned a profit carrying manufactured goods to Africa, where they traded for human cargo to deliver to other Atlantic ports.”

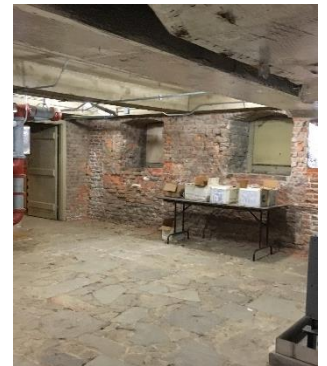


1695

The construction of the Wren Building begins with enslaved labor. Enslaved people are either rented out to the College or working under an undertaker located in the Williamsburg area.

1700s

Enslaved people run the day-to-day parts of the school, so this means cleaning, cooking, gardening, tending livestock, etc. The hiring out of enslaved individuals is also a common practice – some enslaved people at the College are most likely ‘rented’ or ‘rented out.’ These enslaved men and women are most likely overseen by one specific man, or perhaps the white housekeeper. Since it was typical for enslaved people to sleep where they worked, they most likely sleep in the basement of the Wren Building where the kitchen was located. If an enslaved person is at the college because a wealthy student had paid extra room and board to bring them, they will most likely sleep in their enslaver’s room or just outside. We know that William & Mary paid for the baptism of a number of the infant children of College enslaved people.



1702

An English tradition of barring the doors before Christmas is taken too far. The tradition is that Grammar School boys would trap themselves in the classroom and not allow the masters inside to indicate that it was time for Christmas vacation. President James Blair goes to see the incident and tries to force the doors open. Somehow, the students have weapons and fire,



hitting one of Blair's enslaved men in the eye with a "wadd." According to Thomas Johnson, "I went with Mr. Blair and a Negro man, to break open the School Doors... at which time several Pistols were fired by the Scholars... a Negro Girl ran and told Mrs. Blair."

1705

In 1705, the House of Burgesses enacts the 'slave codes.' Inspired by these ideas, James Blair establishes institutional slavery, stating that the College itself can enslave individuals

1716

After the Wren Building burns down, Queen Anne, the current monarch at the time, provides funds for the rebuilding process. She was also a big player in the trading of enslaved people. "Queen Anne followed her predecessors' model of support of Britain's rule in the African slave trade. In 1711 she approved the charter for the South Sea Company, a public-private trading company that established British firms as the exclusive partner supplying enslaved Africans to the Spanish West Indies. Queen Anne retained 20% of the stock in the company, whose initial contract was worth £7.5 million."



1718

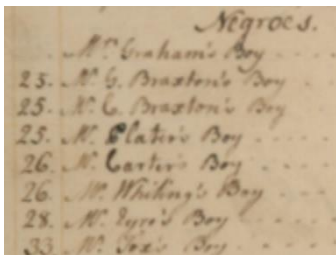
William & Mary purchases the Nottoway Quarter and 17 enslaved people. Income from this tobacco plantation provides scholarships for less wealthy students for the next 90 years. Nottoway Quarter is not sold until 1802.

1727

James Blair publishes a piece, called The Present State of Virginia, and the College where he suggests that silk production be moved to Virginia because, since a lot of the brick manufacturing at this time was probably finished, enslaved children were now "useless," in his words.

1754

Eight students bring enslaved people to school. Occasionally, boys at the grammar school will send their enslaved people back home because they aren't "fitting in" and were drinking too much. There is not enough documentation to show the other side of the story: the boys might have been the ones who were caught out drinking and they blamed the enslaved people. Documentation shows that grammar school boys told teachers that it was an enslaved man that convinced them to sneak out to drink, so the enslaved individuals were punished.





1760

A school for black children, free and enslaved, is established in Williamsburg by The Associates of Dr. Bray on the recommendation of Benjamin Franklin. Anne Wager instructs as many as 400 boys and girls during her 14 years as teacher. Wager teaches the students principles of Christianity, deportment, and reading. The curriculum reinforces proslavery ideology, since the school was created to make enslaved people 'better slaves.' The school moves from this site by 1765 and closes in 1774. By the current Brown Hall, slate pencils were found, which indicates that these students might have learned how to write, even though they were only supposed to read, since writing could be potentially dangerous (in writing down own ideas and forging passes). These students, with 30 students per year, were then expected to go and teach their families about Christianity. In 1831, after the Nat Turner's Rebellion, many fear enslaved people uprising. Therefore, after that, it is illegal to teach an enslaved person to read or write.

More here: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/42612683?seq=1>

1769

The governor takes complaints from students about enslaved people and uses these complaints to "correctly" punish them. In 1769, John Byrd, an undergraduate, picks up a horsewhip and runs after a servant because he wasn't answering his call - even though this was an enslaved man owned by the College

1782

Enslaved people are sold at auctions to afford repairing buildings on campus.

1783

At the end of the Revolution, the state of Virginia enslaved more than 40% of the enslaved individuals in America. Williamsburg itself was 50% residents of color, whether it be enslaved individuals or freemen.

1796

Professor St. George Tucker publishes his quixotic "Dissertation on [the gradual abolition of] Slavery"



Sources:

The Lemon Project (<https://www.wm.edu/sites/lemonproject/>)

The Lemon Project Historical Timeline

(<https://www.wm.edu/sites/lemonproject/researchandresources/historicalline/index.php>)

Ebony and Ivy: Race, Slavery, and the Troubled History of America's Universities by Craig Steven Wilder

The Wren Building 50 Years of African American Education Exhibition

(<https://spotswoodsociety.wixsite.com/tour/great-hall-2018>)

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Thank you so much to the Lemon Project for doing this important research!