

less included many very poor men who left no future prospects at all behind them.

In other ways as well, the servants on the *Ark* resembled those who came later. They evidently were young and unmarried. No one who left evidence of when he was born was over twenty-five at departure and two were only ten. Only one brought a wife over later. They were mostly illiterate. Only fifteen men left indications that they could read or write. The majority, furthermore, had already spent time in England as servants or apprentices. After age fourteen, young men and women usually left home to learn a craft or a trade or to hire themselves out as servants until they could marry and establish their own homes.³⁶

Why did these young people go on the *Ark*? Did they know that they more than likely faced an early death? Did they know that their conditions of service would be much harsher than those they had known at home? In England a servant on a farm promised to work for only a year at a time and could then leave a master he disliked. The servant going to Maryland sold at least three years of his labor to pay for his passage. Consequently he not only served a longer term but his labor could be bought and sold without his consent.³⁷ Work, food, and shelter were all to be different from what he was used to, and all family and kin were going to be thousands of miles away.

It is well known that today the young never believe that they will die, whatever they supposedly know about the risks of life. Perhaps the same was true 350 years ago. Besides, many died young in seventeenth-century England. Nor do the young fear hardship in the face of adventure, or the enterprising anticipate that bad luck