

## Becoming an Indentured Servant

Many people became indentured servants as a way to come to the English colonies. They signed a contract agreeing to work for several years for the person who paid their passage. At the end of the period, they would be free. A young girl named Aulkey Hubertse signed the following contract in New York in 1710. As you read, think about the responsibilities of servant and master.

**T**his indenture witnesses that Aulkey Hubertse of Rensselaerwyck, daughter of the [dead] John Hubertse, has bound herself as a house servant. She has of her own free will bound herself as a house servant to John Delemont, a weaver of the City of Albany. The deacons of the Reformed Dutch Church have given their consent. She will serve from the date of these present indentures [1710] until she shall come of age.

During this term the servant shall serve her master faithfully. She shall keep his secrets and gladly obey his lawful commands. She shall do no damage to her master nor see it done by others without telling her master. She shall not waste her master's goods, nor lend them unlawfully to anyone.

At cards, dice, or any other game she shall not play. She shall not buy or sell her own goods or the goods of others during the term. She shall not be absent day or night from her master's service without his permission. She shall not go to ale-houses, taverns, or playhouses. In all things she shall behave as a faithful servant.

And the master, during the term, shall provide enough meat and drink, washing, lodging, and clothing. He shall also provide all other necessities fit for such a servant.

It is further agreed between the master and servant that in case Aulkey Hubertse should marry before she shall come of age, then the servant is free from her service.

At the end of her service, John Delemont shall deliver to the servant clothes fit for wearing on the Lord's Day as well as on working days. This includes both linen and woolen stockings and shoes and other necessities. For the true performance of all and every part of this agreement, the two parties bind themselves to each other.

Adapted from *Colonial Days in Old New York* by Alice Morse Earle, (1896), as found in Beth Millstein and Jeanne Bodin, *We, the American Women* (Chicago: Science Research Associates, Inc., 1977).

### Analyzing Primary Sources

1. How could Aulkey Hubertse have become free before her service was over?
2. In what ways is John Delemont responsible for his servant?
3. **Critical Thinking** Do you think this contract is fair? Explain your answer.