

Their Servants, they distinguish by the Names of Slaves for Life, and Servants for a time. Slaves are the Negroes, and their Posterity, following the condition of the Mother, according to the Maxim, partus sequitur ventrem. They are call'd Slaves, in Respect of the Time of their Servitude, because it is for Life. Servants are those which serve only for a few Years, according to the time of their Indenture or the Custom of the Country.

-Robert Beverly, "The History and Present State of Virginia" (1705) excerpt.