



Bristol Register of Servants Sent to Foreign Plantations Oaksey

1657

Date	Name	Abode	To	Trade	Period	Location
21 December	John Timbrell	Oaksey, Wilts	Edward Alford	Cooper	4 years	Barbados

OPC Note:--

On 29th September 1654 the Council of the City of Bristol enacted an ordinance requiring that a system of enrolment be set up to record the names of all indentured servants embarking from the port of Bristol for service overseas. On the very next day the first entry was penned in what was to become the register known as *Servants to Foreign Plantations*. The need for a scrupulous tally arose from the long-standing and notorious practice of kidnapping, inveigling, and bribing youngsters onto ships bound for the labour-hungry colonies, there to be sold at good profit. Nor was the practice without weighty precedent, for as early as 1619 the State had connived at the rounding up of vagrant children in London and their forcible shipment to Virginia; but when private enterprise adopted similar measures, the State took exception and prosecuted those responsible. Nevertheless, forcible shipment of servants, indentured or not, continued apace. An Order of Parliament of 9th May 1645 required officers and justices to exercise diligence in apprehending those responsible for the kidnapping and shipping of children, and the City Fathers of Bristol may, perhaps, be considered negligent in having allowed nine years to pass before regulating these matters.

Extract from "The Bristol Registers" by Peter Wilson Coldham