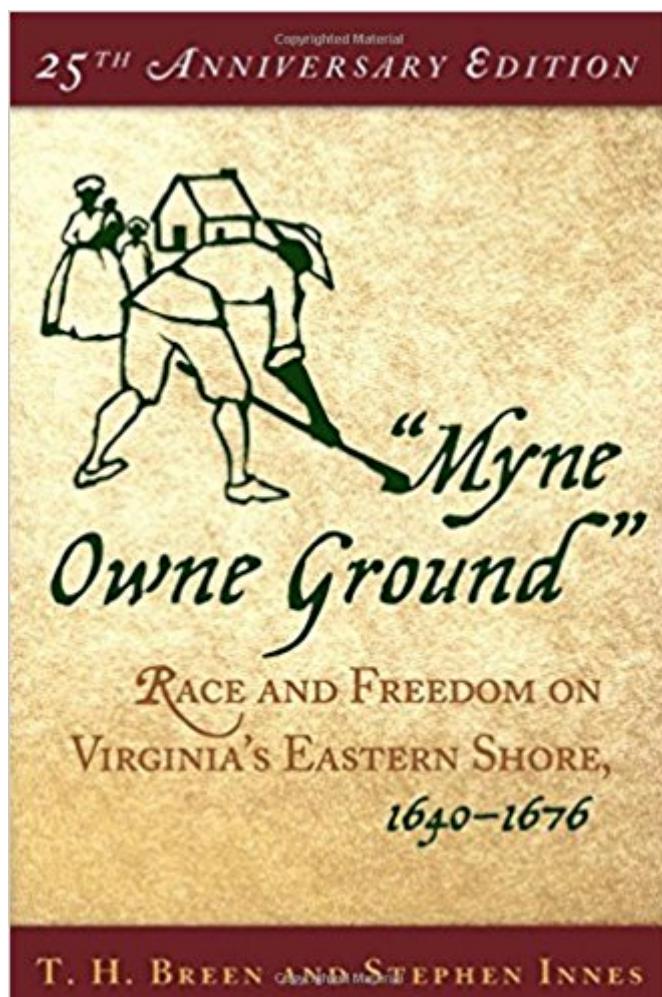


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# "Myne Owne Ground": Race And Freedom On Virginia's Eastern Shore, 1640-1676



## Synopsis

Ever since its publication twenty-five years ago, "Myne Owne Ground" has challenged readers to rethink much of what is taken for granted about American race relations. During the earliest decades of Virginia history, some men and women who arrived in the New World as slaves achieved freedom and formed a stable community on the Eastern shore. Holding their own with white neighbors for much of the 17th century, these free blacks purchased freedom for family members, amassed property, established plantations, and acquired laborers. T.H. Breen and Stephen Innes reconstruct a community in which ownership of property was as significant as skin color in structuring social relations. Why this model of social interaction in race relations did not survive makes this a critical and urgent work of history. In a new foreword, Breen and Innes reflect on the origins of this book, setting it into the context of Atlantic and particularly African history.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"This fascinating account proves that for a couple of generations in seventeenth-century Virginia the two races lived fairly comfortably side by side....It is an extraordinary and convincing story."--The New York Review of Books"[Breen and Innes] have pieced together sufficient details relating to the lives of some of these blacks to establish firstly that skin colour was not originally an absolute impediment to social advancement, and secondly that the white immigrant population on Virginia's eastern shore were not averse to accepting as social equals blacks who had recently purchased their freedom from slavery."--The Historical Journal"A thorough exploitation of available sources

coupled with a sophisticated understanding of the difficult issues confronting those trying to unravel the complexities of early American race relations....[Breen and Innes] have reminded us of forgotten alternatives in this society's racial odyssey."--The Journal of Southern History

T. H. Breen is at Northwestern University. Stephen Innes is at University of Virginia.

This was a fascinating investigation into the lives of black freed-men on a specific peninsula along the coast of Virginia before Bacon's Rebellion. The discussion includes information on indentured servitude as well. I found the authors refreshingly objective, providing candid opinion. Something that impressed me was that I didn't understand the extent to which indentured servitude was like temporary slavery. At one point, white runaway servants were captured and through court order were whipped and branded in the face with an R. They were considered property.

It's always assumed that Africans were treated poorly when they arrived in America. This book provides evidence to the contrary. The premise of the book is that there was a time in which Americans of African heritage were not only NOT treated as animals, but were equals in society, able to hold land, animals and even slaves! The authors focus on one area of the Virginia colony and the court records that can be found for that area. The book is a quick and easy read and does not presuppose any kind of advanced knowledge of American History. The narratives contained in the story will open your eyes as to the beginnings of the American spirit and renew your faith in the American way.

Good read. I always love discovering an alternative perspective.

Had to read for history class, but there were many interesting stories. This product came on time, in good condition. It helped with school and I didn't expect anything more. I do not recommend reading for entertainment purposes, but I am not a huge book reader. =]

An excellent view of free black colonist in 17th Century in eastern shore Virginia.

A very interesting slice of history regarding slavery and the fact that some Africans were actually free and land owners in the 1700s in VA. Of course this changed once the slave trade moved into full swing. I thought it was very interesting.

This is a great quick great read on little known American history. Well used in adding depth to any Virginia history class or any other covering early European colonies in North America.

I had read this book and decided to purchase for my research library. I found this to be an excellent discussion of the topic.

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