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GIVE ME LIBERTY!



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AN AMERICAN HISTORY

THIRD EDITION



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Creating Anglo-America, 1660–1750

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Charles Town Harbor, *a watercolor painted around 1740 by the artist Bishop Roberts, depicts the flourishing major port city of South Carolina. The ships all fly British flags, since the Navigation Acts prevented foreign vessels from carrying the colony's main export, rice. South Carolina was home to the wealthiest elite in Britain's mainland colonies, and ships carried imported luxury goods for them from Great Britain.*

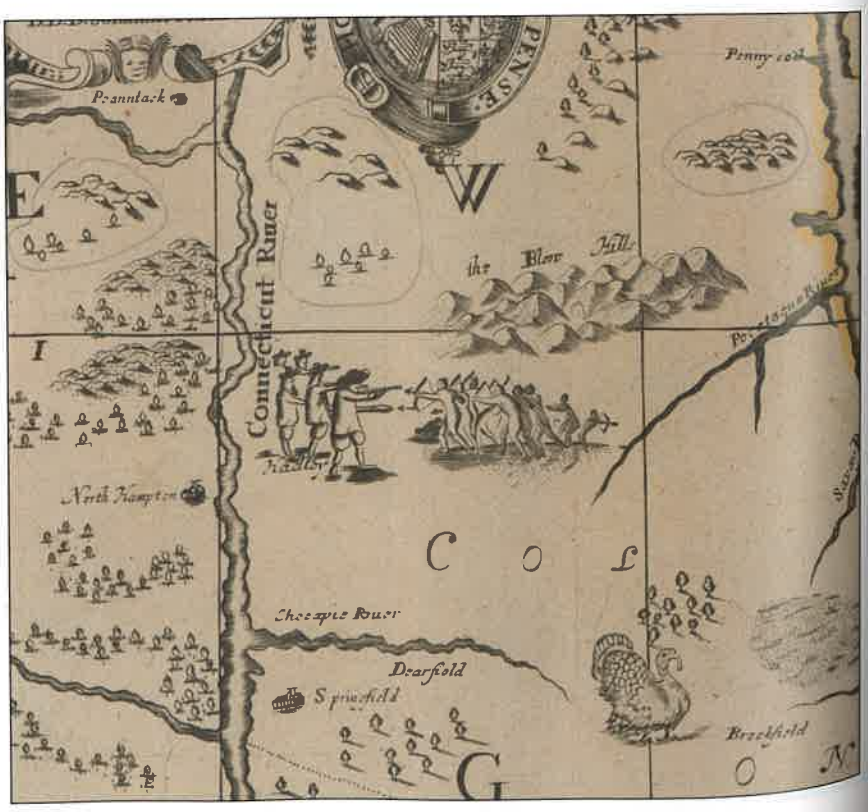
Focus Questions

- How did the English empire in America expand in the mid-seventeenth century?
- How was slavery established in the Western Atlantic world?
- What major social and political crises rocked the colonies in the late seventeenth century?
- What were the directions of social and economic change in the eighteenth-century colonies?
- How did patterns of class and gender roles change in eighteenth-century America?

On the last quarter of the seventeenth century, a series of crises rocked the European colonies of North America. Social and political tensions boiled over in sometimes ruthless conflicts between rich and poor, free and slave, settler and Indian, and members of different religious groups. At the same time, struggles within and between European empires echoed in the colonies. Aggrieved groups seized upon the language of freedom to advance their goals. Although each conflict had its own local causes, taken together they added up to a general crisis of colonial society in the area that would become the United States.

The bloodiest and most bitter conflict occurred in southern New England, where in 1675 an Indian alliance launched attacks on farms and settlements that were encroaching on Indian lands. It was the most dramatic and violent warfare in the region in the entire seventeenth century.

New Englanders described the Wampanoag leader Metacom (known to the colonists as King Philip) as the uprising's mastermind, although in fact most tribes fought under their own leaders. By this time, the white population considerably outnumbered the Indians. But the fate of the New England colonies hung in the balance for several months. By 1676, Indian forces had attacked nearly half of New England's ninety towns. Twelve in Massachusetts were destroyed. As refugees fled eastward, the line of settlement was pushed back almost to the Atlantic coast. Some



A scene from King Philip's War, included on a 1675 map of New England.

1,000 settlers, out of a population of 52,000, and 3,000 of New England's 20,000 Indians, perished in the fighting.

In mid-1676, the tide of battle turned and a ferocious counterattack broke the Indians' power once and for all. Although the uprising united numerous tribes, others remained loyal to the colonists. The role of the Iroquois in providing essential military aid to the colonists helped to solidify their developing alliance with the government of New York. Together, colonial and Indian forces inflicted devastating punishment on the rebels. Metacom was captured and executed, Indian villages destroyed, and captives, including men, women, and children, killed or sold into slavery in the West Indies. Most of the survivors fled to Canada or New York. Even the "praying Indians"—about 2,000 Indians who had converted to Christianity and lived in autonomous communities under Puritan supervision—suffered. Removed from their towns to Deer Island in Boston Harbor, supposedly for their own protection, many perished from disease and lack of food. Both sides committed atrocities in this merciless conflict, but in its aftermath the image of Indians as bloodthirsty savages became firmly entrenched in the New England mind.

In the long run, King Philip's war produced a broadening of freedom for white New Englanders by expanding their access to land. But this freedom rested on the final dispossession of the region's Indians.

GLOBAL COMPETITION AND THE EXPANSION OF ENGLAND'S EMPIRE

THE MERCANTILIST SYSTEM

As the New World became a battleground in European nations' endless contests for wealth and power, England moved to seize control of Atlantic trade, solidify its hold on North America's eastern coast, and exert greater control over its empire. By the middle of the seventeenth century, it was apparent that the colonies could be an important source of wealth for the mother country. According to the prevailing theory known as "mercantilism," the government should regulate economic activity so as to promote national power. It should encourage manufacturing and commerce by special bounties, monopolies, and other measures. Above all, trade should be controlled so that more gold and silver flowed into the country than left it. That is, exports of goods, which generated revenue from abroad, should exceed imports, which required paying foreigners for their products. In the mercantilist outlook, the role of colonies was to serve the interests of the mother country by producing marketable raw materials and importing manufactured goods from home. "Foreign trade," declared an influential work written in 1664 by a London merchant, formed the basis of "England's treasure." Commerce, not territorial plunder, was the foundation of empire.

Under Oliver Cromwell, as noted in Chapter 2, Parliament passed in 1651



By the early eighteenth century, numerous English colonies populated eastern North America, while the French had established their own presence to the north and west.

the first Navigation Act, which aimed to wrest control of world trade from the Dutch, whose merchants profited from free trade with all parts of the world and all existing empires. Additional measures followed in 1660 and 1663. England's new economic policy, mercantilism, rested on the idea that England should enjoy the profits arising from the English empire.

According to the Navigation laws, certain "enumerated" goods—essentially

the most valuable colonial products, such as tobacco and sugar—had to be transported in English ships and sold initially in English ports, although they could then be re-exported to foreign markets. Similarly, most European goods imported into the colonies had to be shipped through England, where customs duties were paid. This enabled English merchants, manufacturers, shipbuilders, and sailors to reap the benefits of colonial trade, and the government to enjoy added income from taxes. As members of the empire, American colonies would profit as well, since their ships were considered English. Indeed, the Navigation Acts stimulated the rise of New England's shipbuilding industry.

THE CONQUEST OF NEW NETHERLAND

The restoration of the English monarchy when Charles II assumed the throne in 1660 sparked a new period of colonial expansion. The government chartered new trading ventures, notably the Royal African Company, which was given a monopoly of the slave trade. Within a generation, the number of English colonies in North America doubled. First to come under English control was New Netherland, seized in 1664 during an Anglo-Dutch war that also saw England gain control of Dutch trading posts in Africa. King Charles II awarded the colony to his younger brother James, the duke of York, with "full and absolute power" to govern as he pleased. (Hence the colony's name became New York.)

New Netherland always remained peripheral to the far-flung Dutch empire. The Dutch fought to retain their holdings in Africa, Asia, and South America, but they surrendered New Netherland in 1664 without a fight. English rule transformed this minor military base into an important imperial outpost, a seaport trading with the Caribbean and Europe, and a launching pad for military operations against the French. New York's European population, around 9,000 when the English assumed control, rose to 20,000 by 1685.

NEW YORK AND THE RIGHTS OF ENGLISHMEN AND ENGLISHWOMEN

English rule expanded the freedom of some New Yorkers, while reducing that of others. The terms of surrender guaranteed that the English would respect the religious toleration and property holdings of the colony's many ethnic communities. But English law ended the Dutch tradition by which married women conducted business in their own name and inherited some of the property acquired during marriage. As colonists of Dutch origin adapted to English rule, their wills directed more attention to advancing the fortunes of their sons than providing for their wives and daughters. There had been many female traders in New Amsterdam (often widows who had inherited a deceased husband's property), but few remained by the end of the seventeenth century.

The English also introduced more restrictive attitudes toward blacks. In colonial New York City, as in New Amsterdam, those residents who enjoyed the status of "freeman," obtained by birth in the city or by an act of local authorities, enjoyed special privileges compared to others, including the right to work in various trades. But the English, in a reversal of Dutch practice, expelled free blacks from many skilled jobs.



An engraving representing the Grand Council of the Iroquois Nations of the area of present-day upstate New York. From a book about American Indians published in Paris by a Jesuit missionary, who depicts the Indians in the attire of ancient Romans. Note the prevalence of wampum belts in the image, in the foreground and in the hand and at the feet of the central figure. Wampum was used to certify treaties and other transactions.

Others benefited enormously from English rule. The duke of York and his appointed governors continued the Dutch practice of awarding immense land grants to favorites, including 160,000 acres to Robert Livingston and 90,000 to Frederick Philipse. By 1700, nearly 2 million acres of land were owned by only five New York families who intermarried regularly, exerted considerable political influence, and formed one of colonial America's most tightly knit landed elites.

NEW YORK AND THE INDIANS

Initially, English rule also strengthened the position of the Iroquois Confederacy of upstate New York. After a complex series of negotiations in the mid-1670s, Sir Edmund Andros, who had been appointed governor of New York after fighting the French in the Caribbean, formed an alliance known as the Covenant Chain, in which the imperial ambitions of the English and Indians reinforced one another. The Five (later Six) Iroquois Nations assisted Andros in clearing parts of New York of rival tribes and helped the British in attacks on the French and their Indian allies. Andros, for his part, recognized the Iroquois claim to authority over Indian communities in the vast area stretching to the Ohio River. But beginning in the 1680s, Indians around the Great Lakes and Ohio Valley regrouped and with French aid attacked the Iroquois, pushing them to the east. By the end of the century, the Iroquois Nations adopted a policy of careful neutrality, seeking to play the European empires off one another while continuing to profit from the fur trade.

THE CHARTER OF LIBERTIES

Many colonists, meanwhile, began to complain that they were being denied the "liberties of Englishmen," especially the right to consent to taxation.

There had been no representative assembly under the Dutch, and the governors appointed by the duke of York at first ruled without one. Discontent was especially strong on Long Island, which had been largely settled by New Englanders used to self-government.

In 1683, the duke agreed to call an elected assembly, whose first act was to draft a Charter of Liberties and Privileges. The Charter required that elections be held every three years among male property owners and the freemen of New York City; it also reaffirmed traditional English rights such as trial by jury and security of property, as well as religious toleration for all Protestants. In part, the Charter reflected an effort by newer English colonists to assert dominance over older Dutch settlers by establishing the principle that the "liberties" to which New Yorkers were entitled were those enjoyed by Englishmen at home.

THE FOUNDING OF CAROLINA

For more than three decades after the establishment of Maryland in 1634, no new English settlement was planted in North America. Then, in 1663, Charles II awarded to eight proprietors the right to establish a colony to the north of Florida, as a barrier to Spanish expansion. Not until 1670 did the first settlers arrive to found Carolina. In its early years, Carolina was the "colony of a colony." It began as an offshoot of the tiny island of Barbados. In the mid-seventeenth century, Barbados was the Caribbean's richest plantation economy, but a shortage of available land led wealthy planters to seek opportunities in Carolina for their sons. At first, Carolinians armed friendly Indians, employing them on raids into Spanish Florida, and enslaved others, shipping them to other mainland colonies and the West Indies. Indeed, between 1670 and 1720, the number of Indian slaves exported from Charleston was larger than the number of African slaves imported. In 1715, the Yamasee and Creek, alarmed by the enormous debts they had incurred in trade with the settlers and by slave traders' raids into their territory, rebelled. The uprising was crushed, and most of the remaining Indians were enslaved or driven out of the colony into Spanish Florida, from where they occasionally launched raids against English settlements.

The Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina, issued by the proprietors in 1669, proposed to establish a feudal society with a hereditary nobility (with strange titles like landgraves and caciques), serfs, and slaves. Needing to attract settlers quickly, however, the proprietors also provided for an elected assembly and religious toleration—by now recognized as essential to enticing migrants to North America. They also instituted a generous headright system, offering 150 acres for each member of an arriving family (in the case of indentured servants, of course, the land went to the employer) and 100 acres to male servants who completed their terms.

None of the baronies envisioned in the Fundamental Constitutions was actually established. Slavery, not feudalism, made Carolina an extremely hierarchical society. The proprietors instituted a rigorous legal code that promised slaveowners "absolute power and authority" over their human property and included imported slaves in the headright system. This allowed any persons who settled in Carolina and brought with them slaves, including planters from Barbados who resettled in the colony, instantly to

acquire large new landholdings. In its early days, however, the economy centered on cattle raising and trade with local Indians, not agriculture. Carolina grew slowly until planters discovered the staple—rice—that would make them the wealthiest elite in English North America and their colony an epicenter of mainland slavery.

THE HOLY EXPERIMENT

The last English colony to be established in the seventeenth century was Pennsylvania. The proprietor, William Penn, envisioned it as a place where those facing religious persecution in Europe could enjoy spiritual freedom, and colonists and Indians would coexist in harmony. Penn's late father had been a supporter and creditor of Charles II. To cancel his debt to the Penn family and bolster the English presence in North America, the king in 1681 granted Penn a vast tract of land south and west of New York, as well as the old Swedish-Dutch colony that became Delaware.

A devout member of the Society of Friends, or Quakers, Penn was particularly concerned with establishing a refuge for his coreligionists, who faced increasing persecution in England. He had already assisted a group of English Quakers in purchasing half of what became the colony of New Jersey from Lord John Berkeley, who had received a land grant from the duke of York. Penn was largely responsible for the frame of government announced in 1677, the West Jersey Concessions, one of the most liberal of the era. Based on Quaker ideals, it created an elected assembly with a broad suffrage and established religious liberty. Penn hoped that West Jersey would become a society of small farmers, not large landowners.

An early eighteenth-century engraving depicts William Penn welcoming a German immigrant on the dock in Philadelphia. Penn sought to make migrants from all over Europe feel at home in Pennsylvania.



QUAKER LIBERTY

Like the Puritans, Penn considered his colony a "holy experiment," but of a different kind—"a free colony for all mankind that should go hither." He hoped that Pennsylvania could be governed according to Quaker principles, among them the equality of all persons (including women, blacks, and Indians) before God and the primacy of the individual conscience. To Quakers, liberty was a universal entitlement, not the possession of any single people—a position that would eventually make them the first group of whites to repudiate slavery. Penn also treated Indians with a consideration almost unique in the colonial experience, arranging to purchase land before reselling it to colonists and offering refuge to tribes driven out of other colonies by warfare. Sometimes, he even purchased the same land twice, when more than one Indian tribe claimed it. Since Quakers were pacifists who came to America unarmed and did not even organize a militia until the 1740s, peace with the native population was essential. Penn's Chain of Friendship appealed to the local Indians, promising protection from rival tribes who claimed domination over them.

Religious freedom was Penn's most fundamental principle. He condemned attempts to enforce "religious Uniformity" for

depriving thousands of "free inhabitants" of England of the right to worship as they desired. His Charter of Liberty, approved by the assembly in 1682, offered "Christian liberty" to all who affirmed a belief in God and did not use their freedom to promote "licentiousness." There was no established church in Pennsylvania, and attendance at religious services was entirely voluntary, although Jews were barred from office by a required oath affirming belief in the divinity of Jesus Christ. At the same time, the Quakers upheld a strict code of personal morality. Penn's Frame of Government prohibited swearing, drunkenness, and adultery, as well as popular entertainments of the era such as "revels, bull-baiting, and cockfighting." Private religious belief may not have been enforced by the government, but moral public behavior certainly was. Not religious uniformity but a virtuous citizenry would be the foundation of Penn's social order.



A Quaker Meeting, *a painting by an unidentified British artist, dating from the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century. It illustrates the prominent place of women in Quaker gatherings.*

LAND IN PENNSYLVANIA

Given the power to determine the colony's form of government, Penn established an appointed council to originate legislation and an assembly elected by male taxpayers and "freemen" (owners of 100 acres of land for free immigrants and 50 acres for former indentured servants). These rules made a majority of the male population eligible to vote. Penn owned all the colony's land and sold it to settlers at low prices rather than granting it outright. Like other proprietors, he expected to turn a profit, and like most of them, he never really did. But if Penn did not prosper, Pennsylvania did. A majority of the early settlers were Quakers from the British Isles. But Pennsylvania's religious toleration, healthy climate, and inexpensive land, along with Penn's aggressive efforts to publicize the colony's advantages, soon attracted immigrants from all over western Europe.

Ironically, the freedoms Pennsylvania offered to European immigrants contributed to the deterioration of freedom for others. The colony's successful efforts to attract settlers would eventually come into conflict with Penn's benevolent Indian policy. And the opening of Pennsylvania led to an immediate decline in the number of indentured servants choosing to sail for Virginia and Maryland, a development that did much to shift those colonies toward reliance on slave labor.

ORIGINS OF AMERICAN SLAVERY

No European nation, including England, embarked on the colonization of the New World with the intention of relying on African slaves for the bulk of its labor force. But the incessant demand for workers spurred by the spread of tobacco cultivation eventually led Chesapeake planters to turn to the transatlantic trade in slaves. Compared with indentured servants, slaves offered planters many advantages. As Africans, they could not claim the protections of English common law. Slaves' terms of service never expired, and they therefore did not become a population of unruly landless men. Their

children were slaves, and their skin color made it more difficult for them to escape into the surrounding society. African men, moreover, unlike their Native American counterparts, were accustomed to intensive agricultural labor, and they had encountered many diseases known in Europe and developed resistance to them, so were less likely to succumb to epidemics.

ENGLISHMEN AND AFRICANS

The English had long viewed alien peoples with disdain, including the Irish, Native Americans, and Africans. They described these strangers in remarkably similar language as savage, pagan, and uncivilized, often comparing them to animals. "Race"—the idea that humanity is divided into well-defined groups associated with skin color—is a modern concept that had not fully developed in the seventeenth century. Nor had "racism"—an ideology based on the belief that some races are inherently superior to others and entitled to rule over them. The main lines of division within humanity were thought to be civilization versus barbarism or Christianity versus heathenism, not color or race.

Nonetheless, anti-black stereotypes flourished in seventeenth-century England. Africans were seen as so alien—in color, religion, and social practices—that they were "enslavable" in a way that poor Englishmen were not. Most English also deemed Indians to be uncivilized. But the Indian population declined so rapidly, and it was so easy for Indians, familiar with the countryside, to run away, that Indian slavery never became viable. Some Indians were sold into slavery in the Caribbean. But it is difficult to enslave a people on their native soil. Slaves are almost always outsiders, transported from elsewhere to their place of labor.

SLAVERY IN HISTORY

Slavery has existed for nearly the entire span of human history. It was central to the societies of ancient Greece and Rome. Slavery survived for centuries in northern Europe after the collapse of the Roman Empire. Germans, Vikings, and Anglo-Saxons all held slaves. Slavery persisted even longer in the Mediterranean world, where a slave trade in Slavic peoples survived into the fifteenth century. (The English word "slavery" derives from "Slav.") Pirates from the Barbary Coast of North Africa regularly seized Christians from ships and enslaved them. In West Africa, as noted in Chapter 1, slavery and a slave trade predated the coming of Europeans, and small-scale slavery existed among Native Americans. But slavery in nearly all these instances differed greatly from the institution that developed in the New World.

In the Americas, slavery was based on the plantation, an agricultural enterprise that brought together large numbers of workers under the control of a single owner. This imbalance magnified the possibility of slave resistance and made it necessary to police the system rigidly. It encouraged the creation of a sharp boundary between slavery and freedom. Labor on slave plantations was far more demanding than in the household slavery common in Africa, and the death rate among slaves much higher. In the New World, slavery would come to be associated with race, a concept that drew a permanent line between whites and blacks. Unlike in Africa, slaves who became free always carried with them in their skin color the mark of



Cutting Sugar Cane *an engraving from* Ten Views in Antigua, *published in 1823. Male and female slaves harvest and load the sugar crop while an overseer on horseback addresses a slave. During the eighteenth century, sugar was the chief crop produced by Western Hemisphere slaves.*

bondage—a visible sign of being considered unworthy of incorporation as equals into free society.

SLAVERY IN THE WEST INDIES

A sense of Africans as alien and inferior made their enslavement by the English possible. But prejudice by itself did not create North American slavery. For this institution to take root, planters and government authorities had to be convinced that importing African slaves was the best way to solve their persistent shortage of labor. During the seventeenth century, the shipping of slaves from Africa to the New World became a major international business. But only a relative handful were brought to England's mainland colonies. By the time plantation slavery became a major feature of life in English North America, it was already well entrenched elsewhere in the Western Hemisphere. By 1600, huge sugar plantations worked by slaves from Africa had made their appearance in Brazil, a colony of Portugal. In the seventeenth century, England, Holland, Denmark, and France joined Spain as owners of West Indian islands. English emigrants to the West Indies outnumbered those to North America in the first part of the seventeenth century. In 1650, the English population of the West Indies exceeded that in all of North America. Generally, the first settlers established mixed economies with small farms worked by white indentured servants. But as sugar planters engrossed the best land, they forced white farmers off island after island. White indentured servants proved as discontented as elsewhere. In 1629, when a Spanish expedition attacked the British island of Nevis, servants in the local militia joined them shouting, "Liberty, joyful liberty!"

With the Indian population having been wiped out by disease, and with the white indentured servants unwilling to do the back-breaking, monotonous work of sugar cultivation, the massive importation of slaves



An engraving from Charles de Rochefort's Histoire Naturelle et Morale des Îles Antilles de l'Amerique *(1665), depicts a sugar mill powered by cattle, with slaves feeding the cane into rollers, which grind it to crush out the juice. The text describes how the various parts of the machinery work.*

from Africa began. In 1645, for example, Barbados, a tiny island owned by England, was home to around 11,000 white farmers and indentured servants and 5,000 slaves. As sugar cultivation intensified, planters turned increasingly to slave labor. By 1660, the island's population had grown to 40,000, half European and half African. Ten years later, the slave population had risen to 82,000, concentrated on some 750 sugar plantations. Meanwhile, the white population stagnated. By the end of the seventeenth century, huge sugar plantations manned by hundreds of slaves dominated the West Indian economy, and on most of the islands the African population far outnumbered that of European origin.

Sugar was the first crop to be mass-marketed to consumers in Europe. Before its emergence, international trade consisted largely of precious metals like gold and silver, and luxury goods aimed at an elite market, like the spices and silks imported from Asia. Sugar was by far the most important product of the British, French, and Portugese empires, and New World sugar plantations produced immense profits for planters, merchants, and imperial governments. Saint Domingue, today's Haiti, was the jewel of the French empire. In 1660, Barbados generated more trade than all the other English colonies combined.

Compared to its rapid introduction in Brazil and the West Indies, slavery developed slowly in North America. Slaves cost more than indentured servants, and the high death rate among tobacco workers made it economically unappealing to pay for a lifetime of labor. For decades, servants from England formed the backbone of the Chesapeake labor force, and the number of Africans remained small. As late as 1680, there were only 4,500 blacks in the Chesapeake, a little over 5 percent of the region's population. The most important social distinction in the seventeenth-century Chesapeake was not between black and white but between the white plantation owners who dominated politics and society and everybody else—small farmers, indentured servants, and slaves.

SLAVERY AND THE LAW

Centuries before the voyages of Columbus, Spain had enacted *Las Siete Partidas*, a series of laws granting slaves certain rights relating to marriage, the holding of property, and access to freedom. These laws were transferred to Spain's American empire. They were often violated, but nonetheless gave slaves opportunities to claim rights under the law. Moreover, the Catholic Church often encouraged masters to free individual slaves. The law of slavery in English North America would become far more repressive than in the Spanish empire, especially on the all-important question of whether avenues existed by which slaves could obtain freedom.

For much of the seventeenth century, however, the legal status of Chesapeake blacks remained ambiguous and the line between slavery and freedom more permeable than it would later become. The first Africans, twenty in all, arrived in Virginia in 1619. British pirates sailing under the Dutch flag had seized them from a Portuguese ship carrying slaves from Angola, on the southwestern coast of Africa, to modern-day Mexico. Small numbers followed in subsequent years. Although the first black arrivals were almost certainly treated as slaves, it appears that at least some managed to become free after serving a term of years. To be sure, racial distinctions were enacted into law from the outset. As early as the 1620s, the law barred blacks from serving in the Virginia militia. The government punished sexual relations outside of marriage between Africans and Europeans more severely than the same acts involving two white persons. In 1643, a poll tax (a tax levied on individuals) was imposed on African but not white women. In both Virginia and Maryland, however, free blacks could sue and testify in court, and some even managed to acquire land and purchase white servants or African slaves. It is not known exactly how Anthony Johnson, who apparently arrived in Virginia as a slave during the 1620s, obtained his freedom. But by the 1640s, he was the owner of slaves and of several hundred acres of land on Virginia's eastern shore. Blacks and whites labored side by side in the tobacco fields, sometimes ran away together, and established intimate relationships.

THE RISE OF CHESAPEAKE SLAVERY

Evidence of blacks being held as slaves for life appears in the historical record of the 1640s. In registers of property, for example, white servants are listed by the number of years of labor, while blacks, with higher valuations, have no terms of service associated with their names. Not until the 1660s, however, did the laws of Virginia and Maryland refer explicitly to slavery. As tobacco planting spread and the demand for labor increased, the condition of black and white servants diverged sharply. Authorities sought to



In this scene depicted on an English handkerchief, male and female slaves work in the tobacco fields alongside a white indentured servant (right).

improve the status of white servants, hoping to counteract the widespread impression in England that Virginia was a death trap. At the same time, access to freedom for blacks receded.

A Virginia law of 1662 provided that in the case of a child one of whose parents was free and one slave, the status of the offspring followed that of the mother. (This provision not only reversed the European practice of defining a child's status through the father but also made the sexual abuse of slave women profitable for slaveholders, since any children that resulted remained the owner's property.) In 1667, the Virginia House of Burgesses decreed that religious conversion did not release a slave from bondage. Thus, Christians could own other Christians as slaves. Moreover, authorities sought to prevent the growth of the free black population by defining all offspring of interracial relationships as illegitimate, severely punishing white women who begat children with black men, and prohibiting the freeing of any slave unless he or she were transported out of the colony. By 1680, even though the black population was still small, notions of racial difference were well entrenched in the law. In England's American empire, wrote one contemporary, "these two words, Negro and Slave [have] by custom grown homogenous and convertible." In British North America, unlike the Spanish empire, no distinctive mulatto, or mixed-race, class existed; the law treated everyone with African ancestry as black.

BACON'S REBELLION: LAND AND LABOR IN VIRGINIA

Virginia's shift from white indentured servants to African slaves as the main plantation labor force was accelerated by one of the most dramatic confrontations of this era, Bacon's Rebellion of 1676. Governor William Berkeley had for thirty years run a corrupt regime in alliance with an inner circle of the colony's wealthiest tobacco planters. He rewarded his followers with land grants and lucrative offices. At first, Virginia's tobacco boom had benefited not only planters but also smaller farmers, some of them former servants who managed to acquire farms. But as tobacco farming spread inland, planters connected with the governor engrossed the best lands, leaving freed servants (a growing population, since Virginia's death rate was finally falling) with no options but to work as tenants or to move to the frontier. At the same time, heavy taxes on tobacco and falling prices because of overproduction reduced the prospects of small farmers. By the 1670s, poverty among whites had reached levels reminiscent of England. In addition, the right to vote, previously enjoyed by all adult men, was confined to landowners in 1670. Governor Berkeley maintained peaceful relations with Virginia's remaining native population. His refusal to allow white settlement in areas reserved for Indians angered many land-hungry colonists.

As early as 1661, a Virginia indentured servant was accused of planning an uprising among those "who would be for liberty and free from bondage." Fifteen years later, long-simmering social tensions coupled with widespread resentment against the injustices of the Berkeley regime erupted in Bacon's Rebellion. The spark was a minor confrontation between Indians and colonists on Virginia's western frontier. Settlers now demanded that the governor authorize the extermination or removal of the colony's Indians, to open more land for whites. Fearing all-out warfare and continu-

ing to profit from the trade with Indians in deerskins, Berkeley refused. An uprising followed that soon careened out of control. Beginning with a series of Indian massacres, it quickly grew into a full-fledged rebellion against Berkeley and his system of rule.

To some extent, Bacon's Rebellion was a conflict within the Virginia elite. The leader, Nathaniel Bacon, a wealthy and ambitious planter who had arrived in Virginia in 1673, disdained Berkeley's coterie as men of "mean education and employments." His backers included men of wealth outside the governor's circle of cronies. But Bacon's call for the removal of all Indians from the colony, a reduction of taxes at a time of economic recession, and an end to rule by "grandees" rapidly gained support from small farmers, landless men, indentured servants, and even some Africans. The bulk of his army consisted of discontented men who had recently been servants.



Sir William Berkeley, governor of colonial Virginia, 1641–1652 and 1660–1677, in a portrait by Sir Peter Lely. Berkeley's authoritarian rule helped to spark Bacon's Rebellion.

THE END OF THE REBELLION, AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

Bacon promised freedom (including access to Indian lands) to all who joined his ranks. His supporters invoked the tradition of "English liberties" and spoke of the poor being "robbed" and "cheated" by their social superiors. In 1676, Bacon gathered an armed force for an unauthorized and indiscriminate campaign against those he called the governor's "protected and darling Indians." He refused Berkeley's order to disband and marched on Jamestown, burning it to the ground. The governor fled, and Bacon became the ruler of Virginia. His forces plundered the estates of Berkeley's supporters. Only the arrival of a squadron of warships from England restored order. Bacon's Rebellion was over. Twenty-three of his supporters were hanged (Bacon himself had taken ill and died shortly after Berkeley's departure).

The specter of a civil war among whites greatly frightened Virginia's ruling elite, who took dramatic steps to consolidate their power and improve their image. They restored property qualifications for voting, which Bacon had rescinded. At the same time, planters developed a new political style in which they cultivated the support of poorer neighbors. Meanwhile, the authorities reduced taxes and adopted a more aggressive Indian policy, opening western areas to small farmers, many of whom prospered from a rise in tobacco prices after 1680. To avert the further rise of a rebellious population of landless former indentured servants, Virginia's authorities accelerated the shift to slaves (who would never become free) on the tobacco plantations. As Virginia reduced the number of indentured servants, it redefined their freedom dues to include fifty acres of land.

A SLAVE SOCIETY

Between 1680 and 1700, slave labor began to supplant indentured servitude on Chesapeake plantations. Bacon's Rebellion was only one among several factors that contributed to this development. As the death rate finally began to fall, it became more economical to purchase a laborer for life. Improving conditions in England reduced the number of transatlantic migrants, and the

opening of Pennsylvania, where land was readily available, attracted those who still chose to leave for America. Finally, the ending of a monopoly on the English slave trade previously enjoyed by the Royal Africa Company opened the door to other traders and reduced the price of imported African slaves.

By 1700, blacks constituted more than 10 percent of Virginia's population. Fifty years later, they made up nearly half. Recognizing the growing importance of slavery, the House of Burgesses in 1705 enacted a new slave code, bringing together the scattered legislation of the previous century and adding new provisions that embedded the principle of white supremacy in the law. Slaves were property, completely subject to the will of their masters and, more generally, of the white community. They could be bought and sold, leased, fought over in court, and passed on to one's descendants. Henceforth, blacks and whites were tried in separate courts. No black, free or slave, could own arms, strike a white man, or employ a white servant. Any white person could apprehend any black to demand a certificate of freedom or a pass from the owner giving permission to be off the plantation. Virginia had changed from a "society with slaves," in which slavery was one system of labor among others, to a "slave society," where slavery stood at the center of the economic process.

NOTIONS OF FREEDOM

One sentiment shared by Europeans, Native Americans, and Africans was fear of enslavement. Throughout history, slaves have run away and in other ways resisted bondage. They did the same in the colonial Chesapeake. Colonial newspapers were filled with advertisements for runaway slaves. These notices described the appearance and skills of the fugitive and included such comments as "ran away without any cause" or "he has great notions of freedom." Some of the blacks brought to the region during the seventeenth century were the offspring of encounters between European traders and Africans on the western coast of Africa or the Caribbean. Familiar with European culture and fluent in English, they turned to the colonial legal system in their quest for freedom. Throughout the seventeenth century, blacks appeared in court claiming their liberty, at first on the basis of conversion to Christianity or having a white father. This was one reason Virginia in the 1660s closed these pathways to freedom. But although legal avenues to liberty receded, the desire for freedom did not. After the suppression of a slave conspiracy in 1709, Alexander Spotswood, the governor of Virginia, warned planters to be vigilant. The desire for freedom, he reminded them, can "call together all those who long to shake off the fetters of slavery."

COLONIES IN CRISIS

King Philip's War of 1675 and Bacon's Rebellion the following year coincided with disturbances in other colonies. In Maryland, where the proprietor, Lord Baltimore, in 1670 had suddenly restricted the right to vote to owners of fifty acres of land or a certain amount of personal property, a Protestant uprising unsuccessfully sought to oust his government and restore the suffrage for all freemen. In several colonies, increasing settlement on the frontier led to resistance by alarmed Indians. A rebellion by Westo Indians

was suppressed in Carolina in 1680. The Pueblo Revolt of the same year (discussed in Chapter 1) indicated that the crisis of colonial authority was not confined to the British empire.

THE GLORIOUS REVOLUTION

Turmoil in England also reverberated in the colonies. In 1688, the long struggle for domination of English government between Parliament and the crown reached its culmination in the Glorious Revolution, which established parliamentary supremacy once and for all and secured the Protestant succession to the throne. Under Charles II, Parliament had asserted its authority in the formation of national policy. It expanded its control of finance, influenced foreign affairs, and excluded from political and religious power Catholics and Dissenters (Protestants who belonged to a denomination other than the official Anglican Church).

When Charles died in 1685, he was succeeded by his brother James II (formerly the duke of York), a practicing Catholic and a believer that kings ruled by divine right. In 1687, James decreed religious toleration for both Protestant Dissenters and Catholics. The following year, the birth of James's son raised the prospect of a Catholic succession, alarming those who equated "popery" with tyranny. A group of English aristocrats invited the Dutch nobleman William of Orange, the husband of James's Protestant daughter Mary, to assume the throne in the name of English liberties. William arrived in England in November 1688 with an army of 21,000 men, two-thirds of them Dutch. As the landed elite and leaders of the Anglican Church rallied to William's cause, James II fled and the revolution was complete.

Unlike the broad social upheaval that marked the English Civil War of the 1640s, the Glorious Revolution was in effect a coup engineered by a small group of aristocrats in alliance with an ambitious Dutch prince. They had no intention of challenging the institution of the monarchy. But the overthrow of James II entrenched more firmly than ever the notion that liberty was the birthright of all Englishmen and that the king was subject to the rule of law. To justify the ouster of James II, Parliament in 1689 enacted a Bill of Rights, which listed parliamentary powers such as control over taxation as well as rights of individuals, including trial by jury. These were the "ancient" and "undoubted . . . rights and liberties" of all Englishmen. In the following year, the Toleration Act allowed Protestant Dissenters (but not Catholics) to worship freely, although only Anglicans could hold public office.

As always, British politics were mirrored in the American colonies. The period from the 1660s to the 1680s had been one of growing religious toleration in both regions, succeeded by a tightening of religious control once William of Orange, a Protestant, became king. Indeed, after the Glorious Revolution, Protestant domination was secured in most of the colonies, with the established churches of England (Anglican) and Scotland (Presbyterian) growing the fastest, while Catholics and Dissenters suffered various forms of discrimination. Despite the new regime's language of liberty, however, religious freedom was far more advanced in some American colonies, such as Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, and Carolina, than in England. Nonetheless, throughout English America the Glorious Revolution powerfully reinforced among the colonists the sense of sharing a proud legacy of freedom and Protestantism with the mother country.

King William III, a portrait by an unknown artist, painted around 1697. William, who came to power in England as a result of the Glorious Revolution, wears an ermine cape.



THE GLORIOUS REVOLUTION IN AMERICA

The Glorious Revolution exposed fault lines in colonial society and offered local elites an opportunity to regain authority that had recently been challenged. Until the mid-1670s, the North American colonies had essentially governed themselves, with little interference from England. Governor Berkeley ran Virginia as he saw fit; proprietors in New York, Maryland, and Carolina governed in any fashion they could persuade colonists to accept; and New England colonies elected their own officials and openly flouted trade regulations. In 1675, England established the Lords of Trade to oversee colonial affairs. Three years later, the Lords questioned the Massachusetts government about its compliance with the Navigation Acts. They received the surprising reply that since the colony had no representatives in Parliament, the Acts did not apply to it unless the Massachusetts General Court approved.

In the 1680s, England moved to reduce colonial autonomy. Shortly before his death, Charles II revoked the Massachusetts charter, citing wholesale violations of the Navigation Acts. Hoping to raise more money from America in order to reduce his dependence on Parliament, James II between 1686 and 1688 combined Connecticut, Plymouth, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, New York, and East and West Jersey into a single super-colony, the Dominion of New England. It was ruled by the former New York governor Sir Edmund Andros, who did not have to answer to an elected assembly. These events reinforced the impression that James II was an enemy of freedom. In New England, Andros's actions alienated nearly everyone not dependent on his administration for favors. He appointed local officials in place of elected ones, imposed taxes without the approval of elected representatives, declared earlier land grants void unless approved by him, and enforced religious toleration for all Protestants. His rule threatened both English liberties and the church-state relationship at the heart of the Puritan order.

THE MARYLAND UPRISING

In 1689, news of the overthrow of James II triggered rebellions in several American colonies. In April, the Boston militia seized and jailed Edmund Andros and other officials, whereupon the New England colonies reestablished the governments abolished when the Dominion of New England was created. In May, a rebel militia headed by Captain Jacob Leisler established a Committee of Safety and took control of New York. Two months later, Maryland's Protestant Association overthrew the government of the colony's Catholic proprietor, Lord Baltimore.

All of these new regimes claimed to have acted in the name of English liberties and looked to London for approval. But the degrees of success of these coups varied markedly. Most triumphant were the Maryland rebels. Concluding that Lord Baltimore had mismanaged the colony, William revoked his charter (although the proprietor retained his land and rents) and established a new, Protestant-dominated government. Catholics retained the right to practice their religion but were barred from voting and holding office. In 1715, after the Baltimore family had converted to Anglicanism, proprietary power was restored. But the events of 1689 transformed the

ruling group in Maryland and put an end to the colony's unique history of religious toleration.

LEISLER'S REBELLION

The outcome in New York was far different. The German-born Leisler, one of the wealthiest merchants in the city, was a fervent Calvinist who feared that James II intended to reduce England and its empire to "popery and slavery." Although it was not his intention, Leisler's regime divided the colony along ethnic and economic lines. Members of the Dutch majority seized the opportunity to reclaim local power after more than two decades of English rule, while bands of rebels ransacked the homes of wealthy New Yorkers. Prominent English colonists, joined by some wealthy Dutch merchants and fur traders, protested to London that Leisler was a tyrant. William refused to recognize Leisler's authority and dispatched a new governor, backed by troops. Many of Leisler's followers were imprisoned, and he himself was condemned to be executed. The grisly manner of his death—Leisler was hanged and then had his head cut off and body cut into four parts—reflected the depths of hatred the rebellion had inspired. For generations, the rivalry between Leisler and anti-Leisler parties polarized New York politics.

CHANGES IN NEW ENGLAND

After deposing Edmund Andros, the New England colonies lobbied hard in London for the restoration of their original charters. Most were successful, but Massachusetts was not. In 1691, the crown issued a new charter that absorbed Plymouth into Massachusetts and transformed the political structure of the Bible Commonwealth. Town government remained intact, but henceforth property ownership, not church membership, would be the requirement to vote in elections for the General Court. The governor was now appointed in London rather than elected. Thus, Massachusetts became a royal colony, the majority of whose voters were no longer Puritan "saints." Moreover, it was required to abide by the English Toleration Act of 1690—that is, to allow all Protestants to worship freely. The demise of the "New England way" greatly benefited non-Puritan merchants and large landowners, who came to dominate the new government.

These events produced an atmosphere of considerable tension in Massachusetts, exacerbated by raids by French troops and their Indian allies on the northern New England frontier. The advent of religious toleration heightened anxieties among the Puritan clergy, who considered other Protestant denominations a form of heresy. "I would not have a hand in setting up their Devil worship," one minister declared of the Quakers. Indeed, not a few Puritans thought they saw the hand of Satan in the events of 1690 and 1691.

THE PROSECUTION OF WITCHES

Belief in magic, astrology, and witchcraft was widespread in seventeenth-century Europe and America, existing alongside the religion of the clergy and churches. Many Puritans believed in supernatural interventions in the affairs of the world. They interpreted as expressions of God's will such events

as lightning that struck one house but spared another, and epidemics that reduced the population of their Indian enemies. Evil forces could also affect daily life. Witches were individuals, usually women, who were accused of having entered into a pact with the devil to obtain supernatural powers, which they used to harm others or to interfere with natural processes. When a child was stillborn or crops failed, many believed that witchcraft was at work.

In Europe and the colonies, witchcraft was punishable by execution. It is estimated that between the years 1400 and 1800, more than 50,000 people were executed in Europe after being convicted of witchcraft. Witches were, from time to time, hanged in seventeenth-century New England. Most were women beyond childbearing age who were outspoken, economically independent, or estranged from their husbands, or who in other ways violated traditional gender norms. The witch's alleged power challenged both God's will and the standing of men as heads of family and rulers of society.

THE SALEM WITCH TRIALS

Until 1692, the prosecution of witches had been local and sporadic. But in the heightened anxiety of that year, a series of trials and executions took place in the town of Salem that made its name to this day a byword for fanaticism and persecution. The crisis began late in 1691 when several young girls began to suffer fits and nightmares, attributed by their elders to witchcraft. Soon, three witches had been named, including Tituba, an Indian from the Caribbean who was a slave in the home of one of the girls. Since the only way to avoid prosecution was to confess and name others, accusations of witchcraft began to snowball. By the middle of 1692, hundreds of residents of Salem had come forward to accuse their neighbors. Some, it appears, used the occasion to settle old scores within the Salem community. Local authorities took legal action against nearly 150 persons, the large majority of them women. Many confessed to save their lives, but fourteen women and five men were hanged, protesting their innocence to the end. One man was pressed to death (crushed under a weight of stones) for refusing to enter a plea.



An illustration from Cotton Mather's 1692 account of witchcraft depicts a witch on her broomstick, accompanied by Satan.

In Salem, accusations of witchcraft spread far beyond the usual profile of middle-aged women to include persons of all ages (one was a child of four) and those with no previous history of assertiveness or marital discord. As accusations and executions multiplied, it became clear that something was seriously wrong with the colony's system of justice. Toward the end of 1692, the governor of Massachusetts dissolved the Salem court and ordered the remaining prisoners released. At the same time, the prominent clergyman Increase Mather published an influential treatise, *Cases of Conscience Concerning Evil Spirits*, warning that juries should not take seriously either the testimony of those who claimed to be possessed or the confessions and accusations of persons facing execution. The events in Salem discredited the tradition of prosecuting witches and accelerated a commitment among prominent

colonists to finding scientific explanations for natural events like comets and illnesses, rather than attributing them to magic. In future years, only two accused witches would be brought to trial in Massachusetts, and both were found not guilty.

THE GROWTH OF COLONIAL AMERICA

The Salem witch trials took place precisely two centuries after Columbus's initial voyage. The Western Hemisphere was dramatically different from the world he had encountered. Powerful states had been destroyed and the native population decimated by disease and in some areas deprived of its land. In North America, three new and very different empires had arisen, competing for wealth and power. The urban-based Spanish empire, with a small settler elite and growing mestizo population directing the labor of a large Indian population, still relied for wealth primarily on the gold and silver mines of Mexico and South America. The French empire centered on Saint Domingue, Martinique, and Guadeloupe, plantation islands of the West Indies. On the mainland, it consisted of a thinly settled string of farms and trading posts in the St. Lawrence Valley. In North America north of the Rio Grande, the English colonies had far outstripped their rivals in population and trade.

As stability returned after the crises of the late seventeenth century, English North America experienced an era of remarkable growth. Between 1700 and 1770, crude backwoods settlements became bustling provincial capitals. Even as epidemics continued in Indian country, the hazards of disease among colonists diminished, agricultural settlement pressed westward, and hundreds of thousands of newcomers arrived from the Old World. Thanks to a high birthrate and continuing immigration, the population of England's mainland colonies, 265,000 in 1700, grew nearly tenfold, to over 2.3 million seventy years later. (It is worth noting, however, that because of the decline suffered by the Indians, the North American population was considerably lower in 1770 than it had been in 1492.)

A DIVERSE POPULATION

Probably the most striking characteristic of colonial American society in the eighteenth century was its sheer diversity. In 1700, the colonies were essentially English outposts. Relatively few Africans had yet been brought to the mainland, and the overwhelming majority of the white population—close to 90 percent—was of English origin. In the eighteenth century, African and non-English European arrivals skyrocketed, while the number emigrating from England declined (see Table 3.1).

As economic conditions in England improved, the government began to rethink the policy of encouraging emigration. No longer concerned with an excess population of vagabonds and "masterless men," authorities began to worry that large-scale emigration was draining labor from the mother country. About 40 percent of European immigrants to the colonies during the eighteenth century continued to arrive as bound laborers who had temporarily sacrificed their freedom to make the voyage

Table 3.1 ORIGINS AND STATUS OF MIGRANTS TO BRITISH NORTH AMERICAN COLONIES, 1700–1775

	Total	Slaves	Indentured Servants	Convicts	Free
Africa	278,400	278,400	—	—	—
Ireland	108,600	—	39,000	17,500	52,100
Germany	84,500	—	30,000	—	54,500
England/Wales	73,100	—	27,200	32,500	13,400
Scotland	35,300	—	7,400	2,200	25,700
Other	5,900	—	—	—	5,900
Total	585,800	278,400	103,600	52,200	151,600

to the New World. But as the colonial economy prospered, poor indentured migrants were increasingly joined by professionals and skilled craftsmen—teachers, ministers, weavers, carpenters—whom England could ill afford to lose. This brought to an end official efforts to promote English emigration.

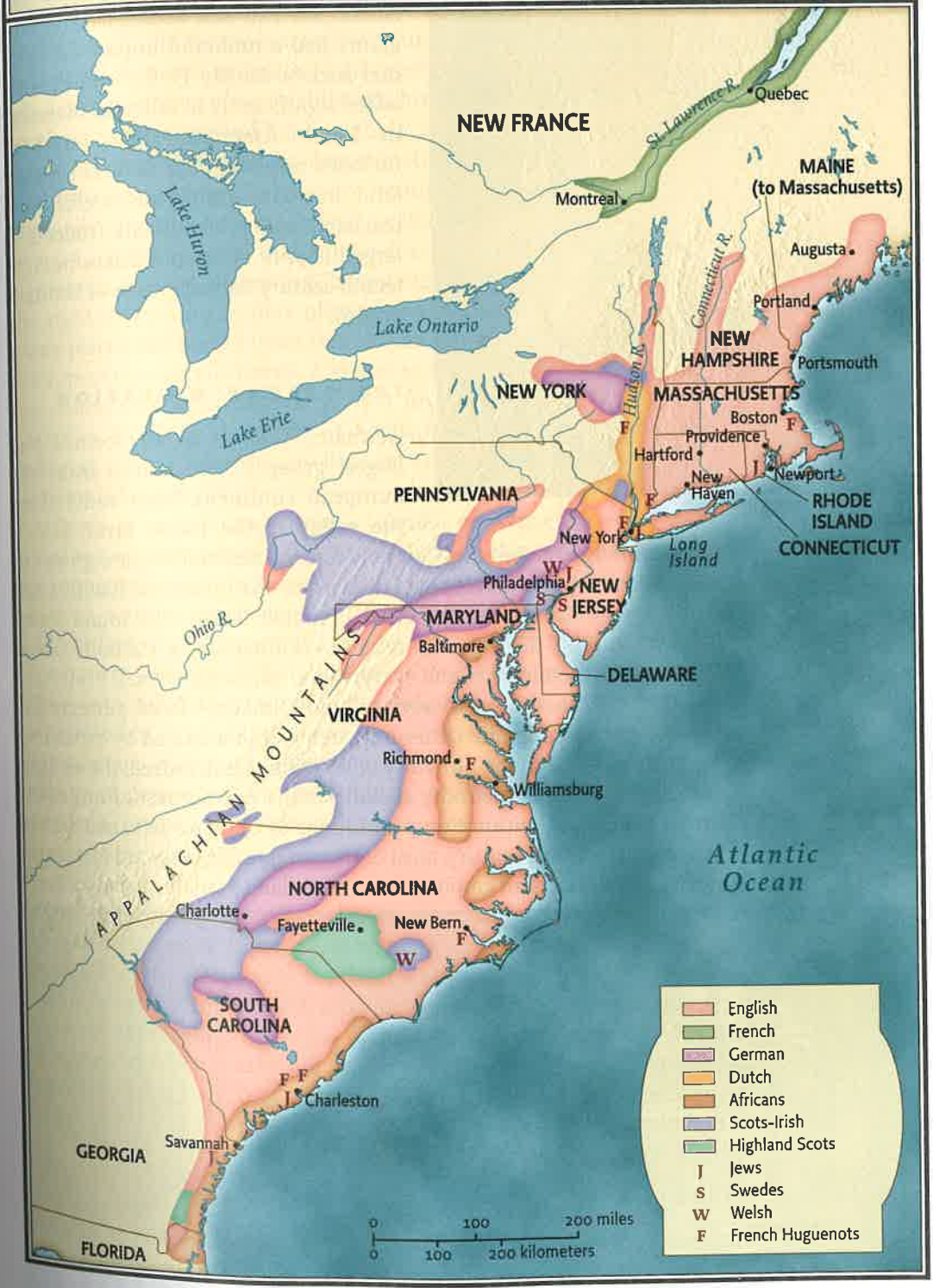
ATTRACTING SETTLERS

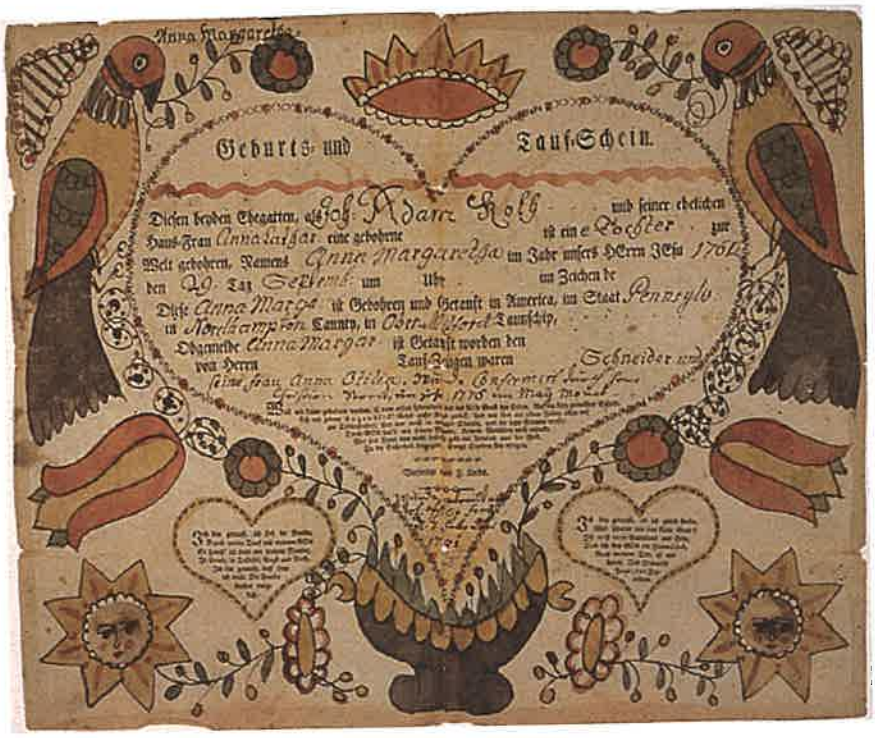
Yet while worrying about losing desirable members of its population, the government in London remained convinced that colonial development enhanced the nation's power and wealth. To bolster the Chesapeake labor force, nearly 50,000 convicts (a group not desired in Britain) were sent to work in the tobacco fields. Officials also actively encouraged Protestant immigration from the non-English (and less prosperous) parts of the British Isles and from the European continent, promising newcomers easy access to land and the right to worship freely. A law of 1740 even offered European immigrants British citizenship after seven years of residence, something that in the mother country could only be obtained by a special act of Parliament. The widely publicized image of America as an asylum for those "whom bigots chase from foreign lands," in the words of a 1735 poem, was in many ways a byproduct of Britain's efforts to attract settlers from non-English areas to its colonies.

Among eighteenth-century migrants from the British Isles, the 80,000 English newcomers (a majority of them convicted criminals) were consider-

Among the most striking features of eighteenth-century colonial society was the racial and ethnic diversity of the population (except in New England). This resulted from increased immigration from the non-English parts of the British Isles and from mainland Europe, as well as the rapid expansion of the slave trade from Africa.

EUROPEAN SETTLEMENT AND ETHNIC DIVERSITY ON THE ATLANTIC COAST OF NORTH AMERICA, 1760





A German-language illustrated family record from late seventeenth-century Pennsylvania. Numerous Germans settled in the colony, attracted by William Penn's generous policies about acquiring land and his promise of religious freedom.

ably outnumbered by 145,000 from Scotland and Ulster, the northern part of Ireland, where many Scots had settled as part of England's effort to subdue the island. Scottish and Scotch-Irish immigrants had a profound impact on colonial society. Mostly Presbyterians, they added significantly to religious diversity in North America. Their numbers included not only poor farmers seeking land but also numerous merchants, teachers, and professionals (indeed, a large majority of the physicians in eighteenth-century America were of Scottish origin).

THE GERMAN MIGRATION

Germans, 110,000 in all, formed the largest group of newcomers from the European continent. Most came from the valley of the Rhine River, which stretches through present-day Germany into Switzerland. In the eighteenth century, Germany was divided into numerous small states, each with a ruling prince who determined the official religion. Those who found themselves worshiping the "wrong" religion—Lutherans in Catholic areas, Catholics in Lutheran areas, and everywhere, followers of small Protestant sects such as Mennonites, Moravians, and Dunkers—faced persecution. Many decided to emigrate. Other migrants were motivated by persistent agricultural crises and the difficulty of acquiring land. Indeed, the emigration to America represented only a small part of a massive reshuffling of the German population within Europe. Millions of Germans left their homes during the eighteenth century, most of them migrating eastward to Austria-Hungary and the Russian empire, which made land available to newcomers.

Wherever they moved, Germans tended to travel in entire families. English and Dutch merchants created a well-organized system whereby "redemptioners" (as indentured families were called) received passage in exchange for a promise to work off their debt in America. Most settled in frontier areas—rural New York, western Pennsylvania, and the southern backcountry—where they formed tightly knit farming communities in which German for many years remained the dominant language. Their arrival greatly enhanced the ethnic and religious diversity of Britain's colonies.

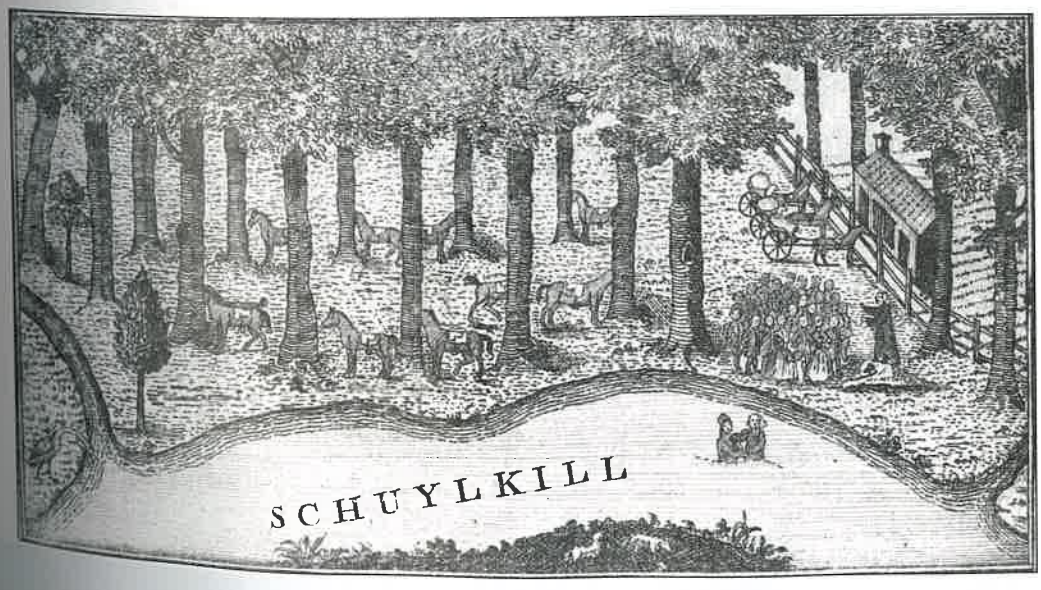
RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY

Eighteenth-century British America was not a "melting pot" of cultures. Ethnic groups tended to live and worship in relatively homogeneous communities. But outside of New England, which received few immigrants and retained its overwhelmingly English ethnic character, American society had a far more diverse population than Britain. Nowhere was this more evident than in the practice of religion. In 1700, nearly all the churches in the

colonies were either Congregational (in New England) or Anglican. In the eighteenth century, the Anglican presence expanded considerably. New churches were built and new ministers arrived from England. But the number of Dissenting congregations also multiplied.

Apart from New Jersey (formed from East and West Jersey in 1702), Rhode Island, and Pennsylvania, the colonies did not adhere to a modern separation of church and state. Nearly every colony levied taxes to pay the salaries of ministers of an established church, and most barred Catholics and Jews from voting and holding public office. But increasingly, de facto toleration among Protestant denominations flourished, fueled by the establishment of new churches by immigrants, as well as new Baptist, Methodist, and other congregations created as a result of the Great Awakening, a religious revival that will be discussed in Chapter 4. By the mid-eighteenth century, dissenting Protestants in most colonies had gained the right to worship as they pleased and own their churches, although many places still barred them from holding public office and taxed them to support the official church. A visitor to Pennsylvania in 1750 described the colony's religious diversity: "We find there Lutherans, Reformed, Catholics, Quakers, Menonists or Anabaptists, Herrnhuters or Moravian Brethren, Pietists, Seventh Day Baptists, Dunkers, Presbyterians, . . . Jews, Mohammedans, Pagans."

"Liberty of conscience," wrote a German newcomer in 1739, was the "chief virtue" of British North America, "and on this score I do not repent my immigration." Equally important to eighteenth-century immigrants, however, were other elements of freedom, especially the availability of land, the lack of a military draft, and the absence of restraints on economic opportunity common in Europe. Skilled workers were in great demand. "They earn what they want," one emigrant wrote to his brother in Switzerland in 1733. Letters home by immigrants spoke of low taxes, the right to enter trades and professions without paying exorbitant fees, and freedom of movement. "In this country," one wrote, "there are abundant liberties in just about all matters."



Baptists were among the numerous religious denominations in the eighteenth-century colonies. In this engraving, from a history of American Baptists published in 1770, a minister baptizes a new member in the Schuylkill River in Pennsylvania, while members of the congregation look on.



VOICES OF FREEDOM

From Letter by a Female Indentured Servant (September 22, 1756)

Only a minority of emigrants from Europe to British North America were fully free. Indentured servants were men and women who surrendered their freedom for a specified period of time in exchange for passage to America. This letter by Elizabeth Sprigs of Maryland to her father in England expresses complaints voiced by many indentured servants.

Honored Father,

My being forever banished from your sight, will I hope pardon the boldness I now take of troubling you with these. My long silence has been purely owing to my undutifulness to you, and well knowing. I had offended in the highest degree, put a tie on my tongue and pen, for fear I should be extinct from your good graces and add a further trouble to you. . . .

O Dear Father, believe what I am going to relate the words of truth and sincerity and balance my former bad conduct [to] my sufferings here, and then I am sure you'll pity your distressed daughter. What we unfortunate English people suffer here is beyond the probability of you in England to conceive. Let it suffice that I am one of the unhappy number, am toiling almost day and night, and very often in the horse's drudgery, with only this comfort that you bitch you do not do half enough, and then tied up and whipped to that degree that you now serve an animal. Scarce any thing but Indian corn and salt to eat and that even begrudged nay many Negroes are better used, almost naked no shoes nor stockings to wear, and the comfort after slaving during master's pleasure, what rest we can get is to wrap ourselves up in a blanket and lie upon the ground. This is the deplorable condition your poor Betty endures, and now I beg if you have any bowels of compassion left show it by sending me some relief. Clothing is the principal thing wanting, which if you should condescend to, may easily send them to me by any of the ships bound to Baltimore town, Patapsco River, Maryland. And give me leave to conclude in duty to you and uncles and aunts, and respect to all friends. . . .

Elizabeth Sprigs

From Letter by a Swiss-German Immigrant to Pennsylvania (August 23, 1769)

Germans were among the most numerous immigrants to the eighteenth-century colonies. Many wrote letters to family members at home, relating their experiences and impressions.

Dearest Father, Brother, and Sister and Brother-in-law,

I have told you quite fully about the trip, and I will tell you what will not surprise you—that we have a free country. Of the sundry craftsmen, one may do whatever one wants. Nor does the land require payment of tithes [taxes to support a local landlord, typical in Europe]. . . . The land is very big from Canada to the east of us to Carolina in the south and to the Spanish border in the west. . . . One can settle wherever one wants without asking anyone when he buys or leases something. . . .

I have always enough to do and we have no shortage of food. Bread is plentiful. If I work for two days I earn more bread than in eight days [at home]. . . . Also I can buy many things so reasonably [for example] a pair of shoes for [roughly] seven Pennsylvania shillings. . . . I think that with God's help I will obtain land. I am not pushing for it until I am in a better position.

I would like for my brother to come . . . and it will then be even nicer in the country. . . . I assume that the land has been described to you sufficiently by various people and it is not surprising that the immigrant agents [demand payment]. For the journey is long and it costs much to stay away for one year. . . .

Johannes Hänner

QUESTIONS

1. Why does Elizabeth Sprigs compare her condition unfavorably to that of blacks?
2. What does Johannes Hänner have in mind when he calls America a "free country"?
3. What factors might explain the different experiences of these two emigrants to British North America?

INDIAN LIFE IN TRANSITION

The tide of newcomers, who equated liberty with secure possession of land, threatened to engulf the surviving Indian populations. By the eighteenth century, Indian communities were well integrated into the British imperial system. Indian warriors did much of the fighting in the century's imperial wars. Their cultures were now quite different from what they had been at the time of first contact. Indian societies that had existed for centuries had disappeared, the victims of disease and warfare. New tribes, like the Catawba of South Carolina and the Creek Confederacy, which united dozens of Indian towns in South Carolina and Georgia, had been created from their remnants. Few Indians chose to live among whites rather than in their own communities. But they had become well accustomed to using European products like knives, hatchets, needles, kettles, and firearms. Alcohol introduced by traders created social chaos in many Indian communities. One Cherokee told the governor of South Carolina in 1753, "The clothes we wear, we cannot make ourselves, they are made to us. We use their ammunition with which we kill deer. . . . Every necessary thing we must have from the white people."

While traders saw in Indian villages potential profits and British officials saw allies against France and Spain, farmers and planters viewed Indians as little more than an obstruction to their desire for land. They expected Indians to give way to white settlers. The native population of the Virginia and South Carolina frontier had already been displaced when large numbers of settlers arrived. In Pennsylvania, however, the flood of German and Scotch-Irish settlers into the backcountry upset the relatively peaceful Indian-white relations constructed by William Penn. At a 1721 conference, a group of colonial and Indian leaders reaffirmed Penn's Chain of Friendship. But conflicts over land soon multiplied. The infamous Walking Purchase of 1737 brought the fraudulent dealing so common in other colonies to Pennsylvania. The Lenni Lanape Indians agreed to an arrangement to cede a tract of land bounded by the distance a man could walk in thirty-six hours. To their amazement, Governor James Logan hired a team of swift runners, who marked out an area far in excess of what the Indians had anticipated.

By 1760, when Pennsylvania's population, a mere 20,000 in 1700, had grown to 220,000, Indian-colonist relations, initially the most harmonious in British North America, had become poisoned by suspicion and hostility. One group of Susquehanna Indians declared "that the white people had abused them and taken their lands from them, and therefore they had no reason to think that they were now concerned for their happiness." They longed for the days when "old William Penn" treated them with fairness and respect.

REGIONAL DIVERSITY

By the mid-eighteenth century, the different regions of the British colonies had developed distinct economic and social orders. Small farms tilled by family labor and geared primarily to production for local consumption predominated in New England and the new settlements of the backcountry (the area stretching from central Pennsylvania southward through the



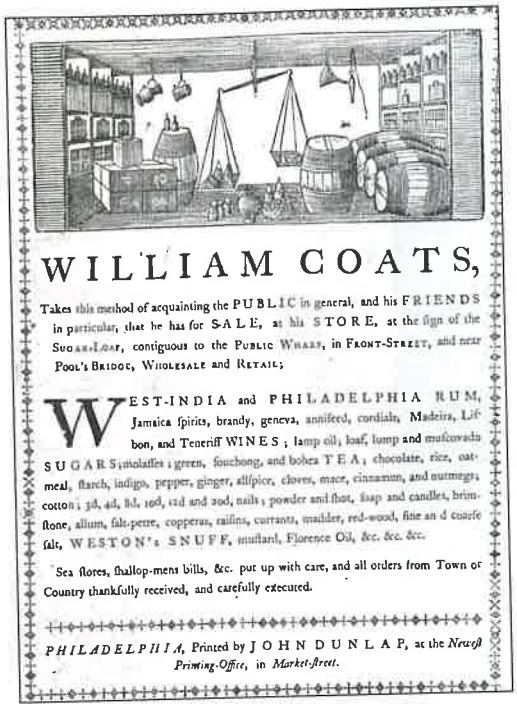
William Penn's Treaty with the Indians. *Penn's grandson, Thomas, the proprietor of Pennsylvania, commissioned this romanticized painting from the artist Benjamin West in 1771, by which time harmony between Indians and colonists had long since turned to hostility. In the nineteenth century, many reproductions of this image circulated, reminding Americans that Indians had once been central figures in their history.*

Shenandoah Valley of Virginia and into upland North and South Carolina). The backcountry was the most rapidly growing region in North America. In 1730, the only white residents in what was then called "Indian country" were the occasional hunter and trader. By the eve of the American Revolution, the region contained one-quarter of Virginia's population and half of South Carolina's. Most were farm families raising grain and livestock, but slaveowning planters, seeking fertile soil for tobacco farming, also entered the area.

In the older portions of the Middle Colonies of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, farmers were more oriented to commerce than on the frontier, growing grain both for their own use and for sale abroad and supplementing the work of family members by employing wage laborers, tenants, and in some instances slaves. Because large landlords had engrossed so much desirable land, New York's growth lagged behind that of neighboring colonies. "What man will be such a fool as to become a base tenant," wondered Richard Coote, New York's governor at the beginning of the eighteenth century, "when by crossing the Hudson river that man can for a song purchase a good freehold?" With its fertile soil, favorable climate, initially peaceful Indian relations, generous governmental land distribution policy, and rivers that facilitated long-distance trading, Pennsylvania came to be known as "the best poor man's country." Ordinary colonists there enjoyed a standard of living unimaginable in Europe.

THE CONSUMER REVOLUTION

During the eighteenth century, Great Britain eclipsed the Dutch as the leading producer and trader of inexpensive consumer goods, including colonial



WILLIAM COATS,

Takes this method of acquainting the PUBLIC in general, and his FRIENDS in particular, that he has for SALE, at his STORE, at the sign of the SUGAR-LOAF, contiguous to the PUBLIC WHARF, in FRONT-STREET, and near POOL'S BRIDGE, WHOLESALE and RETAIL;

WEST-INDIA and PHILADELPHIA RUM, Jamaica spirits, brandy, geneva, annifeed, cordials, Madeira, Lisbon, and Teneriff WINES; lamp oil, loaf, lump and muſcovado SUGARS; molaſſes; green, ſouchong, and bohea TEA; chocolate, rice, oatmeal, ſtarch, indigo, pepper, ginger, allſpice, cloves, mace, cinnamon, and nutmegs; cotton; 3d, 4d, 8d, 10d, 12d and 20d, nails; powder and ſhot, ſoap and candles, brimſtone, allum, ſalt-petre, copperas, raiſins, currants, madder, red-wood, fine and coarſe ſalt, WESTON'S SNUFF, muſtard, Florence Oil, &c. &c. &c.

Sea ſtores, ſhallop-mens bills, &c. put up with care, and all orders from Town or Country thankfully received, and carefully executed.

PHILADELPHIA, Printed by JOHN DUNLAP, at the *Newſ-Printing-Office*, in *Market-ſtreet*.

This 1772 broadside offers a rare view of the interior of a Philadelphia shop and lists some of the many European and West Indian goods on sale, including rum, tea, spices, and gun powder—a sign of the ongoing consumer revolution linked to international trade.

products like coffee and tea, and such manufactured goods as linen, metalware, pins, ribbons, glassware, ceramics, and clothing. Trade integrated the British empire. As the American colonies were drawn more and more fully into the system of Atlantic commerce, they shared in the era's consumer revolution. In port cities and small inland towns, shops proliferated and American newspapers were filled with advertisements for British goods. British merchants supplied American traders with loans to enable them to import these products, and traveling peddlers carried them into remote frontier areas.

Consumerism in a modern sense—the mass production, advertising, and sale of consumer goods—did not exist in colonial America. Nonetheless, eighteenth-century estate inventories—records of people's possessions at the time of death—revealed the wide dispersal in American homes of English and even Asian products. In the seventeenth century, most colonists had lived in a pioneer world of homespun clothing and homemade goods. Now, even modest farmers and artisans owned books, ceramic plates, metal cutlery, and items made of imported silk and cotton. Tea, once a luxury enjoyed only by the wealthy, became virtually a necessity of life. "People that are least able to go to the expense," one New Yorker noted, "must have their tea though their families want bread."

COLONIAL CITIES

Britain's mainland colonies were overwhelmingly agricultural. Nine-tenths of the population resided in rural areas and made their livelihood from farming. Colonial cities like Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Charleston were quite small by the standards of Europe or Spanish America. In 1700, when the population of Mexico City stood at 100,000, Boston had 6,000 residents and New York 4,500. As late as 1750, eight cities in Spanish America exceeded in size any in English North America.

English American cities served mainly as gathering places for agricultural goods and for imported items to be distributed to the countryside. Nonetheless, the expansion of trade encouraged the rise of port cities, home to a growing population of colonial merchants and artisans (skilled craftsmen) as well as an increasing number of poor. In 1770, with some 30,000 inhabitants, Philadelphia was "the capital of the New World," at least its British component, and, after London and Liverpool, the empire's third busiest port. The financial, commercial, and cultural center of British America, its growth rested on economic integration with the rich agricultural region nearby. Philadelphia merchants organized the collection of farm goods, supplied rural storekeepers, and extended credit to consumers. They exported flour, bread, and meat to the West Indies and Europe.

COLONIAL ARTISANS

The city was also home to a large population of furniture makers, jewelers, and silversmiths serving wealthier citizens, and hundreds of lesser artisans like weavers, blacksmiths, coopers, and construction workers. The typical artisan owned his own tools and labored in a small workshop, often his home, assisted by family members and young journeymen and apprentices

learning the trade. The artisan's skill, which set him apart from the common laborers below him in the social scale, was the key to his existence, and it gave him a far greater degree of economic freedom than those dependent on others for a livelihood. "He that hath a trade, hath an estate," wrote Benjamin Franklin, who had worked as a printer before achieving renown as a scientist and statesman.

Despite the influx of British goods, American craftsmen benefited from the expanding consumer market. Most journeymen enjoyed a reasonable chance of rising to the status of master and establishing a workshop of their own. Some achieved remarkable success. Born in New York City in 1723, Myer Myers, a Jewish silversmith of Dutch ancestry, became one of the city's most prominent artisans. Myers produced jewelry, candlesticks, coffeepots, tableware, and other gold and silver objects for the colony's elite, as well as religious ornaments for both synagogues and Protestant churches in New York and nearby colonies. He used some of his profits to acquire land in New Hampshire and Connecticut. Myers's career reflected the opportunities colonial cities offered to skilled men of diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds.



This piece of china made in England and exported to New England celebrates the coronation of James II in 1685. It is an example of the growing colonial demand for English consumer goods.

AN ATLANTIC WORLD

People, ideas, and goods flowed back and forth across the Atlantic, knitting together the empire and its diverse populations—British merchants and consumers, American colonists, African slaves, and surviving Indians—and creating webs of interdependence among the European empires. Sugar, tobacco, and other products of the Western Hemisphere were marketed as far away as eastern Europe. London bankers financed the slave trade between Africa and Portugese Brazil. Spain spent its gold and silver importing goods from other countries. As trade expanded, the North American and West Indian colonies became the major overseas market for British manufactured goods. Although most colonial output was consumed at

As Atlantic trade expanded, shipbuilding became a major enterprise in the colonies. This painting from around 1750 by an unknown artist depicts vessels under construction at the Grey's Inn Creek Shipyard in Maryland.



home, North Americans shipped farm products to Britain, the West Indies, and with the exception of goods like tobacco "enumerated" under the Navigation Acts, outside the empire. Virtually the entire Chesapeake tobacco crop was marketed in Britain, with most of it then re-exported to Europe by British merchants. Most of the bread and flour exported from the colonies was destined for the West Indies. African slaves there grew sugar that could be distilled into rum, a product increasingly popular among both North American colonists and Indians, who obtained it by trading furs and deerskins that were then shipped to Europe. The mainland colonies carried on a flourishing trade in fish and grains with southern Europe. Ships built in New England made up one-third of the British empire's trading fleet.

Membership in the empire had many advantages for the colonists. Most Americans did not complain about British regulation of their trade because commerce enriched the colonies as well as the mother country and lax enforcement of the Navigation Acts allowed smuggling to flourish. In a dangerous world, moreover, the Royal Navy protected American shipping. And despite the many differences between life in England and its colonies, eighteenth-century English America drew closer and closer to, and in some ways became more and more similar to, the mother country across the Atlantic.

SOCIAL CLASSES IN THE COLONIES

THE COLONIAL ELITE

Most free Americans benefited from economic growth, but as colonial society matured an elite emerged that, while neither as powerful or wealthy as the aristocracy of England, increasingly dominated politics and society. Indeed, the gap between rich and poor probably grew more rapidly in the eighteenth century than in any other period of American history.



A 1732 portrait of Daniel, Peter, and Andrew Oliver, sons of a wealthy Boston merchant. The prominent display of their delicate hands tells the viewer that they have never had to do manual labor.

In New England and the Middle Colonies, expanding trade made possible the emergence of a powerful upper class of merchants, often linked by family or commercial ties to great trading firms in London. There were no banks in colonial America. Credit and money were in short supply, and mercantile success depended on personal connections as much as business talent. By 1750, the colonies of the Chesapeake and Lower South were dominated by slave plantations producing staple crops, especially tobacco and rice, for the world market. Here great planters accumulated enormous wealth. The colonial elite also included the rulers of proprietary colonies like Pennsylvania and Maryland.

America had no titled aristocracy as in Britain. It had no system of legally established social ranks or family pedigrees stretching back to medieval times. Apart from the De Lanceys, Livingstons, and Van Rensselaers of New York, the Penn family in Pennsylvania, and a few southern planters, it had no one whose landholdings, in monetary value, rivaled those of the British aristocracy. But throughout British America, men of prominence controlled colonial government. In Virginia, the upper class was so tight-knit and intermarried so often that the colony was said to be governed by a "cousinocracy." Members of the gentry controlled the vestries, or local governing bodies, of the established Anglican Church, dominated the county courts (political as well as judicial institutions that levied taxes and enacted local ordinances), and were prominent in Virginia's legislature. In the 1750s, seven members of the same generation of the Lee family sat in the House of Burgesses.

Eighteenth-century Virginia was a far healthier environment than in the early days of settlement. Planters could expect to pass their wealth down to the next generation, providing estates for their sons and establishing family dynasties. Nearly every Virginian of note achieved prominence through family connections. The days when self-made men could rise into the Virginia gentry were long gone; by 1770, nearly all upper-class Virginians had inherited their wealth. Thomas Jefferson's grandfather was a justice of the peace (an important local official), militia captain, and sheriff, and his father was a member of the House of Burgesses. George Washington's father, grandfather, and great-grandfather had been justices of the peace. The Virginia gentry used its control of provincial government to gain possession of large tracts of land as western areas opened for settlement. Grants of 20,000 to 40,000 acres were not uncommon. Robert "King" Carter, a speaker of the House of Burgesses, acquired 300,000 acres of land and 1,000 slaves by the time of his death in 1732.



A portrait of Elijah Boardman, a merchant in New Milford, Connecticut. Boardman wears the attire of a gentleman and rests his arm on his counting desk. In the rear, bolts of cloth are visible. But Boardman chose to emphasize his learning, not his wealth, by posing with books, including two plays of Shakespeare, John Milton's Paradise Lost, *and the* London Magazine.

ANGLICIZATION

For much of the eighteenth century, the American colonies had more regular trade and communications with Britain than among themselves. Elites in different regions slowly developed a common lifestyle and sense of common interests. But rather than thinking of themselves as distinctively American, they became more and more English—a process historians call "Anglicization."

Wealthy Americans tried to model their lives on British etiquette and behavior. Somewhat resentful at living in provincial isolation—"at the end of the world," as one Virginia aristocrat put it—they sought to demonstrate their status and legitimacy by importing the latest London fashions and literature, sending their sons to Britain for education, and building homes equipped with fashionable furnishings modeled on the country estates and town houses of the English gentry. Their residences included large rooms for entertainment, display cases for imported luxury goods, and elaborate formal gardens. Some members of the colonial elite, like George Washington, even had coats of arms designed for their families, in imitation of English upper-class practice.

Desperate to follow an aristocratic lifestyle, many planters fell into debt. William Byrd III lived so extravagantly that by 1770 he had accumulated



Built in the 1750s by Carter Burwell, grandson of the original Robert "King" Carter, Carter's Grove, near Williamsburg, Virginia, was a grand plantation mansion with large formal gardens, in imitation of English landscape design.

a debt of £100,000, an amount almost unheard of in England or America. But so long as the world market for tobacco thrived, so did Virginia's gentry.

THE SOUTH CAROLINA ARISTOCRACY

The richest group of mainland colonists were South Carolina planters (although planters in Jamaica far outstripped them in wealth). Elite South Carolinians often traveled north to enjoy summer vacations in the cooler climate of Newport, Rhode Island, and they spent much of the remainder of their time in Charleston, the only real urban center south of Philadelphia and the richest city in British North America. Here aristocratic social life flourished, centered on theaters, literary societies, and social events. Like their Virginia counterparts, South Carolina grandees lived a lavish lifestyle amid imported furniture, fine wines, silk clothing, and other items from England. They surrounded themselves with house slaves dressed in specially designed uniforms. In 1774, the per capita wealth in the Charleston District was £2,300, more than four times that of tobacco areas in Virginia and eight times the figure for Philadelphia or Boston. But wealth in South Carolina was highly concentrated. The richest 10 percent of the colony owned half the wealth in 1770, the poorest quarter less than 2 percent.

Throughout the colonies, elites emulated what they saw as England's balanced, stable social order. Liberty, in their eyes, meant, in part, the power to rule—the right of those blessed with wealth and prominence to dominate over others. They viewed society as a hierarchical structure in which some men were endowed with greater talents than others and destined to rule. The social order, they believed, was held together by webs of influence

that linked patrons and those dependent on them. Each place in the hierarchy carried with it different responsibilities, and one's status was revealed in dress, manners, and the splendor of one's home. "Superiority" and "dependence," as one colonial newspaper put it, were natural elements of any society. An image of refinement served to legitimate wealth and political power. Colonial elites prided themselves on developing aristocratic manners, cultivating the arts, and making productive use of leisure. Indeed, on both sides of the Atlantic, elites viewed work as something reserved for common folk and slaves. Freedom from labor was the mark of the gentleman.

POVERTY IN THE COLONIES

At the other end of the social scale, poverty emerged as a visible feature of eighteenth-century colonial life. Although not considered by most colonists part of their society, the growing number of slaves lived in impoverished conditions. Among free Americans, poverty was hardly as widespread as in Britain, where in the early part of the century between one-quarter and one-half of the people regularly required public assistance. But as the colonial population expanded, access to land diminished rapidly, especially in long-settled areas. In New England, which received few immigrants, the high birthrate fueled population growth. With the supply of land limited, sons who could not hope to inherit farms were forced to move to other colonies or to try their hand at a trade in the region's towns. By mid-century, tenants and wage laborers were a growing presence on farms in the Middle Colonies.

In colonial cities, the number of propertyless wage earners subsisting at the poverty line steadily increased. In Boston, one-third of the population in 1771 owned no property at all. In rural Augusta County, carved out of Virginia's Shenandoah River valley in 1738, land was quickly engrossed by planters and speculators. By the 1760s, two-thirds of the county's white men owned no land and had little prospect of obtaining it unless they migrated further west. Taking the colonies as a whole, half of the wealth at mid-century was concentrated in the hands of the richest 10 percent of the population.

Attitudes and policies toward poverty in colonial America mirrored British precedents. The better-off colonists generally viewed the poor as lazy, shiftless, and responsible for their own plight. Both rural communities and cities did accept responsibility for assisting their own. But to minimize the burden on taxpayers, poor persons were frequently set to labor in workhouses, where they produced goods that reimbursed authorities for part of their upkeep. Their children were sent to work as apprentices in local homes or workshops. And most communities adopted stringent measures to "warn out" unemployed and propertyless newcomers who might become dependent on local poor relief. This involved town authorities either expelling the unwanted poor from an area or formally declaring certain persons ineligible for assistance. In Essex County, Massachusetts, the number of poor persons warned out each year rose from 200 in the 1730s to 1,700 in the 1760s. Many were members of families headed by widowed or abandoned women.

THE MIDDLE RANKS

The large majority of free Americans lived between the extremes of wealth and poverty. Along with racial and ethnic diversity, what distinguished the mainland colonies from Europe was the wide distribution of land and the economic autonomy of most ordinary free families. The anonymous author of the book *American Husbandry*, published in 1775, reported that "little freeholders who live upon their own property" made up "the most considerable part" of the people, especially in the northern colonies and the nonplantation parts of the South. Altogether, perhaps two-thirds of the free male population were farmers who owned their own land. England, to be sure, had no class of laborers as exploited as American slaves, but three-fifths of its people owned no property at all.

By the eighteenth century, colonial farm families viewed landownership almost as a right, the social precondition of freedom. They strongly resented efforts, whether by Native Americans, great landlords, or colonial governments, to limit their access to land. A dislike of personal dependence and an understanding of freedom as not relying on others for a livelihood sank deep roots in British North America. These beliefs, after all, accorded with social reality—a wide distribution of property that made economic independence part of the lived experience of large numbers of white colonists.

WOMEN AND THE HOUSEHOLD ECONOMY

In the household economy of eighteenth-century America, the family was the center of economic life. Most work revolved around the home, and all members—men, women, and children—contributed to the family's livelihood. The independence of the small farmer depended in considerable measure on the labor of dependent women and children. "He that hath an industrious family shall soon be rich," declared one colonial saying, and the high birthrate in part reflected the need for as many hands as possible on colonial farms. Most farmers concentrated first on growing food for their own consumption and acquiring enough land to pass it along to their sons. But the consumer revolution and expanding networks of Atlantic trade drew increasing numbers of farmers into production for the market as well.

As the population grew and the death rate declined, family life stabilized and more marriages became lifetime commitments. Free women were expected to devote their lives to being good wives and mothers. Already enshrined in law and property relations, male domination took on greater and greater social reality. In several colonies, the law mandated primogeniture—meaning that estates must be passed intact to the oldest son. As colonial society became more structured, opportunities that had existed for women in the early period receded. In Connecticut, for example, the courts were informal and unorganized in the seventeenth century, and women often represented themselves. In the eighteenth century, it became necessary to hire a lawyer as one's spokesman in court. Women, barred from practicing as attorneys, disappeared from judicial proceedings. Because of the desperate need for labor, men and women in the seventeenth century both did various kinds of work. In the eighteenth century, the division of labor

VISIONS OF FREEDOM



The Van Bergen Overmantel. *The opportunity to achieve economic independence was central to American colonists' idea of freedom. This section is part of a seven-foot-long painting by John Heaten from around 1773, probably designed to hang above a wide fireplace in the home of Marten Van Bergen, a Dutch farmer in colonial New York. The house and farm buildings are in Dutch style. The painting offers a rare contemporary view of a prosperous colonial farm, with its full granary and livestock. Native Americans and African-American slaves, as well as workers who probably were indentured servants, are among the individuals depicted by the artist.*

QUESTIONS

1. What does the painting suggest about gradations of freedom at the time it was created?

2. What indications of prosperty are evident in the painting?



This portrait of the Cheney family by an unknown late eighteenth-century artist illustrates the high birthrate in colonial America, and suggests how many years of a woman's life were spent bearing and raising children.

along gender lines solidified. Women's work was clearly defined, including cooking, cleaning, sewing, making butter, and assisting with agricultural chores. The work of farmers' wives and daughters often spelled the difference between a family's self-sufficiency and poverty.

"Women's work is never done." This popular adage was literally true. Even as the consumer revolution reduced the demands on many women by making available store-bought goods previously produced at home, women's work seemed to increase. Lower infant mortality meant more time spent in child care and domestic chores. The demand for new goods increased the need for all family members to contribute to family income. For most women, work was incessant and exhausting. "I am dirty and distressed, almost wearied to death," wrote Mary Cooper, a Long Island woman, in her diary in 1769. "This day," she continued, "is forty years since I left my father's house and come here, and here have I seen little else but hard labor and sorrow."

NORTH AMERICA AT MID-CENTURY

By the mid-eighteenth century, the area that would become the United States was home to a remarkable diversity of peoples and different kinds of social organization, from Pueblo villages of the Southwest to tobacco plantations of the Chesapeake, towns and small farms of New England, landholdings in the Hudson Valley that resembled feudal estates, and fur trading outposts of the northern and western frontier. Elites tied to imperial centers of power dominated the political and economic life of nearly every colony. But large numbers of colonists enjoyed far greater opportunities for freedom—access to the vote, prospects of acquiring land, the right to worship as they pleased, and an escape from oppressive government—than existed in Europe. Free colonists probably enjoyed the highest per capita income in the world. The colonies' economic growth contributed to a high birthrate, long life expectancy, and expanding demand for consumer goods.

In the British colonies, writes one historian, lived "thousands of the freest individuals the Western world has ever known." Yet many others found themselves confined to the partial freedom of indentured servitude or to the complete absence of freedom in slavery. Both timeless longings for freedom and new and unprecedented forms of unfreedom had been essential to the North American colonies' remarkable development.

SUGGESTED READING

BOOKS

Bailyn, Bernard. *The Peopling of British North America* (1986). A brief survey of the movement of peoples across the Atlantic.

Berlin, Ira. *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (1998). The most extensive study of the origins and development of colonial slavery.

Bushman, Richard. *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (1992). A study of how a more "refined" lifestyle emerged in the eighteenth-century colonies.

Dayton, Cornelia H. *Women before the Bar: Gender, Law, and Society in Connecticut, 1639–1789* (1995). Examines the changing legal status of women in one American colony.

Jordan, Winthrop D. *White over Black: American Attitudes toward the Negro, 1550–1812* (1968). A detailed look at how ideas about race developed over time in England and the American colonies.

Kidd, Thomas S. *The Great Awakening* (2007). An account of the religious movement that swept the American colonies in the eighteenth century.

Kulikoff, Allan. *Tobacco and Slaves: The Development of Southern Cultures in the Chesapeake, 1680–1800* (1986). Explores how the rise of slave-grown tobacco affected society in the Chesapeake.

Lemon, James T. *The Best Poor Man's Country: A Geographical Study of Early Southeastern Pennsylvania* (1972). A study of agriculture and the environment in one of the most successful farming areas of colonial America.

Lepore, Jill. *The Name of War: King Philip's War and the Origin of American Identity* (1998). An examination not only of the war itself but also of its long-term consequences for Indian-white relations.

Lovejoy, David S. *The Glorious Revolution in America* (1972). Explores how the revolution in England in 1689 affected the American colonies.

Mintz, Sidney. *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (1985). A global history of the significance of sugar in the making of the modern world.

Morgan, Edmund S. *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia* (1975). An influential study of the slow development of slavery in seventeenth-century Virginia.

Norton, Mary Beth. *In the Devil's Snare: The Salem Witchcraft Crisis of 1692* (2002). A study of the witch trials that places them in the context of anxieties over Indian warfare on the Massachusetts frontier.

Saxton, Martha. *Being Good: Women's Moral Values in Early America* (2003). Examines social standards for women's behavior and how women tried to live up to them.

WEBSITES

The Atlantic Slave Trade and Slave Life in the Americas: http://hitchcock.itc.virginia.edu/Slavery/index.php

Afro-Louisiana History and Genealogy: www.ibiblio.org/laslave/

Chapter Review

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Both the Puritans and William Penn viewed their colonies as "holy experiments." How did they differ?

2. The textbook states, "Prejudice by itself did not create American slavery." Examine the forces and events that led to slavery in North America, and the role that racial prejudice played.

3. How were the actions of King James II toward New England perceived as threats to colonial liberty?

4. How did King Philip's War, Bacon's Rebellion, and the Salem witch trials illustrate a widespread crisis in British North America in the late seventeenth century?

5. The social structure of the eighteenth-century colonies was growing more open for some but not for others. For whom was there more opportunity, and for whom not?

6. By the end of the seventeenth century, commerce was the foundation of empire and the leading cause of competition between European empires. Explain how the North American colonies were directly linked to Atlantic commerce by laws and trade.

7. If you traveled outside of eighteenth-century New England, you might agree with fellow travelers that the colonies were demonstrating greater diversity in many ways. How would you support this claim?

8. Despite their lack of rights, hard-working women and children were often the key to the success of independent family farmers. Demonstrate the truth of this statement.

FREEDOM QUESTIONS

1. English settlers insisted that true freedom for Native Americans meant they must abandon their traditions and accept English ways. Examine the changes to Native American life by the mid-eighteenth century, and discuss whether Native American freedom increased by any standards.

2. Freedom and lack of freedom existed side-by-side in the English colonies. Using examples from Pennsylvania and elsewhere, demonstrate how greater freedom for some colonists in one area meant less freedom for others.

3. British citizens connected freedom and liberty to land ownership and not having to work for wages. Why did they make these connections and what were the consequences for the social structure?

4. Some historians have argued that the freedoms and prosperity of the British empire were all based on slavery. Examine this statement using specific examples.

5. Many British settlers in North America believed it was the "best poor man's country," and that they were the freest people in the world. What factors would lead to such a claim?

KEY TERMS

Metacom (p. 94)

King Philip's War (p. 95)

mercantilist system (p. 95)

Navigation Acts (p. 96)

Covenant Chain (p. 98)

Yamasee uprising (p. 99)

Society of Friends (Quakers) (p. 100)

sugar (p. 103)

Las Siete Partidas (p. 105)

Bacon's Rebellion (p. 106)

slave code (p. 108)

Anglicanism (p. 109)

Glorious Revolution (p. 109)

English Bill of Rights (p. 109)

Lords of Trade (p. 110)

Dominion of New England (p. 110)

English Toleration Act (p. 111)

Salem witch trials (p. 112)

redemptioners (p. 116)

Walking Purchase (p. 120)

backcountry (p. 120)

artisans (p. 122)

"cousinocracy" (p. 125)

REVIEW TABLE

Colonial Crises in the Late Seventeenth Century

Crisis	*Dates*	*Origins of Conflict*	*Action*	*Resolution*
King Philip's War	1675–1676	White settlers' encroachment on Indian land	Philip's forces attack forty-five New England towns	Settlers counter-attack, breaking Indians' power
Bacon's Rebellion	1676	Corruption of Virginia's government	Bacon burns Jamestown and takes power	Virginia's ruling elite undertake reforms
Glorious Revolution	1688	James II threatens to restore Catholicism to England	A bloodless coup to overthrow James II; colonists overthrow Dominion of New England	Protestants William and Mary of Orange are crowned
Salem Witch Trials	1691–1692	Amidst political and social tensions, young girls begin to experiment with magic	Hundreds accused of witchcraft and nineteen people are hanged	Governor dissolves the Salem court