

Colonization of North America from 1607 to 1750

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Introduction

The sixteenth century brought changes in Europe that helped reshape the whole Atlantic world of Europe, Africa, and the Americas. These events were the rise of nation states, the splintering of the Christian church into Catholic and Protestant sects, and a fierce competition for global commerce (Figure 2.1). Spain aggressively protected its North American territorial claims against imperial rivals, for example. When French Protestant Huguenots established Fort Caroline (Jacksonville, Florida, today) in 1564, Spain attacked and killed the settlers the following year. France, Britain, and Holland wanted their own American colonies, and privateers from these countries used safe havens along the coast of North America to raid Spanish treasure ships. But North America did not hold the gold and silver found in Spanish possessions in the Caribbean, Mexico, and Peru. In the end, Spain concentrated on these more profitable portions of its empire, and other European nation states began to establish their own claims in North America.

Europe's political, religious, and economic rivalries were fought in both European wars and in a struggle for colonies throughout the Atlantic. England's Queen Elizabeth I supported Protestant revolts in Catholic France and the Spanish Netherlands, which put her at odds with Spain's Catholic monarch, Philip II. So did her support for English privateers such as Sir Frances Drake, Sir George Summers, and Captain Christopher Newport, who preyed on Spanish treasure ships and commerce. In 1584, Elizabeth ignored the Spanish claim to all of North America and issued a royal charter to Sir Walter Raleigh, encouraging him and a group of investors to explore, colonize, and rule the continent.

***Look at the timeline on the next page and make the connections between the topics you covered in 7th grade social studies and the new information you are reading in this packet.*

*** Here is a link to the electronic versions of all of the images contained in this packet:*

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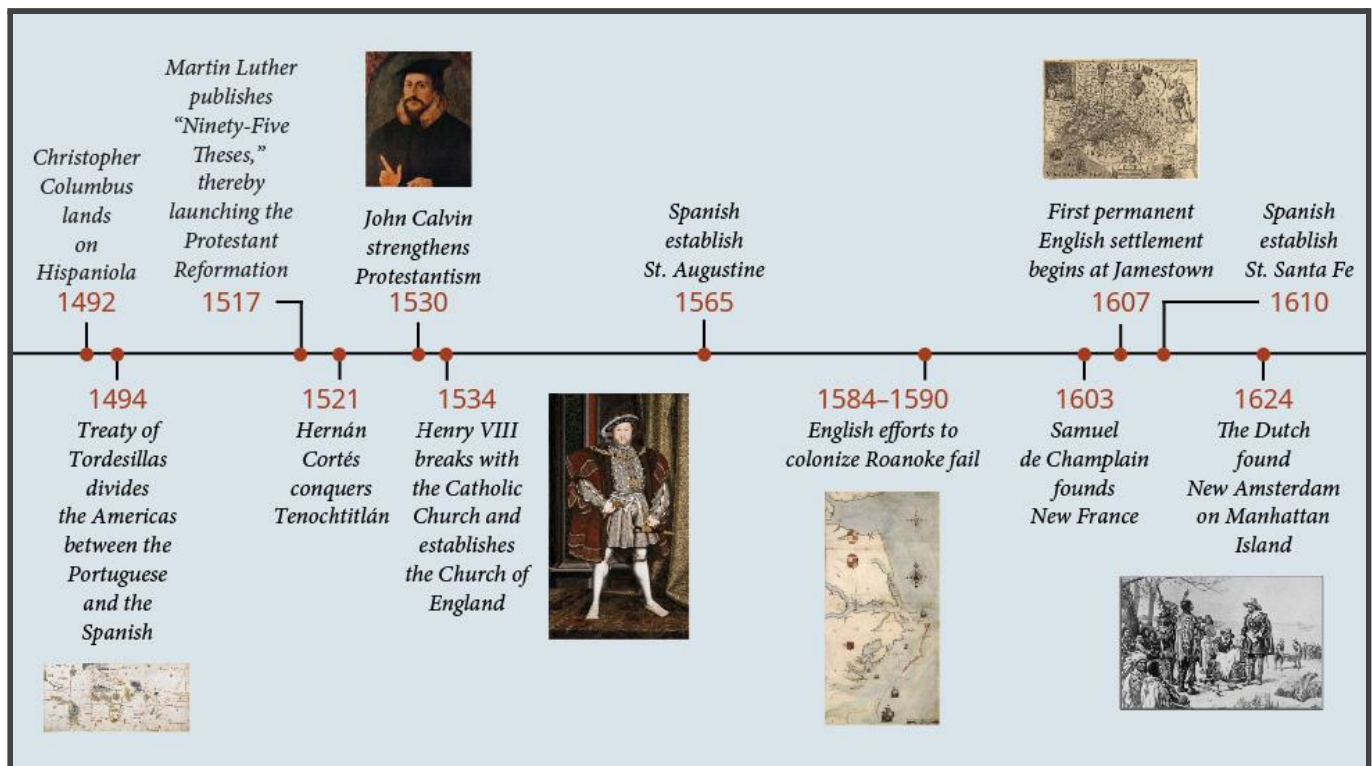


Figure 2.1 Sixteenth-century Europe was defined by the rise of nation states and the division of Christianity due to the Protestant Reformation. Increased competition for wealth fueled by both developments spilled over into the New World, and by the early seventeenth century, Spain, Portugal, England, France, and the Netherlands all had a presence in North America.

England, France, and the Netherlands

By 1600, the stage had been set for competition between the European nations colonizing the Americas, and several quickly established footholds. The Spanish founded St. Augustine (in what is now Florida) in 1565. In 1607, English adventurers arrived at Jamestown in the Virginia colony. The French established Quebec in what today is Canada, in 1608. Spanish Santa Fe (in what is now New Mexico) was founded in 1610. The Dutch established Albany (now the capital of New York) as a trading center on the Hudson River in 1614, and New Amsterdam (called New York City today) in 1624. English Separatists, now known as Pilgrims, established Plymouth Colony in 1620. Ten years later, in 1630, Puritans established the Massachusetts Bay Colony. European settlement grew exponentially. Seventeenth-century North America became a place where diverse nations—European and Native American—came into close contact.

By the 1650s, the English, French, and Dutch were well established in North America. French traders used the waterways to move ever deeper into the interior of the continent from their toehold in Quebec, trading with American Indians (Figure 2.2). French Jesuit priests lived peacefully with American Indians, learned their languages, recorded their society norms and customs, and worked to convert them to Christianity. Europeans traded imported goods to

American Indians for beaver and other furs that brought high profits in Europe. The American Indians' economy and culture, and relationships with other native tribes, were changed by their new focus on the fur trade and by the metal tools and firearms the Europeans offered. By the mid-1700s, the French had claimed the St. Lawrence River Valley, the Great Lakes region, and the whole of the Mississippi River Valley.



Figure 2.2 By about 1650, the Atlantic coast had all been claimed by rival European powers. American Indians resisted European encroachment in various ways and with varying degrees of success. Struggles between American Indians and European settlers continued throughout the colonial period and beyond. (attribution: Copyright Rice University, OpenStax, under CC BY 4.0 license)

The Dutch settled the Hudson River Valley and established New Amsterdam. They began with a fur-trading site established in 1614 near what is today Albany, New York. It grew steadily during the next several decades, and historians estimate that by the 1660s, about nine thousand people inhabited the Dutch colony.

England's First Attempts at Colonization (Roanoke and Jamestown)

Tensions between England and Spain increased during the long reign of England's Protestant Queen Elizabeth I. Following the Gulf Stream currents, Spanish treasure ships traveled up the

southern coast of North America on their way back to Europe. The English saw the Chesapeake Bay and eastern coast of what is today North Carolina as strategic locations from which to strike the Spanish ships. Thus, English privateers, along with French and Dutch ships, lay in wait along the coast hoping to capture a rich cargo of gold, silver, and gems destined for Spain. In 1584, Elizabeth I granted a charter to Sir Walter Raleigh (Figure 2.12) to find riches in the New World and establish a base from which the English could attack and capture Spanish ships.



Figure 2.12 Sir Walter Raleigh was a known favorite of Queen Elizabeth I and a constant thorn in Spain's side. He attacked Spanish treasure ships and helped defend England against the Spanish Armada in 1588. This portrait of Raleigh dates from about 1585, approximately one year after he was granted a charter to find riches in the New World.

Raleigh sent out his first expedition in 1584. Its members built a small fortification on Roanoke Island off what is today the coast of North Carolina, approximately one hundred miles south of the Chesapeake Bay. The adventurers claimed the region for England and named it Virginia in honor of Elizabeth, the virgin queen. In 1587, a group of colonists arrived, led by Governor John White. Shortly after, the governor's granddaughter, Virginia Dare, became the first English child born in the New World. White departed for England in late 1587 to arrange for provisions for the colony. Unfortunately, he arrived home when England was preparing to meet the Spanish Armada, and no ships or supplies could be spared for the American settlers. By the time White returned in the summer of 1590, the colonists had disappeared. All that remained of them was the word "CROATOAN" carved into a post. The sign might have indicated that they had left willingly and possibly incorporated themselves into the Croatoan tribe, but it might also have been meant to tell of an attack in which all the settlers were killed. An approaching storm prevented White from searching for his daughter, granddaughter, and the other colonists. The Lost Colony became one of America's enduring mysteries (Figure 2.13).



Figure 2.13 In 1585, John White created this map of the east coast of what is today Virginia and North Carolina. The Lost Colony of Roanoke was located in the outer banks of North Carolina, shown underneath the large compass rose.

In 1606, Elizabeth's successor, King James I, issued a new charter to a business venture known as the Virginia Company of London. The king granted the company all the territory between modern-day Cape Fear, North Carolina, and Long Island Sound. That grant, of course, ignored the fact that the Indian people the English called Powhatan already ruled much of the Chesapeake region.

The Virginia Company investors expected to establish a colony that would extract North American riches, including gold, silver, or precious gems. That would be the quickest way to enjoy a return on their investment, but they were open to profit through other natural resources as well. Moreover, they wanted to find the Northwest Passage, a legendary waterway to the lucrative Asian trade. The Company was an entrepreneurial enterprise designed to earn a profit, and also a bold and risky venture. By no means was its success guaranteed.

The Company's first group of 104 men and boys left London in December 1606 and landed in the Chesapeake Bay in April 1607. The Company had appointed a governing council that selected a president, Captain Edward Maria Wingfield. On May 14, the council chose for its first settlement a location about sixty miles from the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay on the James River, named in honor of the king. Jamestown's position promised the best defense against

England's greatest enemy, Spain. As it turned out, however, hunger—not the Spanish—would be the settlers' greatest adversary. They arrived at a time of severe drought and, because they had communal rather than private property, lacked an incentive to plant corn. They were also too taken by the mentality of getting rich quick. Many were sickened by disease and salt poisoning from drinking the brackish water and were physically unable to work. Starvation and disease plagued the colony for years.

Once they had selected the site for their settlement, the Englishmen began exploring the area. On May 26, nearly 200 local Indians attacked them, wounding almost a dozen and killing two Englishmen. As the Indians persisted in attacking the settlement, the settlers began constructing a three-sided fort with bulwarks in each corner to mount cannon. They planted crops, even though it was late in the planting season, but life in the colony remained difficult. In addition to disease and the lack of food, there was political infighting among the councilmen. By the time supply ships arrived from England in January 1608, two-thirds of the colonists were dead.

Captain John Smith was a controversial figure among the first settlers. He arrived in Virginia in chains, having been accused of mutiny during the voyage from England. In the months after the settlement was established, he undoubtedly contributed to the political infighting on the council. But he also demonstrated his usefulness to the colony, leading expeditions to map the area and obtaining food from local people through a combination of force and trade. In December 1607, while exploring the Chickahominy River area, Smith was captured by the brother of the Powhatan leader. He was taken to the northern shore of what is today called the York River to meet Chief Powhatan.

Powhatan was a powerful ruler who controlled most of the tribes in the Chesapeake region. John Smith described him as “a tall well proportioned man . . . his head somewhat gray. . . . His age neare 60; of a very able and hardybody to endure any labour.” Smith was fed and questioned during his stay with Powhatan. He later claimed that Powhatan attempted to execute him but the chief's young daughter, Pocahontas, saved him. Today, some historians believe Smith misunderstood his ordeal and that, in fact, he underwent an adoption ceremony in which he was ritually killed and resurrected by Pocahontas. It seems that Powhatan had decided Smith and the English settlers were worthy allies. Perhaps he wanted to control trade with Europeans. Perhaps he wanted access to metal tools and weapons. We cannot be certain of his motives, but we can be sure the great chief was no novice at diplomacy (Figure 2.14).



(a)



(b)

Figure 2.14(a) This image of Powhatan is a detail from (b) a map drawn by John Smith and printed in 1624. The caption on the detail reads “Powhatan held this state and fashion when Capt. Smith was delivered to him prisoner, 1607.” Do you think Smith’s depiction of Powhatan is a reliable source? Why or why not?

The next year or so was relatively peaceful. Smith continued to explore and map the region. He also successfully traded with American Indians to increase the English supply of food. In September 1608, the council elected Smith president, and over the following year he focused on stabilizing the colony, instituting a “work or starve policy,” and searching for raw materials to export. The Virginia Company of London was concerned that the struggling colony had yet to make a profit. That same month, Smith was badly injured in an explosion and returned to England.

The Jamestown colony almost did not survive the next year. Even after the arrival of additional supplies and colonists from England, internal strife, lack of food, and conflict with native people turned the winter of 1609–1610 into the “starving time,” during which the colony dwindled from five hundred inhabitants from waves of settlers to sixty. Only the arrival of supplies and new settlers helped Jamestown continue. The colony still struggled economically, and the London Company investors were running out of patience. There were no precious metals or gems in Virginia. The colonists tried refining pitch and tar from local pine trees, a valuable naval commodity. Glassblowers attempted to use local sand to produce glass products. Then, in 1611, John Rolfe began experimenting with the production of tobacco. Tobacco was an indigenous plant, but the strong and harsh local variety proved unsuitable for the new tobacco market developing in Europe. Rolfe brought a variety of tobacco from the Caribbean and successfully cultivated it in Virginia. He shipped his first cargo to England in 1617, and within a couple of years Jamestown had established a profitable cash crop. The introduction of private property a few years later gave the settlers an incentive to work hard to keep the profits from the tobacco they raised.

More colonists arrived, and slowly the struggling colony took hold. A new charter in 1618 encouraged settlement by offering colonists the opportunity to own land and take a hand in managing the affairs of the colony. The first General Assembly met in Jamestown on July 30, 1619, and consisted of the governor, his council, and twenty-two elected members of the House of Burgesses. Representing the English settlements established on the James River, the burgesses composed the first European representative assembly in the New World. Finally, after more than ten years, the Englishmen in the Virginia Colony were building a firm foundation of economic opportunity and representative government, based upon the English model on which later generations also came to rely. The profits from tobacco led to a scramble for land and indentured servants as settlers risked the high mortality rate to get rich.

A new England for Religious Dissidents (Pilgrims and Puritans)

The second major area to be colonized by the English in the first half of the 17th century, New England, differed markedly in its founding principles from the commercially oriented Chesapeake tobacco colonies.

Settled largely by waves of Puritan families in the 1630s, New England had a religious orientation from the start. In England, reform-minded men and women had been calling for greater changes to the English national church since the 1580s. These reformers, who followed the teachings of John Calvin and other Protestant reformers, were called Puritans because of their insistence on purifying the Church of England of what they believed to be unscriptural, Catholic elements that lingered in its institutions and practices.

Many who provided leadership in early New England were educated ministers who had studied at Cambridge or Oxford but who, because they had questioned the practices of the Church of England, had been deprived of careers by the king and his officials in an effort to silence all dissenting voices.

Other Puritan leaders, such as the first governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, John Winthrop, came from the privileged class of English gentry. These well-to-do Puritans and many thousands more left their English homes not to establish a land of religious freedom, but to practice their own religion without persecution. Puritan New England offered them the opportunity to live as they believed the Bible demanded. In their “New” England, they set out to create a model of reformed Protestantism, a new English Israel.

The conflict generated by Puritanism had divided English society because the Puritans demanded reforms that undermined the traditional festive culture. For example, they denounced popular pastimes like bear-baiting—letting dogs attack a chained bear—which were often conducted on Sundays when people had a few leisure hours. In the culture where William Shakespeare had produced his masterpieces, Puritans called for an end to the theater, censoring playhouses as places of decadence.

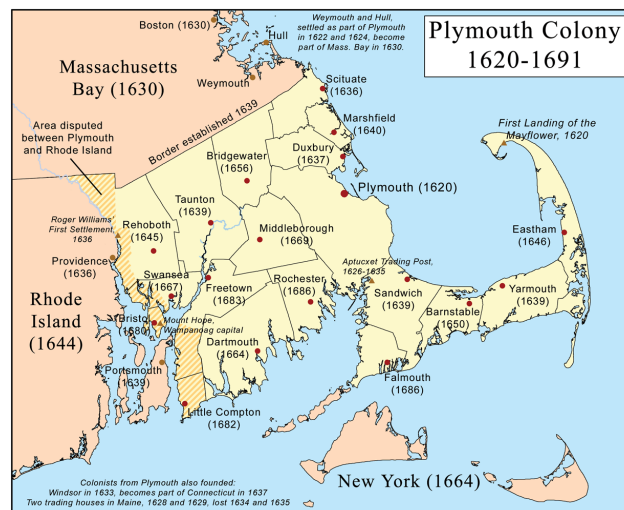
Indeed, the Bible itself became part of the struggle between Puritans and James I, who as King of England was head of the Church of England. Soon after ascending the throne, James commissioned a new version of the Bible in an effort to stifle Puritan reliance on the Geneva Bible, which followed the teachings of John Calvin and placed God's authority above the monarch's. The King James Version, published in 1611, instead emphasized the majesty of kings.

During the 1620s and 1630s, the conflict escalated to the point where the state church prohibited Puritan ministers from preaching. In the Church's view, Puritans represented a national security threat because their demands for cultural, social, and religious reforms undermined the king's authority. Unwilling to conform to the Church of England, many Puritans found refuge in the New World.

Yet those who emigrated to the Americas were not united. Some called for a complete break with the Church of England while others remained committed to reforming the national church.

Plymouth and the Pilgrims

The first group of religious separatists to make their way across the Atlantic was a small contingent known as the Pilgrims. Unlike other dissidents, they insisted on a complete separation from the Church of England and had first migrated to the Dutch Republic seeking religious freedom.

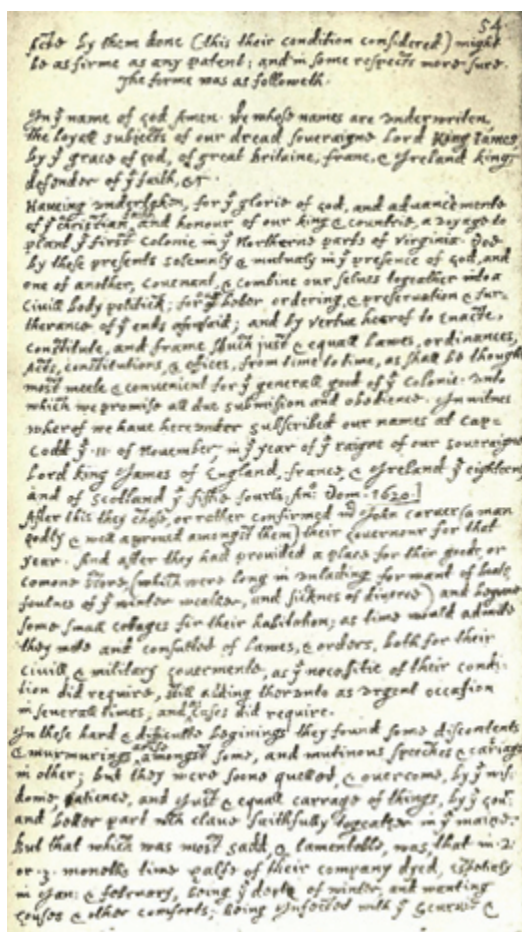


Map of the Plymouth Colony, located near present-day Cape Cod. **Map of the Plymouth Colony, located near present-day Cape Cod. Note that the capital of the Massachusetts Bay Colony at Boston was farther north.** Image credit: [Wikimedia Commons](#)

Although they found they could worship without hindrance there, they grew concerned that they were losing their Englishness as they saw their children begin to learn the Dutch language and adopt Dutch ways. In addition, the English Pilgrims—and others in

Europe—feared another attack on the Dutch Republic by Catholic Spain. Because of this, in 1620 they moved on to found the Plymouth Colony in present-day Massachusetts.

The governor of Plymouth, William Bradford, was a Separatist—a proponent of complete separation from the English state church. Bradford and the other Pilgrim Separatists represented a major challenge to the prevailing vision of a unified English national church and empire. On board the *Mayflower*, which was bound for Virginia but landed on the tip of Cape Cod, Bradford and 40 other adult men signed the Mayflower Compact, which presented a religious—rather than an economic—rationale for colonization. The compact expressed a community ideal of working together.



54.
Set by them done (this their condition considered) might
be as firme as any patent; and in some respects more sure.
The forme was as followeth.

In the name of god Amen. We whose names are underwritten,
the loyal subjects of our dread sovereign Lord King James
by the grace of god, of great Brittain, France, & Ireland King,
defender of the faith, &c.

Having undertaken, for the glory of god, and advancement
of the Christian religion, and honour of our King & country, a voyage to
plant the first colony in the Northern parts of Virginia: God
by these presents solemnly & mutually in the presence of god, and
one another, covenant & combine our selves together into a
civil body politic; for the better ordering, preservation & fur-
therance of the ends aforesaid; and by virtue hereof to enact,
constitute, and frame such just & equal laws, ordinances,
acts, institutions & offices, from time to time, as shall be thought
most meet & convenient for the general good of the Colony. unto
which we promise all due submission and obedience. In witness
whereof we have hereunder subscribed our names at Cape
Cod the 11th of November, in the year of the reign of our sovereign
Lord King James of England, France, & Ireland the eighteenth
and of Scotland the fiftie fourth, Anno Domini 1620.

After this they chose, or rather confirmed, John Carver a man
godly & well approved amongst them their Governor for that
year. And after they had provided a place for their gods, or
common store, (which was long in building for want of tools,
furniture of the winter weather, and sickness of divers) and begun
some small cottages for their habitation; as time would admit
they made and consulted of laws, & orders, both for their
civil & military government, as the necessities of their condi-
tion did require, till adding therunto as urgent occasion
in several times, and cases did require.

In these hard & difficult beginnings they found some discontent
& murmurings amongst some, and mutinous speeches & carriages
in other; but they were soon quelled, & overcome, by the
humiliation, and just & equal carriage of things, by the god
and better part with cleave faithful cooperation in the march:
but that which was most sad, & lamentable, was that in 2
or 3 moneths time parts of their company died, especially
in Jan: & February, being the depth of winter, and wanting
clothes & other comforts; being infected with the general

This is a transcription of the Mayflower Compact, written in longhand.

William Bradford, transcription of the Mayflower Compact, c. 1645. Image credit: "[English Settlements in America](#)" by OpenStaxCollege, CC BY 4.0

Mayflower Compact

November 11, 1620

(Original document with 1600's spelling)



IN THE NAME of GOD, Amen. We, whose Names are under-written, the Loyal Subjects of our dread Sovereign Lord King *James*, by the Grace of God, of *Great Britain, France* and *Ireland*, King, *Defendor of the Faith*, &c. Having undertaken for the glory of God, and advancement of the Christian Faith, and the Honour of our K[i]ng and Countrey, a Voyage to plant the first Colony in the northern parts of *Virginia*; Do by these Presents, solemnly and mutually, in the presence of God and one another, Covenant and Combine our selves together into a Civil Body Politick, for our better ordering and preservation, and furtherance of the ends aforesaid: and by virtue hereof do enact, constitute, and frame, such just and equal Laws, Ordinances, Acts, Constitutions and Officers, from time to time, as shall be thought most meet and convenient for the general good of the Colony; unto which we promise all due submission and obedience. In Witness whereof we have hereunto subscribed our Names at *Cape-Cod* the eleventh of *November*, in the Reign of our Sovereign Lord King *James*, of *England, France* and *Ireland* the eighteenth, and of *Scotland* the fifty-fourth, *Anno Dom*; 1620.

John Carver,	Samuel Fuller,	Edward Tilly,
William Bradford	Christopher Martin,	John Tilly,
Edward Winslow,	William Mullins,	Francis Cooke
William Brewster,	William White,	Thomas Rogers,
Isaac Allerton,	Richard Warren,	Thomas Tinker,
Myles Standish,	John Howland,	John Ridgdale,
John Alden,	Steven Hopkins	Edward Fuller,
John Turner,	Digery Priest,	Richard Clark,
Francis Eaton,	Thomas Williams,	Richard Gardiner,
James Chilton,	Gilbert Winslow,	John Allerton,
John Craxton,	Edmund Margesson,	Thomas English,
John Billington,	Peter Brown	Edward Doten,
Joses Fletcher,	Richard Britteridge,	Edward Liester.
John Goodman,	George Soule	

When a larger exodus of Puritans established the Massachusetts Bay Colony in the 1630s, the Pilgrims at Plymouth welcomed them and the two colonies cooperated with each other.

“A city upon a hill” - The Puritans of Massachusetts Bay

A much larger group of English Puritans left England in the 1630s, establishing the Massachusetts Bay Colony, the New Haven Colony, the Connecticut Colony, and Rhode Island.

Unlike the exodus of young men to the Chesapeake colonies, these migrants were families with young children and their university-trained ministers. Their aim—according to John Winthrop, the first governor of Massachusetts Bay—was to create a model of reformed Protestantism, a “city upon a hill,” a new English Israel.

The idea of a “city upon a hill” made clear the religious orientation of the New England settlement, and the charter of the Massachusetts Bay Colony stated as a goal that the colony’s people (original spelling) “may be soe religiously, peaceablie, and civilly governed, as their good Life and orderlie Conversacon, maie wynn and incite the Natives of Country, to the Knowledg and Obedience of the onlie true God and Saulor of Mankinde, and the Christian Fayth.”

Like their Spanish and French Catholic rivals, English Puritans in America took steps to convert native peoples to their version of Christianity. John Eliot, the leading Puritan missionary in New England, urged Native Americans in Massachusetts to live in “praying towns” established by English authorities for converted Native Americans and to adopt the Puritan emphasis on the centrality of the Bible. In keeping with the Protestant emphasis on reading scripture, he translated the Bible into the local Algonquian language and published his work in 1663. Eliot hoped that as a result of his efforts, some of New England’s native inhabitants would become preachers.

The Puritan work ethic

Different labor systems also distinguished early Puritan New England from the Chesapeake colonies.

Puritans expected young people to work diligently at their calling, and all members of their large families—including children—did the bulk of the work necessary to run homes, farms, and businesses.

Unlike the indentured servants in Virginia, very few migrants came to New England as laborers; in fact, New England towns protected their disciplined homegrown workforce by refusing to allow outsiders in, ensuring their sons and daughters would have steady employment.

New England’s labor system produced remarkable results, notably a powerful maritime-based

economy with scores of oceangoing ships and the crews necessary to sail them. New England mariners sailing New England-made ships transported Virginian tobacco and West Indian sugar throughout the Atlantic World.

Religion and culture in Puritan New England

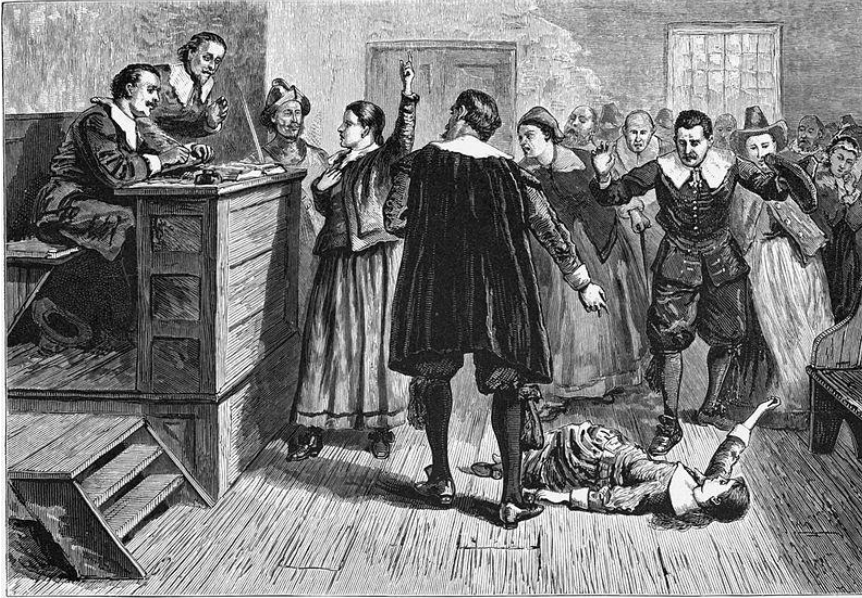
Puritan New England differed in many ways from both England and the rest of Europe. Protestants emphasized literacy so that everyone could read the Bible. This attitude was in stark contrast to that of Catholics, who refused to tolerate private ownership of Bibles in the vernacular language. The Puritans placed a special emphasis on reading scripture, and their commitment to literacy led to the establishment of the first printing press in English America in 1636. Four years later, in 1640, they published the first book in North America, the Bay Psalm Book.

As Calvinists, Puritans adhered to the doctrine of predestination, whereby a few elect would be saved and all others damned. No one could be sure whether they were predestined for salvation, but through introspection, guided by scripture, Puritans hoped to find a glimmer of redemptive grace. Church membership was restricted to those Puritans who were willing to provide a conversion narrative telling how they came to understand their spiritual estate by hearing sermons and studying the Bible.

Like many other Europeans, the Puritans believed in the supernatural. Every event appeared to be a sign of God's mercy or judgment, and people believed that witches allied themselves with the Devil to carry out evil deeds and deliberate harm such as the sickness or death of children, the loss of cattle, and other catastrophes.

Hundreds were accused of witchcraft in Puritan New England, including townspeople whose habits or appearance bothered their neighbors or who appeared threatening for any reason. Women, seen as more susceptible to the Devil because of their supposedly weaker constitutions, made up the vast majority of suspects and those who were executed.

The most notorious witchcraft cases occurred in Salem Village in 1692. Many of the accusers who prosecuted the suspected witches had been traumatized by the Indian wars on the frontier and by unprecedented political and cultural changes in New England. Relying on their belief in witchcraft to help make sense of their changing world, Puritan authorities executed 19 people and caused the deaths of several others.



1876 engraving depicting the events of the Salem Witch Trials. William A. Crafts, *Pioneers in the settlement of America: from Florida in 1510 to California in 1849*. Boston: Published by Samuel Walker and Company. [Image](#) courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

Religious intolerance in Massachusetts Bay

Although many people assume Puritans escaped England to establish religious freedom, they proved to be just as intolerant as the English state church. When dissenters, including Puritan minister Roger Williams and midwife Anne Hutchinson, challenged Governor Winthrop in Massachusetts Bay in the 1630s, they both were banished from the colony.

Roger Williams questioned the Puritans' theft of Native American land. Williams also argued for a complete separation from the Church of England, a position other Puritans in Massachusetts rejected, as well as the idea that the state could not punish individuals for their beliefs. Although he did accept that nonbelievers were destined for eternal damnation, Williams did not think the state could compel true orthodoxy.

Puritan authorities found Williams guilty of spreading dangerous ideas, but he went on to found Rhode Island as a colony that sheltered dissenting Puritans from their brethren in Massachusetts. In Rhode Island, Williams wrote favorably about native peoples, contrasting their virtues with Puritan New England's intolerance.

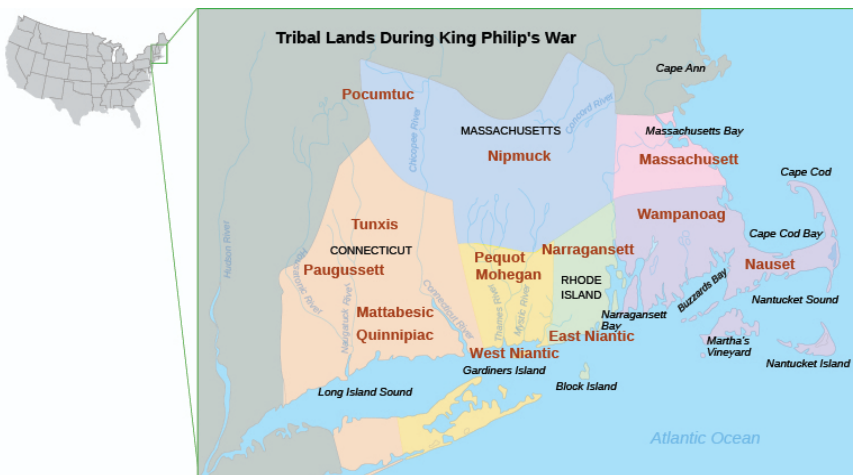
Anne Hutchinson also ran afoul of Puritan authorities for her criticism of the evolving religious practices in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. In particular, she held that Puritan ministers in New England taught a shallow version of Protestantism emphasizing hierarchy and actions—a “covenant of works” rather than a “covenant of grace.” Literate Puritan women like Hutchinson presented a challenge to the male ministers' authority. Indeed, her major offense was her claim of direct religious revelation (that she spoke directly with God), a type of spiritual experience that negated the role of ministers.

Because of Hutchinson's beliefs and her defiance of authority in the colony, especially that of

Governor Winthrop, Puritan authorities tried and convicted her of holding false beliefs. In 1638, she was excommunicated and banished from the colony. She went to Rhode Island and later, in 1642, sought safety among the Dutch in New Netherland. The following year, Algonquians killed Hutchinson and her family. In Massachusetts, Governor Winthrop noted her death as the righteous judgment of God against a heretic.

Puritan relationships with native peoples

Tensions had existed from the beginning between the Puritans and the native peoples who controlled southern New England. Relationships deteriorated as the Puritans continued to expand their settlements aggressively and as European ways increasingly disrupted native life. These strains led to King Philip's War—from 1675 to 1676—a massive regional conflict that was nearly successful in pushing the English out of New England.



This is a map of New England indicating the domains of New England's native inhabitants—including the Pequot, Narragansett, Mohegan, and Wampanoag—in 1670, a few years before King Philip's War. Image credit: "[English Settlements in America](#)" by OpenStaxCollege, [CC BY 4.0](#).

When the Puritans began to arrive in the 1620s and 1630s, local Algonquian peoples viewed them as potential allies in the conflicts already simmering between rival native groups. In 1621, the Wampanoag, led by Massasoit, concluded a peace treaty with the Pilgrims at Plymouth. In the 1630s, the Puritans in Massachusetts and Plymouth allied themselves with the Narragansett and Mohegan people against the Pequot, who had recently expanded their claims into southern New England. In May 1637, the Puritans attacked a large group of several hundred Pequot along the Mystic River in Connecticut. To the horror of their Native American allies, the Puritans massacred all but a handful of the men, women, and children they found.

By the mid-17th century, the Puritans had pushed their way farther into the interior of New England, establishing outposts along the Connecticut River Valley. There seemed no end to their expansion. Wampanoag leader Metacom or Metacomet, also known as King Philip among the English, was determined to stop the encroachment. The Wampanoag—along with the Nipmuck, Pocumtuck, and Narragansett—went to war to drive the English from the land.

In the ensuing conflict, called King Philip's War, native forces succeeded in destroying half of

the frontier Puritan towns; however, in the end, the English—aided by Mohegans and Christian Native Americans—prevailed and sold many captives into slavery in the West Indies. The severed head of King Philip was publicly displayed in Plymouth. The war also forever changed the English perception of native peoples; after King Philip's War, Puritan writers took great pains to vilify Native Americans as bloodthirsty savages. A new type of racial hatred became a defining feature of Native American-English relationships in the Northeast.

Trade in the Early Colonies

Native nations in North America sought the advantages of trade and the help of European allies to counter their enemies. But they also strove to control and resist the growing European presence on their land, using both diplomacy and military strikes. During the winter of 1609–1610, for example, Powhatan, an Algonquin chief and the father of Pocahontas, stopped trading with and providing food to the Jamestown settlers. His warriors laid siege to Jamestown and killed all who left the fort. During that winter, described by Englishmen as the “starving time,” Powhatan came close to ending the colony’s existence. Indians again waged war in the Second Anglo-Powhatan War of 1622 and the Third Anglo-Powhatan War of 1644, but by that time, the English presence in Virginia was too strong to resist.

In the New Amsterdam and New England regions, Dutch and English traders wanted to control the lucrative fur trade. So did American Indian groups. The Pequot began expanding their influence in the 1630s, pushing out the Wampanoag to their north, the Narragansett to the east, and the Algonquians and Mohegan to the west. But they also came into conflict with the English of the Massachusetts Bay, Plymouth, and Connecticut colonies. Tensions came to a head in the Pequot War of 1637, when the Pequots faced an alliance of European colonists and the Narragansett and Mohegan Indians. The conflict ended in disaster for the Pequot: The survivors of the defeated tribe were given to their Narragansett and Mohegan enemies or shipped to the Bahamas and West Indies as slaves.

In these and other conflicts, American Indian nations and European nations competed among themselves and with each other for land, trade, and dominance. In the end, however, Europeans kept arriving and growing in numbers. Even more devastating was that American Indians had no immunity to European diseases like measles and smallpox, which caused 90 percent mortality rates in some areas (Figure 2.3). Epidemics spread across North America while Europeans steadily pushed American Indians farther west.

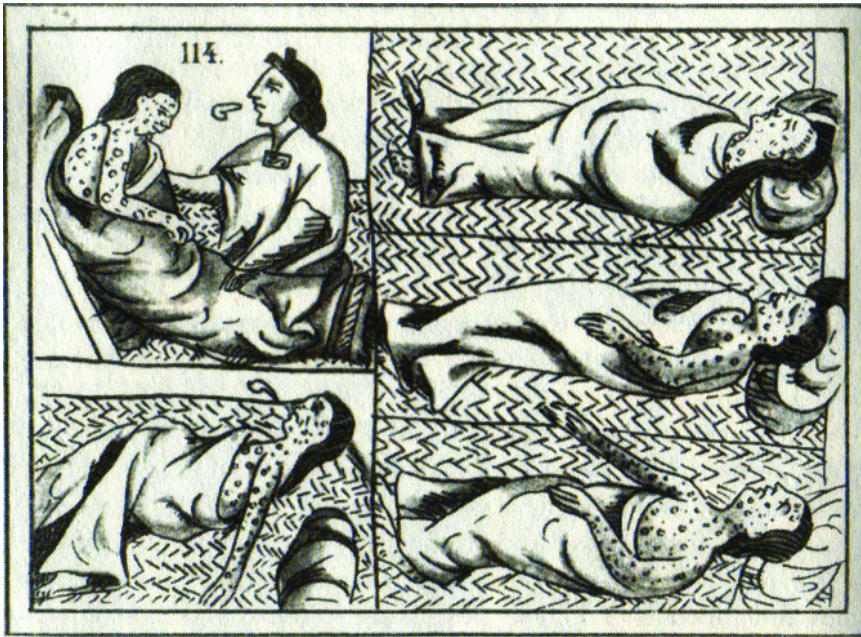


Figure 2.3 This sixteenth-century Aztec drawing shows the suffering of a typical victim of smallpox. Smallpox and other contagious diseases brought by European explorers decimated native populations in the Americas.

Slavery

Enslavement of Africans was introduced early in the settlement of the Americas. In the early 1500s, Spain imported enslaved Africans to the Caribbean to meet the high demand for labor. The Dutch played a key role in the Atlantic slave trade until the 1680s, when the English gained control and allowed colonial shippers to participate. The Atlantic slave trade consisted of transporting captives from the west coast of Africa to the Americas in what became known as the “Middle Passage.” The Middle Passage was one leg of a profitable triangular trade in the Atlantic. Ships transported raw materials from the Americas to Europe and then shipped manufactured goods and alcohol to Africa, where they were used to purchase human beings from the West Africans. Ships’ captains packed their human cargo of chained African men, women, and children into the holds of the ships, where roughly 10 to 15 percent died (Figure 2.4).

Despite high mortality rates, merchant financiers and slave-ship captains made significant profits. More than ten million Africans were forcibly brought to the Americas during the three-century-long period of the slave trade. Most were destined for Brazil or the West Indies. About 5 percent of the African slave trade went to British North America.

The first Africans in British North America arrived at Jamestown aboard a Dutch ship in 1619. Historians are not certain about their initial status—whether they were indentured servants or slaves. What is clear, however, is that over time, a few gained freedom and owned property, including slaves. During the next several decades, laws governing and formalizing the racial and hereditary slave system gradually developed. By the end of the seventeenth century, every colony in North America had a slave code—a set of laws defining the status of enslaved

persons.

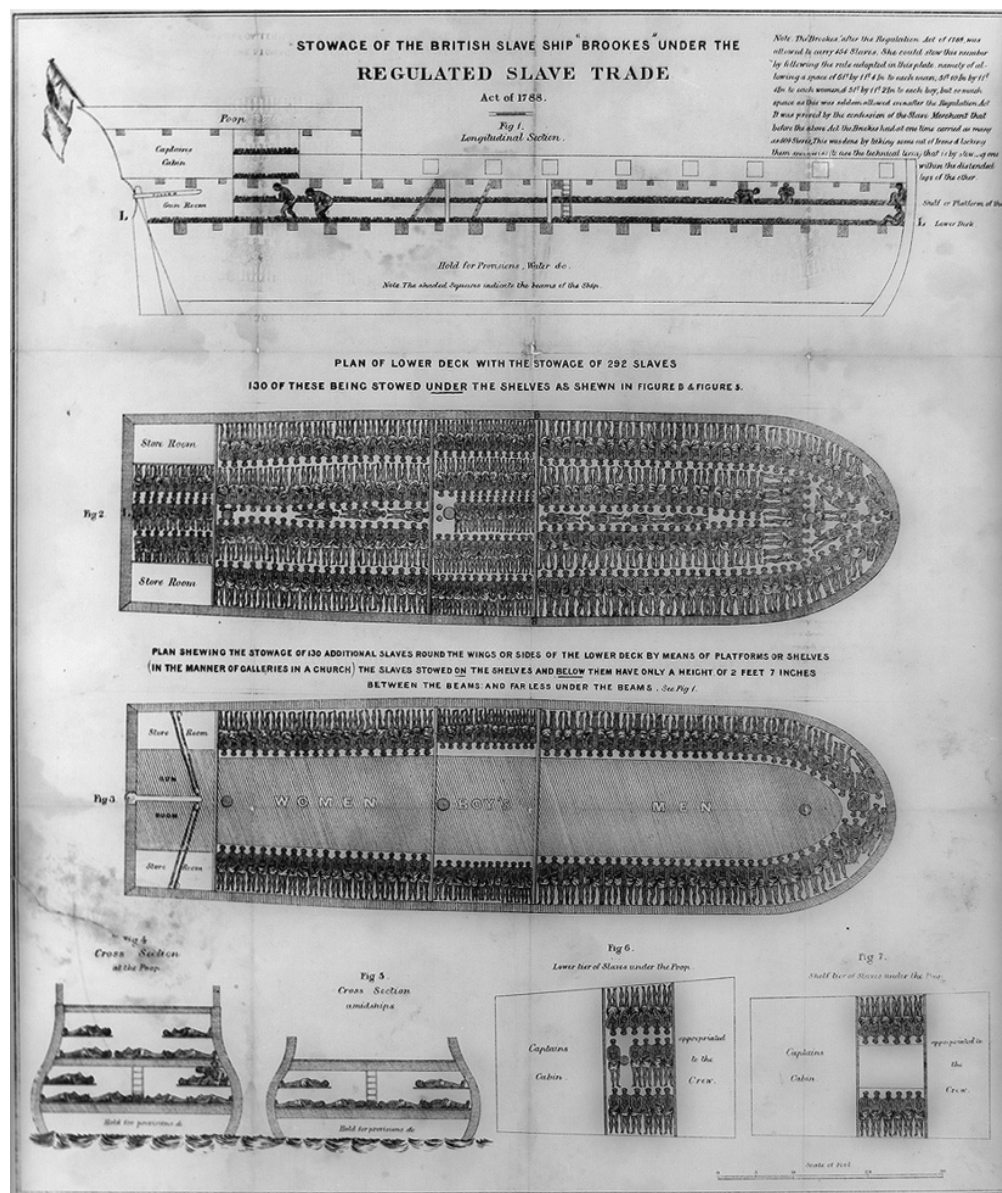


Figure 2.4 Slaves were literal cargo on board ships in the Middle Passage, as this cross-section of the British slave ship *Brookes* shows. Ships' decks were designed to transport commodities, but during the Atlantic slave trade, human beings became the cargo. This illustration of a slave ship was made in the late eighteenth century, after the American Revolution.

In Maryland and Virginia, enslaved persons provided labor for the tobacco fields (Figure 2.5). Farther south, in the Carolinas, indigo and rice were the cash crops. A southern plantation system developed that allowed wealthy landowners to manage many slaves who cultivated vast land holdings. Most whites were not large landowners, however. Many small farmers, businessmen, and tradesmen held one or two slaves, while others had none. Some paid a master for a slave's labor in a system known as hiring out. By 1750, almost 25% of the

population in the British colonies was enslaved. In Virginia, Maryland, and North Carolina, the percentages were higher than in the North. In those southern colonies, slaves accounted for almost half the population. In South Carolina, almost two-thirds of the population were slaves.

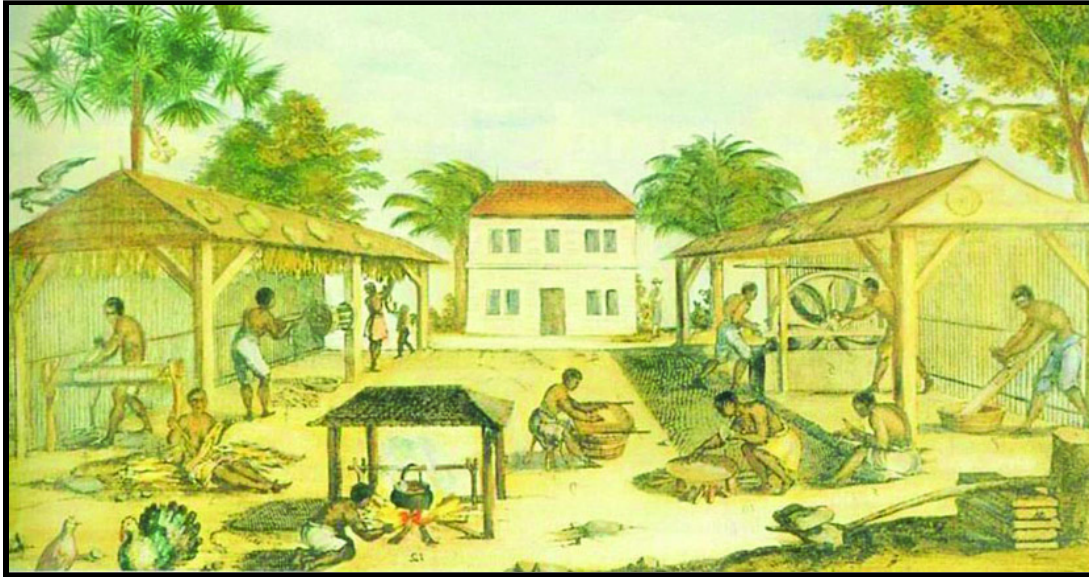


Figure 2.5 In this 1670 painting by an unknown artist, slaves work in tobacco-drying sheds.

No one escaped the brutality of the slave system. Ownership of another human being as chattel property—like a horse or a cow—was often enforced by violence, and violence was always at hand, though masters also provided a variety of incentives such as time off or small gifts at Christmas. Masters and overseers used physical and mental coercion to maintain control. The whip was an ever-present threat and used with horrific results. A master was not faulted or legally punished for killing a rebellious slave. But perhaps one of the most powerful threats was the auction block, where fathers, sons, daughters, and mothers could be sold away from family (Figure 2.6). This specific type of slavery that became prevalent in North America was known as Chattel Slavery. Two distinctive characteristics of this type of slavery included: The children of enslaved mothers inherited the condition of slavery and were born into a life of servitude, and according to the law, slaves were property a master could dispose of as he saw fit.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, most runaway slaves had no place to go. Before the American Revolution, some southern slaves ran away to Spanish Florida, but every British colony enforced slavery and slave laws, even as a few individuals and groups denounced the brutality of slavery and the slave trade. People of African descent could be arrested without cause anywhere they were strangers or unknown by the community. Even the few free blacks (probably no more than 0.5 percent of the African American population in 1750) stayed close to communities where they were known, where influential whites vouched for their free status. Law, society, and custom all suppressed the fundamental rights of blacks.

This system, enforced by fear and violence, spawned revolts. Some were small; individuals ran away, broke tools, or damaged crops. Other revolts were larger and more violent, like the 1739 Stono Rebellion in South Carolina.

[illegible]

Figure 2.6 This entry from the ledger of the firm Austin & Laurens records the purchase, sale, and price of enslaved men, women, and children—56 men, 24 women, 24 boys, and 14 girls. Why do you think adult male slaves fetched the highest price?

Maryland

Religion was a defining feature of other North American settlements as well (Table 2.1). Cecil Calvert, Lord Baltimore, was an English noble and a Roman Catholic. He received a charter from King Charles I of England allowing him to establish the Maryland proprietary colony and giving him and his family full control of it. Lord Baltimore founded Maryland on religious toleration and provided a safe haven for English Catholics. The first colonists arrived in 1634 and settled at St. Mary's City. Despite the colony's 1649 Toleration Act, however, religious tolerance was short-lived. In the 1650s, in the wake of the English Civil Wars, a Protestant council ruled the colony and persecuted Roman Catholics.

William Penn and the Founding of Pennsylvania

As he disembarked from his ship onto the western shore of the Delaware River in 1682, William Penn surveyed the green country in front of him. The thirty-eight-year-old Englishman could not help contrasting this strange, expansive land with memories of the cramped prison cell he had occupied twenty years earlier back in England.

Penn was part of a religious sect known as the Society of Friends. Its members were called “Quakers” by their enemies because their intense meetings sometimes led members to shake in fits of spiritual fervor. During the 1660s, Englishmen harshly persecuted the Quakers, whom they considered to be dangerous radicals because of their teachings on social and religious equality. Even though he was an English aristocrat, the young Penn had been imprisoned for his illegal preaching and publication of Quaker doctrines. As a result, he became an ardent activist for religious freedom. During the 1670s, he began to dream of a colony where Quakers—and all kinds of Christians—would be free to worship as they saw fit. This dream became a reality when King Charles II offered him title to a large expanse of land in the New World to pay off a substantial debt the crown owed to Penn’s family. Now, in 1682, Penn finally stood on the shores of the colony of Pennsylvania.

Penn had high hopes that the colony would enjoy religious freedom, as well as peace with the Lenni Lenapes and other American Indians who had lived in this land for centuries. Like all Quakers, he was a pacifist, and he was adamant that his new colony would avoid the bloodshed and war between Indians and other English colonists that had occurred in New England and Virginia. One year before his trip across the Atlantic Ocean, Penn had written a letter to the “Kings of the Indians,” explaining that he was coming to settle in their land. He regretted the “unkindness and injustice” that Indians had experienced from other Europeans and promised that Pennsylvania would be different. Because God commanded his people to love others, his colony would treat the Indians with honesty, fairness, and peace.

Having arrived, Penn worked on bringing his plans to fruition. The Quakers refused to take any land unless the Indians agreed to it. During the first couple of years, Penn purchased land from the Lenape and Susquehannock leaders, including large areas along the Delaware and Schuylkill Rivers. As he stood side by side with the Indian leaders and signed the purchase contracts, he may have felt a measure of pride that his land was being honestly bought rather than stolen from the Indians. However, he did not realize that these peaceful transactions were being aided by forces beyond his control. Since Europeans had arrived in the New World, disease and war had reduced the Lenni Lenapes to a mere five thousand people. Their alliance with the English thus provided much-needed protection from their rivals, the Iroquois League, the most powerful Indian alliance in the region, and contributed to their willingness to sell their land.

Penn's Letter to the Indians
October 18, 1681



My friends—There is one great God and power that hath made the world and all things therein, to whom you and I, and all people owe their being and well-being, and to whom you and I must one day give an account for all that we do in the world; this great God hath written his law in our hearts, by which we are taught and commanded to love and help, and do good to one another, and not to do harm and mischief one to another.

Now this great God hath been pleased to make me concerned in your parts of the world, and the king of the country where I live hath given unto me a great province, but I desire to enjoy it with your love and consent, that we may always live together as neighbours and friends, else what would the great God say to us, who hath made us not to devour and destroy one another, but live soberly and kindly together in the world? Now I would have you well observe, that I am very sensible of the unkindness and injustice that hath been too much exercised towards you by the people of these parts of the world, who sought themselves, and to make great advantages by you, rather than be examples of justice and goodness unto you, which I hear hath been matter of trouble to you, and caused great grudgings and animosities, sometimes to the shedding of blood, which hath made the great God angry; but I am not such a man, as is well known in my own country; I have great love and regard towards you, and I desire to win and gain your love and friendship, by a kind, just, and peaceable life, and the people I send are of the same mind, and shall in all things behave themselves accordingly; and if in any thing any shall offend you or your people, you shall have a full and speedy satisfaction for the same, by an equal number of just men on both sides, that by no means you may have just occasion of being offended against them.

I shall shortly come to you myself, at what time we may more largely and freely confer and discourse of these matters. In the mean time, I have sent my commissioners to treat with you about land, and a firm league of peace. Let me desire you to be kind to them and the people, and receive these presents and tokens which I have sent to you, as a testimony of my good will to you, and my resolution to live justly, peaceably, and friendly with you.

I am your loving friend,
WILLIAM PENN

Not long after the ink on the purchase agreement was dry, the Quakers began to build a city on the land between the Delaware and Schuylkill rivers. They optimistically proclaimed that their capital would be a “City of Brotherly Love.” The capital’s grid-patterned streets were soon bustling (Figure 2.23). Only four years after Penn landed, the colony was home to a diverse group of more than eight thousand settlers of many different religions and ethnicities: Quakers, Anglicans, Dutch Calvinists, German Lutherans, and many Christians who had been persecuted in England, including Presbyterians, Baptists, and Catholics. These colonists had to obey Pennsylvania’s moral laws—no swearing, no “wildness,” —to promote a healthy civic society. However, they were free to practice their own religion as long as they believed in “the one Almighty and eternal God.”

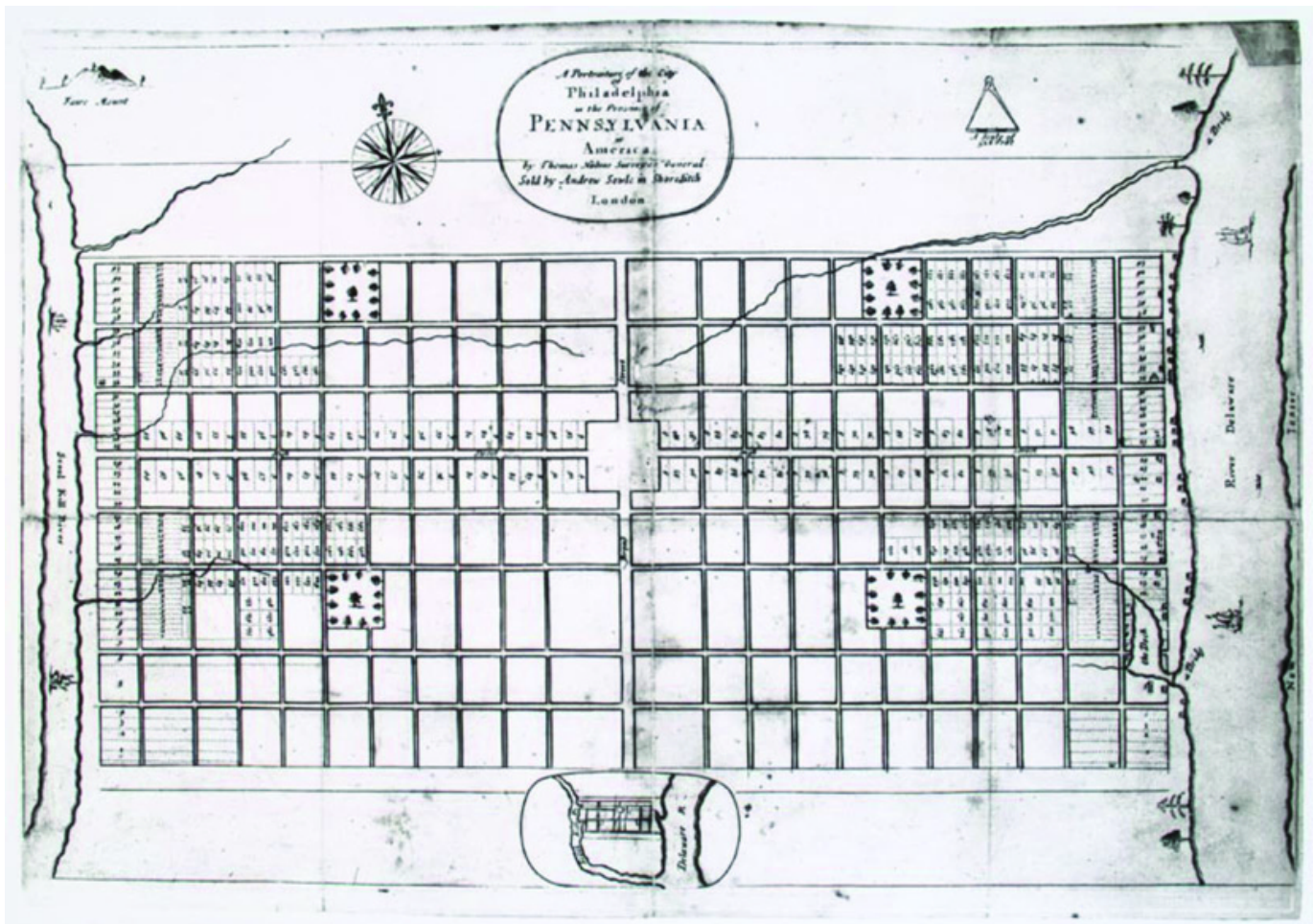


Figure 2.23 Created by Thomas Holme in 1683, *A Portraiture of the City of Philadelphia* was the first map that depicted the Pennsylvania city founded by William Penn and his fellow Quakers. Holme was a surveyor who worked with Penn to devise a system of grid-patterned streets.

In spite of good intentions to foster religious harmony and toleration, the City of Brotherly Love was not entirely peaceful. In the early 1690s, a Quaker missionary and pastor named George Keith grew concerned that Philadelphia’s Quakers had departed from the teaching of

the Bible, relying too much on the “inward light” of the Spirit. The leading Quakers thought him too divisive and removed him as pastor. Keith ignored this judgment and increased his criticism, arguing that Quaker ministers had been corrupted by their own political influence. After he proclaimed that the top Quaker magistrate’s “name would stink,” Keith was indicted for libel. The dispute culminated in an attempt by Keith and his followers to set up their own gallery in the Philadelphia meetinghouse, at which point a brawl broke out and both galleries were destroyed. Keith’s followers eventually dwindled in number, and he returned to England. This dispute showed the difficulty Quakers had in maintaining authority and religious orthodoxy in their own city. Even though Pennsylvania aspired to harmony between Christians of all kinds, it still experienced strife and rivalry within its own denominations.

Nonetheless, Penn’s colony was undoubtedly a religious and commercial success. The prospect of religious freedom attracted many middle-class merchants, farmers, and traders from Europe, and Philadelphia’s population quickly surpassed that of the much older New York City. Commerce flourished as Philadelphia’s Quakers engaged in a profitable trade with their fellow Quakers in Boston, New York, and the West Indies. In spite of many Quakers’ reservations about slavery, slaves and slave trading did become common in Philadelphia. Moreover, many poor whites from Britain and Europe migrated as indentured servants and owed their labor for a time to their masters. However, the climate of the colony’s western backcountry favored the growing of wheat over the much more labor-intensive tobacco. As a result, fewer slaves were needed, and small, independent farms thrived.

William Penn’s experiment in religious and political liberty paid dividends for his colony. Philadelphia became a place where Quakers, Baptists, and Presbyterians all practiced their religion freely without an established church. The capital also had a growing economy. Pennsylvania treated American Indians with justice even as the settlers moved west and established prosperous small farms. The colony became a model of religious liberty and justice in British North America.

Religion in the Colonies		
Colony (Date of Founding)	Reason for Founding	Religion
Plymouth (1620)	Religious freedom	Protestant: Separatists or Pilgrims who believed the Church of England was so beyond saving they must separate from it. Later, Plymouth merged with Massachusetts Bay Colony.
Massachusetts Bay (1629)	Religious freedom	Protestant: Puritans who wanted to reform or purify the Church of England from within, rather than separate from it like the Separatists or Pilgrims.
Maryland (1633)	Religious toleration for Christians	Founded as a haven for Roman Catholics: The Toleration Act (1649) called for religious toleration of all Christians. However, after the Glorious Revolution later in the seventeenth century, Catholics were persecuted and the Church of England was established as the state-sanctioned religion in the colony.
Connecticut (1636)	Religious differences with Puritans in Massachusetts	Protestant: Puritans
Rhode Island (1636)	Religious differences with Puritans in Massachusetts	Protestant: Puritans
Pennsylvania (1682)	Religious freedom	Protestant: Quakers; provided for limited government and complete freedom of conscience

Table 2.1 The American colonies offered a variety of religious experiences, including religious freedom, religious toleration, and established churches.

The British Take Control

In the late 1600s and early 1700s, the British consolidated their control over the eastern seaboard of North America. During the period 1675 to 1676, New England fought against the

Wampanoag and their allies in what was called King Philip's War. The conflict resulted in staggeringly high casualties on both sides and the physical expansion of colonies in New England. It helped convince the English government to revoke the Massachusetts charter and establish greater control over the colony.

Some conflicts arose between the colonists and royal colonial administrations when officials prevented settlers from expanding into American Indians' lands or failed to protect the settlers when they did. In 1676, western colonists were alarmed by a series of attacks by American Indians, and even more by the perception that Governor William Berkeley's government in Jamestown was doing little to protect them. Nathaniel Bacon demanded a military commission to campaign against the Indians, but Berkeley refused. The refusal prompted Bacon and his followers—including small planters, indentured servants, and even slaves—to take up arms in defiance of the governor. Ultimately, the rebellion collapsed, and the English crown sent troops to Virginia to reestablish order. White farmers on smaller farms won tax relief and an expanded suffrage. With better economic conditions in England, fewer people migrated as indentured servants, increasing the demand for enslaved people.

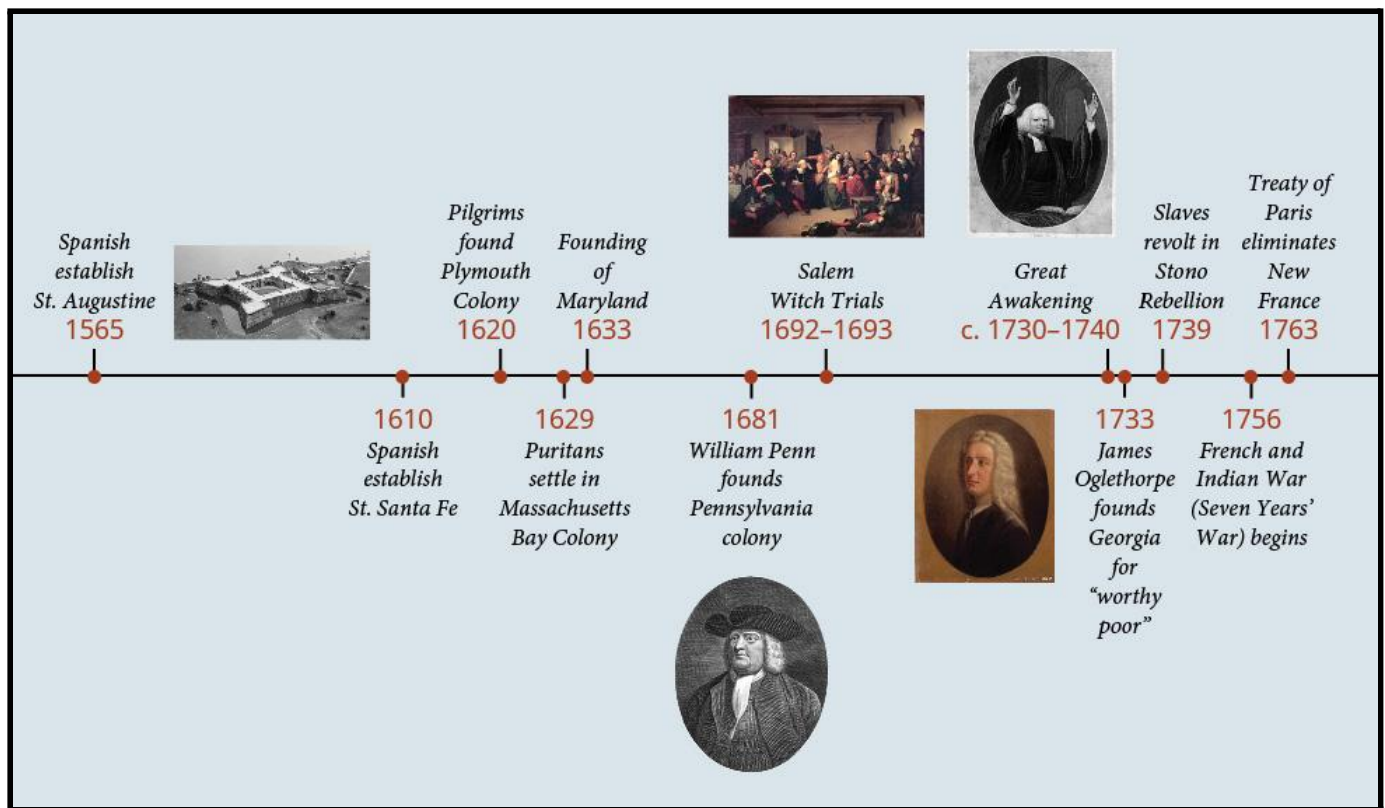
European nations sought to control the flow of goods and materials between them and their colonies in a system called mercantilism. Mercantilism held that the amount of wealth in the world was fixed and best measured in gold and silver bullion. To gain power, nations had to amass wealth by mining these precious raw materials or maintaining a "favorable" balance of trade. Mercantilist countries established colonies as a source of raw materials and trade to enrich the mother country and as a consumer of manufactures from the mother country. The mercantilist countries established monopolies over that trade and regulated their colonies. For example, the British and colonial trade in raw materials and manufactured goods was expected to travel through British ports on British ships. The result was a closely held and extremely profitable trading network that fueled the British Empire. Parliament passed a series of laws called the Navigation Acts in the middle of the seventeenth century to prevent other nations from benefiting from English imperial trade with its North American colonies.

In the mid-1600s, the English went to war with the competing Dutch Empire for control in North America. The English seized New Amsterdam in 1664 during the Second Anglo-Dutch War. King Charles II gave it to his brother, the Duke of York, as a proprietorship, and the colony was renamed New York in the Duke's honor, thus eliminating the Dutch toehold in North America. By the 1700s, therefore, there were only two major European powers in North America: Britain and France.

During the early eighteenth century, the French extended their influence from modern-day Canada down the St. Lawrence River Valley through the Great Lakes and into the Mississippi and Ohio River Valleys. By 1750, French influence extended all the way down the Mississippi to Louisiana (Figure 2.9). Tensions were high as rivalry between France and Great Britain played out against the backdrop of the North American frontier.



Figure 2.9 European settlements in 1750, before the French and Indian War. (credit: "Map of North America in 1750" by Bill of Rights Institute/Flickr, CC BY 4.0)



By the mid-eighteenth century, Great Britain had defeated its rivals and emerged as the dominant force in North America. The cost of this dominance, however, would prove precarious for the relationship between Great Britain and its thirteen mainland colonies.