AP United States History
Summer Assignment

Welcome to AP United States history. Please complete the following assignment over the summer. This assignment is due to your APUSH teacher on the first day of class. Use the accompanying APUSH Summer Assignment Documents to complete each section. This activity will introduce you to the first unit of the semester and provide you with insights into the historical reasoning skills and document analysis you can expect to practice throughout the course of the semester.

PART ONE: New World Beginnings

- Read the following articles. Annotate ***(provide notes/questions/comments)*** each document.
- Summarize the historical arguments made in the article. What is the author saying about the past?
    - **Document #1:** *American Indians* by Elliot West

    - **Document #2:** *The Columbian Exchange* by Alfred W. Crosby

- Use the readings to respond to the following.
    - Identify and analyze the similarities and differences between various Native American populations in North America prior to 1492.

    - What is the Columbian Exchange and how did it impact Europeans as well as native populations in North America? (Be sure to discuss the social as well as biological implications.)

PART TWO: The Planting of English America

- Read the following article. Annotate ***(provide notes/questions/comments)*** each document.
- Summarize the historical arguments made in the article. What is the author saying about the past?
    - **Document #3:** *Early Settlements* by James Horn

- Use the reading to respond to the following question.
    - Explain the evolution of British colonization in North America. How did colonies develop differently in different regions of the continent?

PART THREE: Settling the Northern Colonies

- Read the following article. Annotate ***(provide notes/questions/comments)*** each document.
- Summarize the historical arguments made in the article. What is the author saying about the past?
    - **Document #4:** *The Puritans and Dissent: The Cases of Roger Williams and Anne Hutchinson* by Francis J. Bremer

- Use the reading to respond to the following questions.
    - Describe Puritanism in the colonial era.

    - How did religious devotion shape colonial society in the New England region?

PART FOUR: American Life in the Seventeenth Century

- Read the following article. Annotate ***(provide notes/questions/comments)*** each document.
- Summarize the historical arguments made in the article. What is the author saying about the past?
    - **Document #5:** *African Immigration to Colonial America* by Ira Berlin

- Use the reading to respond to the following questions.
    - Compare and contrast the transatlantic slave trade to the internal slave trade within the colonies. What were the goals of those running slave trades?

    - What were the various experiences for enslaved African throughout the colonies? How was slavery different from region to region?

Explore **The Ultimate AP® US History Guide to the 13 Colonies** website produced by Albert and complete the chart below to compare and contrast the British colonies in North America.

Colony	**Religion**	**Economy** (Important crops, trades, etc.)	**Government** (Type of government structure and important documents)	**People** (Ethnicities and nationalities)	**Other Information**
Southern Colonies					
Maryland					
Virginia					
Carolinas					
Georgia					
Middle Colonies					
Pennsylvania					
New York					
New Jersey					
Delaware					
New England Colonies					
Massachusetts Bay					
Connecticut					
Rhode Island					
New Hampshire					

Document #1

American Indians
By Elliott West

Detail from sketch of Secotan Village, published in Americae pars decima by Theodor de Bry, 1619, based on a drawing by John White. (Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division)

If history is the story of what people have done, then American history began thousands of years ago, and by far most of it is that of Indian peoples and their ancestors before Europeans arrived. Historians, however, disagree over answers to fundamental questions about that long history. Some say the first migrations into the Americas from today's Siberia happened twelve or thirteen thousand years ago, others say as early as twenty-five thousand years ago. That migration continued southward by land along both sides of the Rocky Mountains, according to some, while others lean toward a route down the Pacific coast, partly by boat.

Estimates of the New World population in 1492 range from thirty million to one hundred twenty million, and those for North America above Mexico range from five million to thirteen million. (The best guesses today are around fifty million and seven million respectively.) On some points, however, all agree. In 1492 what is today the United States was home to an extraordinary number of cultures of breathtaking variety. There were more than five hundred peoples, most of them divided into smaller related groups. Each people spoke their own language, many with separate dialects. Many languages were grouped in half a dozen families but many were not, and the difference between, say, the language of the Pomo of California and that of the Chickasaws of Mississippi was as great as the difference between German and Chinese. The disparate peoples expressed themselves in rich artistic traditions—elaborate redwood carvings in the Pacific Northwest; basketry of grasses woven into gorgeous, intricate patterns in the Southwest and California; garments on the plains decorated delicately with shells, porcupine quills, and elk teeth. Indians worshipped by cosmologies as varied as their art and languages. Pawnees believed the stars were living beings who had sung and chanted everything into existence. Hopis could point to a spring where they had emerged from several worlds beneath this one and from which sustaining spirits visited annually.

Each Indian people supported themselves by a savvy and complex use of their particular place, and in America's diverse geography that meant a bewildering array of economies. Those in the wooded East lived in permanent villages and practiced diversified "safety net" economies blending gardening, gathering, hunting, and fishing. Southwestern peoples like the Hopis and Zunis farmed with the help of elaborate irrigation systems. In the Missouri River valley people living in villages of large earth lodges cultivated extensive gardens and hunted from huge herds of bison to the west. Downstream on the lower Mississippi palisaded cities thrived, fed by great cornfields, fishing, and trade, while on the high plains other peoples lived semi-nomadically in small groups as hunters and gatherers. On the Pacific coast there was virtually no agriculture but dense populations supported themselves by gathering, hunting, and fishing—in the Northwest especially of the salmon that returned annually in unimaginable numbers.

Tying together this splay of cultures and economies was an intricate and well-trafficked trade network. Goods from across the continent and beyond passed through major trading centers and annual rendezvous into a webbing that ultimately reached the remotest villages. Bison meat and hides from the plains were swapped for corn in the Southwest and fish and conch shells in the Southeast.

Mica from the Appalachian Mountains made its way to the northern Rocky Mountains, and obsidian from the Rockies traveled to the upper Ohio River and deep into Mexico. From Mexico in turn came a whole array of goods, including colorful bird feathers. Everywhere daily life featured details from hundreds of miles away. Men along the eastern Great Lakes wore necklaces of grizzly claws from the far West, while others on the upper Rio Grande listened to music from flutes fashioned from the leg bones of Gulf coastal whooping cranes.

The first Europeans, then, encountered a land far more culturally varied than the one they had left. They would only gradually realize that variety, however. Early reports from America, whether from the English and French on the Atlantic coast or from the Spanish on the Gulf coast and Southwest, pictured Indians in similar terms that were both clichéd and contradictory. Indians were described as simple, childlike, and innocent but also savage, dangerous, godless, and debased. American Indians' impressions of Europeans are much harder to determine, but natives also misunderstood much of what they saw. Certainly they underestimated the forces about to be unleashed and the changes that would follow.

Indians often were first impressed by what they might gain from the newcomers. A pictograph from the Lene Lenape (later called the Delawares) expresses their initial response to whites who had come "from north and south." It shows a ship, and its accompanying memory is, "They are peaceful; they have great things; who are they?" Indians took in much that was immaterial. European contact brought an expanded view of the world's expanse and new notions of people's relations to God, the Great Mystery. The most immediate effects, however, came from the "great things" changing their daily lives. Metal goods ranked high among them. Iron pots and axe heads, a point for a lance or arrow, and something as simple as a metal awl to replace a sharpened piece of bone to punch a hole in an animal hide—these were near miraculous advances that eased the labors and heightened the comforts of Native peoples. Such items coursed through the long-established trading network linking coast to coast and the Arctic to tropical rainforests. This initial European impact, the vigorous spout of life-transforming goods, preceded the Europeans themselves into much of the interior. Impressions of the newcomers traveled with the pots and spearpoints. In 1542 Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo, the first European to sail along the Pacific coast, heard from Indians that to the east "men like us were traveling about, bearded, clothed and armed . . . killing many native Indians."[1]

That would have been the expedition of Francisco Vasquez de Coronado (1540–1542) or Hernando de Soto (1539–1542), maybe both. Coronado's rode out of Mexico into Arizona and New Mexico, with a thrust through modern-day Texas up into Kansas. De Soto's landed in Florida and marched through what is today Georgia, the Carolinas, Alabama, Mississippi, and Arkansas, with an offshoot to eastern Texas. Both epitomized Spain's two dominant motives—wealth and souls—and the Native response to them. Both Coronado and de Soto hoped to find opulent cities and storehouses of wealth like those conquered in Mexico and Peru. The second motive was religious. Columbus's first voyage was in the same year that Spain finally expelled Muslim forces that had occupied part of Iberia for nearly eight centuries. Fired by that victory, the Spanish saw the unexpected revelation of the Americas as a duty to save its peoples' souls through conversion to Roman Catholicism.

In both cases some American Indians welcomed the newcomers at first, hoping to obtain Spanish goods and to acquire whatever spiritual powers they thought useful. Soon, however, the conquistadors' demands, abuses, and intolerance soured relations. De Soto's large command, about seven hundred men at the outset, was especially brutal, and Indians put up stiff resistance, killing as many as two hundred in one battle. De Soto died of a fever, and the accounts brought back by the expedition's survivors, like those of Coronado on his return from the Southwest, discouraged further expeditions. In 1565 Pedro Menendez de Aviles founded San Augustine on the Atlantic coast of Florida, and thirty-three years later Juan de Onate established missions and military outposts among the Pueblo peoples along the upper Rio Grande in New Mexico. Now Spain's purpose was religious and strategic—to spread the faith and to protect more valuable holdings to the south in the Indies and Mexico from imperial competition.

Spain's first competitors were the French, who explored the Atlantic coast and attempted to colonize present-day South Carolina, from which they also preyed on the treasure fleets bearing gold and silver back to Spain. Menendez destroyed one colony and set out as well to dominate Indians of the Southeast, but the isolated, thinly garrisoned outposts held only a tenuous toehold in Florida in 1620. By then the English also were making their bid for the Atlantic coast. Their colony at Roanoke in North Carolina, begun in 1585, vanished during a long delay in resupplying it. In 1607 England tried again, landing 105 colonists on the James River in Virginia. Unlike those of the Spanish, English goals were mainly commercial, with plans for Indians to supply labor and support for the production of such big-ticket items as wine, silk, and caviar. Native Virginians, a confederation numbering perhaps twenty thousand persons, had little interest in that, however. As had others elsewhere, their leader, Powhatan, at first courted English trade, but, also as elsewhere, English demands and cultural misunderstandings soon brought conflict. In 1620 Jamestown, like Spanish St. Augustine,

was barely hanging on. In that year another English colony, Plymouth, with another motive, to be a religious refuge for radical English Protestants, was planted on Massachusetts Bay.

With a few isolated exceptions, Indian peoples in what is today the United States were firmly in command of their world in 1620. They vastly outnumbered Europeans. In many ways they had benefited from goods Europeans offered, and they were increasingly savvy to the newcomers' ways and how to deal with them to their advantage. By then, however, their vulnerabilities to the new arrivals were clear. In time those vulnerabilities would undermine their independence, cripple their economies and threaten their cultures and even their very existence.

The greatest threat came from diseases—smallpox, typhus, influenza, measles, malaria, and others. With no earlier exposure, Indians had little resistance to them, and the toll was horrific. Pathogens brought by de Soto's expedition apparently swept away vast numbers of southeastern natives and led to the abandonment of many cities described by the invaders. The terrible losses from diseases were followed by economic disruption, which brought hunger, social disarray, and further deaths. Like trade goods, epidemics often moved in advance of Europeans themselves. Traders, fishermen and privateers infected Indians along the North Atlantic coast on the eve of the first colonies. Plymouth was founded on the ruins of a Wampanoag village abandoned after a pestilence, possibly typhus, had swept away its peoples in 1616–1617. More than fifty New England settlements rose from other devastated villages. Diseases would move in waves across the continent, eventually reducing the overall Indian population by 80 percent or more.

Europeans brought domesticated animals that Indians had never known. Some were welcomed. Especially in the far West after 1680, horses would revolutionize Native life. Initially, however, horses were hugely helpful in subduing Indians and in maintaining European settlements. Animals introduced diseases—de Soto's herds of pigs may have carried dangerous contagions—and pigs, cattle, horses, sheep and goats threatened Indian economies by destroying their crops and competing with game animals for forage. The effects of Europe's technology, like its animals, cut both ways. While trade goods offered great advantages, the more Indians used them, the more reliant on them they became, and thus the more leverage Europeans had in economic exchanges. As the newcomers' numbers grew and Indians were less able to supply what they wanted, that disparity would prove deeply troubling.

The greatest threats to Indian peoples in 1620 were so fundamental they are easy to miss. Europe held far more people than did North America—and in fact the Indian population was shrinking due to epidemics. European nations could focus resources and power against Native American divided into hundreds of different societies. European nations were highly motivated to invade and exploit a continent brimming with resources, and they looked upon its natives not as partners but as people to convert or to conquer. The Indians' firm command of what is now the United States was not to last. By 1820 they had lost control of land east of the Mississippi River, and a mere sixty years later the descendants of those newcomers perched so precariously on the Atlantic in 1620 dominated the continent all the way to the Pacific. The ways of life of all American Indian peoples were under siege.

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[1] "Translation from the Spanish of the Account by the Pilot Ferrel of the Voyage of Cabrillo along the West Coast of North America in 1542," in Report upon United States Geographical Surveys West of the One Hundredth Meridian, George Montague Wheeler, et al. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1879), 7:305. Available on Google Books.

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Document #2

The Columbian Exchange
By Alfred W. Crosby

Millions of years ago, continental drift carried the Old World and New Worlds apart, splitting North and South America from Eurasia and Africa. That separation lasted so long that it fostered divergent evolution; for instance, the development of rattlesnakes on one side of the Atlantic and vipers on the other. After 1492, human voyagers in part reversed this tendency. Their artificial re-establishment of connections through the commingling of Old and New World plants, animals, and bacteria, commonly known as the Columbian Exchange, is one of the more spectacular and significant ecological events of the past millennium.

When Europeans first touched the shores of the Americas, Old World crops such as wheat, barley, rice, and turnips had not traveled west across the Atlantic, and New World crops such as maize, white potatoes, sweet potatoes, and manioc had not traveled east to Europe. In the Americas, there were no horses, cattle, sheep, or goats, all animals of Old World origin. Except for the llama, alpaca, dog, a few fowl, and guinea pig, the New World had no equivalents to the domesticated animals associated with the Old World, nor did it have the pathogens associated with the Old World's dense populations of humans and such associated creatures as chickens, cattle, black rats, and Aedes egypti mosquitoes. Among these germs were those that carried smallpox, measles, chickenpox, influenza, malaria, and yellow fever.

The Columbian exchange of crops affected both the Old World and the New. Amerindian crops that have crossed oceans—for example, maize to China and the white potato to Ireland—have been stimulants to population growth in the Old World. The latter's crops and livestock have had much the same effect in the Americas—for example, wheat in Kansas and the Pampa, and beef cattle in Texas and Brazil. The full story of the exchange is many volumes long, so for the sake of brevity and clarity let us focus on a specific region, the eastern third of the United States of America.

As might be expected, the Europeans who settled on the east coast of the United States cultivated crops like wheat and apples, which they had brought with them. European weeds, which the colonists did not cultivate and, in fact, preferred to uproot, also fared well in the New World. John Josselyn, an Englishman and amateur naturalist who visited New England twice in the seventeenth century, left us a list, "Of Such Plants as Have Sprung Up since the English Planted and Kept Cattle in New England," which included couch grass, dandelion, shepherd's purse, groundsel, sow thistle, and chickweeds. One of these, a plantain (Plantago major), was named "Englishman's Foot" by the Amerindians of New England and Virginia who believed that it would grow only where the English "have trodden, and was never known before the English came into this country." Thus, as they intentionally sowed Old World crop seeds, the European settlers were unintentionally contaminating American fields with weed seed. More importantly, they were stripping and burning forests, exposing the native minor flora to direct sunlight and to the hooves and teeth of Old World livestock. The native flora could not tolerate the stress. The imported weeds could, because they had lived with large numbers of grazing animals for thousands of years.

Cattle and horses were brought ashore in the early 1600s and found hospitable climate and terrain in North America. Horses arrived in Virginia as early as 1620 and in Massachusetts in 1629. Many wandered free with little more evidence of their connection to humanity than collars with a hook at the bottom to catch on fences as they tried to leap over them to get at crops. Fences were not for keeping livestock in, but for keeping livestock out.

Native American resistance to the Europeans was ineffective. Indigenous peoples suffered from white brutality, alcoholism, the killing and driving off of game, and the expropriation of farmland, but all these together are insufficient to explain the degree of their defeat. The crucial factor was not people, plants, or animals, but germs. The history of the United States begins with Virginia and Massachusetts, and their histories begin with epidemics of unidentified diseases. At the time of the abortive Virginia colony at Roanoke in the 1580s the nearby Amerindians "began to die quickly. The disease was so strange that they neither knew what it was, nor how to cure it."[1] When the Pilgrims settled at Plymouth, Massachusetts, in 1620, they did so in a village and on a coast nearly cleared of Amerindians by a recent epidemic. Thousands had "died in a great plague not long since; and pity it was and is to see so many goodly fields, and so well seated, without man to dress and manure the same."[2]

Smallpox was the worst and the most spectacular of the infectious diseases mowing down the Native Americans. The first recorded pandemic of that disease in British North America detonated among the Algonquin of Massachusetts in the early 1630s: William Bradford of Plymouth Plantation wrote that the victims "fell down so generally of this disease as they were in the end not able to help one another, no not to make a fire nor fetch a little water to drink, nor any to bury the dead."[3]

The missionaries and the traders who ventured into the American interior told the same appalling story about smallpox and the indigenes. In 1738 alone the epidemic destroyed half the Cherokee; in 1759 nearly half the Catawbas; in the first years of the next century two-thirds of the Omahas and perhaps half the entire population between the Missouri River and New Mexico; in 1837–1838 nearly every last one of the Mandans and perhaps half the people of the high plains.

European explorers encountered distinctively American illnesses such as Chagas Disease, but these did not have much effect on Old World populations. Venereal syphilis has also been called American, but that accusation is far from proven. Even if we add all the Old World deaths blamed on American diseases together, including those ascribed to syphilis, the total is insignificant compared to Native American losses to smallpox alone.

The export of America's native animals has not revolutionized Old World agriculture or ecosystems as the introduction of European animals to the New World did. America's grey squirrels and muskrats and a few others have established themselves east of the Atlantic and west of the Pacific, but that has not made much of a difference. Some of America's domesticated animals are raised in the Old World, but turkeys have not displaced chickens and geese, and guinea pigs have proved useful in laboratories, but have not usurped rabbits in the butcher shops.

The New World's great contribution to the Old is in crop plants. Maize, white potatoes, sweet potatoes, various squashes, chiles, and manioc have become essentials in the diets of hundreds of millions of Europeans, Africans, and Asians. Their influence on Old World peoples, like that of wheat and rice on New World peoples, goes far to explain the global population explosion of the past three centuries. The Columbian Exchange has been an indispensable factor in that demographic explosion.

All this had nothing to do with superiority or inferiority of biosystems in any absolute sense. It has to do with environmental contrasts. Amerindians were accustomed to living in one particular kind of environment, Europeans and Africans in another. When the Old World peoples came to America, they brought with them all their plants, animals, and germs, creating a kind of environment to which they were already adapted, and so they increased in number. Amerindians had not adapted to European germs, and so initially their numbers plunged. That decline has reversed in our time as Amerindian populations have adapted to the Old World's environmental influence, but the demographic triumph of the invaders, which was the most spectacular feature of the Old World's invasion of the New, still stands.

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[1] David B. Quinn, ed. The Roanoke Voyages, 1584–1590: Documents to Illustrate the English Voyages to North America (London: Hakluyt Society, 1955), 378.

[2] Edward Winslow, Nathaniel Morton, William Bradford, and Thomas Prince, New England's Memorial (Cambridge: Allan and Farnham, 1855), 362.

[3] William Bradford, Of Plymouth Plantation, 1620–1647, ed. Samuel E. Morison (New York: Knopf, 1952), 271.

Alfred W. Crosby is professor emeritus of history, geography, and American studies at the University of Texas at Austin. In addition to his seminal work on this topic, The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492 (1972), he has also written America's Forgotten Pandemic: The Influenza of 1918 (1989) and Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900–1900 (1986).

Document #3

Early Settlements
By James Horn

Nieuw Amsterdam, from a 1682 map of America by Nicholas Visscher. (Gilder Lehrman Collection)

"I marvel not a little," Richard Hakluyt the younger wrote in 1582, "that since the first discovery of America (which is now full fourscore and ten years) after so great conquest and plantings of the Spaniards and Portuguese there, that we of England could never have the grace to set fast footing in such fertile and temperate places, as are left as yet unpossessed by them."[1] Hakluyt was among the foremost experts of colonization of his age and a glance at a map of the Americas in the early 1580s would have confirmed his

gloomy assessment: the entire Western Hemisphere was claimed by Spain. Despite repeated explorations throughout the sixteenth century and sporadic efforts to establish colonies, not a single non-Hispanic nation had established a settlement in the New World. At the time Hakluyt wrote, the Spanish Catholic monarch Philip II was the undisputed master of the New World.

Hakluyt hoped that the English would soon stake a claim to New World lands, but even at his most optimistic he could not have foreseen the dramatic changes that were about to take place. Within fifty years, England had established successful colonies in Virginia, Bermuda, New England, and the Caribbean. Within a century, English settlements stretched some 1,200 miles along the North American coast from Maine to the Carolinas, and in the West Indies in a great arc from Jamaica to Barbados. By 1763, following a series of imperial wars fought among Great Britain, France, and Spain for global preeminence, the British emerged with a vast North American empire.

THE PEARL AND THE GOLD

The first phase of English settlement from 1585 to 1603 was dominated by one man—Sir Walter Raleigh—and by one ambition—to emulate Spanish success in the New World. Tens of thousands of Spanish settlers crossed the Atlantic in the ninety years following the European discovery of America by Christopher Columbus. By 1580, the Spanish Indies boasted 225 towns and cities with a total white population of approximately 150,000 scattered throughout the Caribbean, Mexico, and South American mainland. Each year, treasure fleets from Panama and Mexico sailed to Spain carrying gold and silver bullion, pearls, cochineal, hides, cacao, and other valuable commodities. The massive flow of wealth from the New World filling Philip's royal coffers made possible his ambition to expand Spain's dominions throughout Europe and enlarge his overseas empire.[2]

The English were well aware of the threat posed by Philip's aim to reunite Christendom under a universal Catholic monarch. Raleigh borrowed freely from plans developed earlier by his half brother, Sir Humphrey Gilbert, which called for the English to attack Spain in the New World in order to weaken its power in the Old. A colony located somewhere along the eastern seaboard of North America would be an ideal site, Raleigh believed, for a privateering base from to prey on Spanish galleons. But a broader ambition stemmed from the exploits of famed conquistadors such as Hernán Cortés and Francisco Pizarro, who had plundered the wealth of the Aztecs and Incas and had carved out empires for themselves and their king. If the Spanish had done so, then why couldn't the English?

Raleigh chose Roanoke Island, off the coast of modern-day North Carolina, as the site of his colony. Three principal objectives guided his thinking: to claim the region for the English crown and establish a beachhead for further territorial expansion; to establish a convenient American harbor for privateers; and to search for precious minerals as well as a river passage through the landmass of North America to the Pacific Ocean. After a successful reconnaissance expedition to the coast of North Carolina in 1584, he launched a large fleet carrying about 600 men the following spring. A garrison of approximately 108 soldiers on Roanoke Island lasted for a year before the English were forced to abandon their fort when supplies ran out and hostilities with local Indian peoples made it impossible to remain any longer. The island had also proved to be unsuitable as a privateering base owing to its shallow waters.

Despite the setback, Raleigh pressed on with plans to dispatch another expedition in 1587. He had been encouraged by reports of great quantities of a soft pale metal, perhaps gold, in a wealthy province deep in the interior called "Chaunis Temoatan," and by the possibility of a passage through the mountains to the South Sea (Pacific). The new settlement, made up of civilians under the command of John White, was to be established on the Chesapeake Bay to the north, where the English had discovered fertile lands and deep rivers capable of accommodating ocean-going ships.

In April 1587, White led a group of 118 men, women, and children to the Chesapeake Bay to establish a colony to be called the City of Raleigh. They never reached the Chesapeake, however. The mariners instead put them off at Roanoke Island and refused to take them any farther. After remaining on the island for six weeks, White returned to England at the end of August to raise funds and pick up more supplies but was unable to get back to Roanoke Island for three years, by which time the colonists had disappeared. Although he found clues that indicated they had moved to Croatoan Island fifty miles to the south, he was unable to reach them and returned to England a broken man. Raleigh's plans had come to nothing, and the first sustained English attempt to establish an American colony had failed.[3]

ENGLISH AMERICA

The turn of the century witnessed a new direction in English colonizing activities. Peace with Spain in 1604 brought an end to privateering, plunder, and the need for a North American base from which to attack Spanish shipping. What remained was the

certainty that the New World offered England potentially vast profits from valuable American commodities. The new era heralded the age of commercial trading companies.

Two companies were established by royal charter in April 1606. The Plymouth Company, made up of merchants and financiers from Plymouth, Bristol, Exeter, and lesser West Country ports, was granted the right to settle lands between the Chesapeake Bay and Maine. The Virginia Company, supported by important statesmen, merchants, and gentry from London and surrounding counties, was permitted to establish settlements in a region stretching from North Carolina to the Hudson River.

The Plymouth Company's venture did not prosper. A small settlement established at Sagadahoc near the mouth of the Kennebec River, Maine, in the summer of 1607 was abandoned the following spring after a series of disastrous setbacks. Its failure gave the region an unenviable reputation for harsh winters and unfriendly Indians. England did not attempt to plant another colony in the northern region for more than a decade, although plenty of English mariners plied the rich fishing waters off the coast and dabbled in the fur trade with local peoples.

To the south, picking up where Sir Walter Raleigh had left off twenty years earlier, the Virginia Company of London focused their efforts on the Chesapeake Bay. The Company's aims were to assert England's claim to North America, search for gold or silver and a passage to the South Sea (Pacific Ocean) in the interior, harvest the natural resources of the region, and trade with the American Indians.

Jamestown, founded on May 14, 1607, barely survived its first five years. A combination of disease, Indian attacks, faction, and the failure to make any significant discoveries or profit brought the colony to the edge of collapse on several occasions and discouraged continuing investment. The discovery of a lucrative cash crop, tobacco, which could be cultivated extensively in Virginia and brought a handsome return in England, saved the colony but not the Virginia Company, whose exclusive charter was revoked in 1624.

By the mid-1620s the new royal colony was thriving; some 1,200 to 1,300 men, women, and children lived along the James River valley, and new immigrants arrived regularly to work on the growing number of tobacco plantations lining the rivers. Tobacco, the first major American staple to emerge, formed the basis of the Chesapeake's transatlantic economy for the next century and a half. As a consequence, Virginia rapidly took on the characteristics of a plantation society in which large numbers of poor white laborers (indentured servants) toiled in the fields alongside initially small numbers of enslaved Africans. The first Africans on English soil on the North American mainland came to Virginia in a Dutch ship in 1619.[4]

In New England colonial development took a different course, influenced by the immigrants' religious convictions and the natural resources of the region. The first significant group to arrive was made up of religious separatists who established themselves at Plymouth in 1620. The Pilgrims wished to erect a pure church free of the corruptions of the Old World where they could worship and govern themselves without interference from state authorities. Plymouth did not develop into an important colony; its population and economy remained marginal throughout the century, dwarfed by its much larger neighbor, Massachusetts.

The Massachusetts Bay Company, founded in 1629, conceived colonization of New England on a much grander scale. Attracting London merchants and investors to finance their venture as well as Puritan settlers who wished to live under a reformed church rather than a separate one, the colony welcomed thousands of emigrants from England during the 1630s and early 1640s. Based on fishing, farming, and maritime trade, settlement quickly spread throughout the region along the coast and fertile river valleys spawning new colonies in Connecticut, New Haven, and Rhode Island (of differing theological temperatures), as well as offshoots farther north in New Hampshire and Maine. By 1640, New England's population approached 14,000 and the region was the most populous in English North America.[5]

Puritan migration to New England, however, was only a small component of a much broader flow of settlers to English America in this period. More than 200,000 settlers arrived in the colonies between 1630 and 1670. Most ended up in the West Indies and the Chesapeake working on sugar and tobacco plantations. In the tobacco colonies of Virginia and Maryland, white indentured servants were the main source of labor throughout the century; enslaved Africans did not become numerically significant until the 1680s and 1690s. In contrast, the numbers of enslaved African laborers in the English West Indies (St. Christopher, Barbados, Nevis, Montserrat, Antigua, and Jamaica) equaled the white population as early as the 1660s.

The great influx of white settlers, together with large numbers of enslaved Africans transported to the islands, transformed English North America and the Caribbean during the mid-seventeenth century. In 1660 there were three major clusters of settlement: New

England with a population of approximately 33,000; the Chesapeake with 25,000; and the English West Indies with 66,000, half of whom were enslaved Africans.[6]

With the rapid spread of white settlement many American Indian populations experienced demographic collapse. In the Caribbean, Spanish Florida, and English mainland colonies, Old World diseases such as smallpox, measles, typhus, and influenza ravaged Native peoples. In some regions, virulent epidemics carried off up to 90 percent of the population, destroying entire communities and leaving once densely populated lands deserted. Periodic wars and the steady encroachment of white settlers into Indian territories further hastened population decline. Of the approximately 15,000 Algonquians who lived along the coastal plain of Virginia when the English first arrived, only about 1,000 remained by 1700. In New England the decline was equally dramatic, from about 70,000 in 1620 to 12,000 half a century later.[7]

Another pulse of expansion began after 1660 with the capture of New Netherland (New York) from the Dutch in 1664 and the establishment of New Jersey in the same year and Pennsylvania in 1681. All three colonies grew quickly, rising from a combined population of 15,000 in 1680 to more than 53,000 twenty years later, forming a fourth population center in the Middle Colonies.

At the same time, settlers from overcrowded Barbados established Charles Town, Carolina, in 1670, initially supplying livestock and naval products (tar) to the West Indies but then turning to rice cultivation in the 1690s. Rice became the third great staple of Britain's transatlantic commerce, alongside West Indian sugar and Chesapeake tobacco, and with the expansion of rice-growing areas in the low country of the coastal plain, the numbers of enslaved African laborers increased steadily. By 1710, nearly 40 percent of the colony's 11,000 inhabitants were of African descent, and South Carolina soon emerged as the first mainland colony with an African majority.[8]

The establishment of half a dozen new colonies in the second half of the seventeenth century brought about important changes to the character of English America. The Middle Colonies introduced greater ethnic and religious diversity with the absorption of Dutch, German, French, and Scandinavian peoples. In addition, the arrival of West Indian planters in Carolina and growing numbers of enslaved laborers forcibly transported from West Africa and Angola created a new cultural mosaic as English colonies of the seventeenth century gave way to the expansive, polyglot British American world of the eighteenth.

EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY BRITISH AMERICA

Three major trends characterize the expansion of British America through 1763: rapid white and black population growth, increasing diversity among immigrant populations, and the surge of movement into the backcountry. These far-reaching social, economic, and cultural developments took place in the context of intense imperial rivalry between the major European powers in America—Britain, France, and Spain—expressed in a series of major colonial wars between 1689 and 1763 that redrew national boundaries several times during the period.

In 1700, the white population of British mainland colonies was approximately a quarter of a million. Sixty years later in the midst of the French and Indian War (1756–1763), the population had risen fivefold to 1,284,000, representing a doubling of the population every twenty-five years. The areas of fastest growth were the Middle Colonies and Lower South, which grew more than six times over the period. Black populations grew even more rapidly from about 20,000 in 1700 to 326,000 by 1760, reflecting the massive importation of enslaved Africans into the Chesapeake and Lower South after 1720. Sectional divisions were much in evidence by 1760. Whereas in New England and the Middle Colonies Africans and African Americans made up 3 percent and 7 percent respectively of the population, in the Chesapeake and Lower South the corresponding figures were 38 percent and 44 percent. Together, Virginia, Maryland, and the Lower South accounted for fully 87 percent of all Africans and African Americans living in the mainland colonies in 1760.[9]

Continuing large-scale immigration and high rates of natural increase fueled European population growth and expansion. Commercial disruption caused by Queen Anne's War (1702–1713), initially slowed the pace of immigration during the first two decades of the eighteenth century. But from the 1720s huge numbers of white settlers moved to America: well over 100,000 up to 1750 and another 200,000 by 1776. English indentured servants, Ulster Irish, Catholic Irish, Scots, French Huguenots, and tens of thousands of Germans from the Rhineland and Swiss cantons moved into the coastal plain; flocked to the burgeoning port cities of Boston, New York, and Philadelphia; trekked along fertile river valleys into the interior; and pressed on toward the Appalachian Mountains. Tens of thousands of settlers headed westward into the rich lands of the Virginia piedmont and across the mountains to the enormous expanse of the Ohio River basin. Others went south along the Great Wagon Road to the Shenandoah Valley, the Carolinas, and Georgia. All along the

expanding backcountry frontier, Irish, Scots, English, Welsh, German, and French colonists, together with enslaved Africans and American Indians, evolved locally distinctive societies where ethnic diversity and the continual arrival of new settlers were taken for granted.[10]

Territorial adjustments in the wake of major imperial wars encourage ethnic diversity and the expansion of settlement. As a result of the Treaty of Utrecht (1713), which ended Queen Anne's War, Britain acquired Hudson Bay, Acadia (Nova Scotia), and Newfoundland from France, greatly strengthening British presence in the north. Far to the south, Georgia was created by royal charter in 1732 to provide a buffer between the Carolinas and Spanish Florida. King George's War (1743–1748) heightened British interest in the vast lands claimed by the French in Ohio territory. The French and Indian War (1756–1763) was the culmination of British, French, and Spanish rivalry in North America and resulted in complete British dominance. Britain took control of Canada and lands east of the Mississippi River from France as well as Florida from the Spanish. The Spanish still claimed lands west from the Mississippi to California (Spanish Louisiana), but by the Treaty of Paris in 1763 Britain emerged as the acknowledged master of North America.[11]

In little more than a century and a half, British America had grown from a fragile outpost on a distant Atlantic shore to an empire that stretched from the great forests and lakes of Canada to the lush tropical lands of East Florida. Population continued to surge and reached approximately two and half million by the Revolutionary War, embracing a remarkable diversity of peoples, regions, and settlements. The political convulsion ignited by the American Revolution split Britain's American empire in two and accelerated the expansion of settler populations. Taking advantage of the end of British restrictions on westward movement, migrants flooded into the American interior, foreshadowing the greater movements to come in the nineteenth century.

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[1] E. G. R. Taylor, ed., *The Original Writings and Correspondence of the Two Richard Hakluyts*(London: Hakluyt Society, 1935), 1:175; 2:242.

[2] J. H. Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America, 1492–1830* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 41, 52.

[3] James Horn, *A Kingdom Strange: The Brief and Tragic History of the Lost Colony of Roanoke*(New York: Basic Books, 2010).

[4] Edmund S. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia*(New York: Norton, 1975); James Horn, *A Land As God Made It: Jamestown and the Birth of America* (New York: Basic Books, 2005). Tobacco was initially an important cash crop on the Atlantic island of Bermuda, governed from 1615 by the Somers Islands Company, and in the early English Caribbean, notably Barbados, down to the sugar revolution of the 1640s.

[5] Virginia DeJohn Anderson, "New England in the Seventeenth Century," in Nicholas Canny, ed.,*The Origins of Empire: British Overseas Enterprise to the Close of the Seventeenth Century*(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 193–216; Alan Taylor, *American Colonies* (New York: Penguin, 2001), 164–185.

[6] Russell R. Menard, "British Migration to the Chesapeake Colonies in the Seventeenth Century," in Lois Green Carr, Philip D. Morgan, and Jean B. Russo, eds., *Colonial Chesapeake Society*(Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 105; John J. McCusker and Russell R. Menard, *The Economy of British America, 1607–1789* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 154; Hilary McD. Beckles, "The 'Hub of Empire': The Caribbean and Britain in the Seventeenth Century," in Canny, ed., *Origins of Empire*, 224; Jack P. Greene, *Pursuits of Happiness: The Social Development of Early Modern British Colonies and the Formation of American Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 178.

[7] Helen C. Rountree, *Pocahontas's People: The Powhatan Indians of Virginia through Four Centuries* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press,1990), 104–105; Steven Sarson, *British America, 1500–1800: Creating Colonies, Imagining an Empire* (London: Hodder Arnold, 2005), 136.

[8] Greene, *Pursuits of Happiness*, 178; Ned C. Landsman, "The Middle Colonies: New Opportunities for Settlement, 1660–1700," in Canny, ed., *Origins of Empire*, 351–373; Taylor,*American Colonies*, 223–226, 236–239.

[9] Greene, *Pursuits of Happiness*, 179.

[10] James Horn and Philip D. Morgan, "Settlers and Slaves: European and African Migrations to Early Modern British America," in Elizabeth Mancke and Carole Shammas, eds., *The Creation of the British Atlantic World* (Baltimore MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 24, 33–34; Richard R. Johnson, "Growth and Mastery: British North America, 1690–1748," in P. J. Marshall, ed., *The Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 276–298; Sarson, *British America*, 166, 182.

[11] Taylor, *American Colonies*, 421–433; Anthony McFarlane, *The British in the Americas, 1480–1815* (London: Longman, 1992), 220–225.

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Document #4

The Puritans and Dissent: The Cases of Roger Williams and Anne Hutchinson
By Francis J. Bremer

"Landing of Roger Williams," based on a painting by Alonzo Chappel (New York: Johnson Fry & Col, 1867) (Gilder Lehrman Collection)

Every society constructs what one scholar has called a "perimeter fence," which sets the boundary between actions and beliefs that are acceptable and those that are not.[1] This is as true of the United States in the twentieth century as it was of New England in the seventeenth century. The debates over where to place that boundary can be very heated, pitting those who believe that a broader range of opinions can foster progress towards the society's goals against others who fear that contested notions will poison the body politic.

The puritans[2] who settled New England in 1630 were not coming to America to promote religious freedom for all, but to achieve for themselves a freedom from the church and civil officials in England who had prevented them from pursuing their faith as they believed God wanted them to. The settlement of Massachusetts presented the colonists with their first opportunity to decide what views and actions were acceptable and to prohibit what was not. Virtually all puritans believed that they had been born again through God's grace, bestowed upon them despite their unworthiness. Their reaction to this experience differed, however. Massachusetts governor John Winthrop was typical of puritans who never lost awareness of the fact that they were unworthy of God's love and still imperfect in their understanding. Others believed that because God had blessed them, their views on what was to be believed and practiced were beyond question. These differences were key as the colonists sought to establish the perimeter fence that would define their society.

Open discussion that could lead to a greater understanding of God's will and way was how the godly had worked to achieve unity when in England. In his famous "Christian Charity" lay sermon, Governor Winthrop expressed the belief that if the colonists lived as God desired them to, he would allow them to "see much more of his wisdom, power, goodness and truth than we have formerly been acquainted with."[3] Clearly he did not believe that he or his fellow colonists had no further need for debate, and the early history of the colony was characterized by vigorous discussion within individual congregations and in the larger community. In many cases debates over religious views led to agreement or to a willingness to accept differences. For example, the Watertown clergyman George

Philips expressed a belief that the Roman Catholic Church was a true church, something most Protestants had traditionally denied. After extended discussion, he abandoned that position. What was essential to the system of open discussion of religious views was the willingness of all sides to admit that they might be wrong and that their openness further truth. This, as well as the nature of the actual ideas proposed, helps to explain the controversies that centered on Roger Williams and Anne Hutchinson.

Roger Williams was a charismatic young clergyman who had first come to New England in 1631. He was welcomed by Winthrop as "a godly minister."[4] Just as his fellow puritans had criticized the Church of England as not going far enough to advance the kingdom of God, so Williams would use his prophetic voice to challenge the colonists to go further. All puritans were committed to restricting religious ordinances to those who were God's elect and limiting religious interaction with those who were not godly. Williams pursued this goal with a zeal that led him to insist on things that most of his peers believed were too extreme. After a brief stay in Boston, he left for the Plymouth colony because the Massachusetts churches refused to renounce all connections with the Church of England. He felt more comfortable with the Plymouth Separatists (Pilgrims), but his drive to push the quest for purity ever further soon worried the colonists there. Elder William Brewster and Governor William Bradford both expressed concern over Williams's beliefs that it was wrong for a godly magistrate to administer an oath to an ungodly man, that it was wrong for a godly man to even pray with family members who were not elect, and that the practice of infant baptism allowed some who were not chosen by God to enter the church.

Disappointed with the Pilgrims, Williams returned to Massachusetts, settling in Salem, where he preached unofficially and continued to express radical ideas. He asserted that women should wear veils when they went abroad, but especially in church services, as a sign that they had inherited Eve's corruption. He questioned the appropriateness of the red cross of St. George as a symbol on the English flag. He took the position that it was inappropriate for the king to have granted a charter to Massachusetts since the monarch had no true claim to the land he was dispensing.

The issue of women and veils was debated in the Boston church and evidently resolved against the requirement. The Salem magistrate John Endecott acted on Williams's views on the use of the cross by cutting the red cross from the English flag used by the local militia, an act that led to his suspension from public office by the Massachusetts authorities who feared how the action might be viewed by the English government. The denial of the king's right to have granted the charter carried even greater potential to elicit action against the colony. In December 1633 Governor Winthrop persuaded Williams to desist from advancing that argument, and some of the clergy persuaded the colony's Court of Assistants that the views expressed by Williams need not be punished. Had Williams kept his controversial views to himself, no further action would have been taken against him. But in November 1634, Thomas Dudley, who had replaced Winthrop as governor that year, determined that Williams had continued to speak his mind on these issues, and in particular that he had challenged the legitimacy of the oath of allegiance the colony had recently required of all inhabitants. Dudley was a man who would be memorialized by his loving daughter Anne Bradstreet as being "to sectaries, a whip and maul."[5]

In April 1635 the General Court under Dudley's leadership summoned Williams to answer these charges, and ordered the clergyman to desist from promulgating his controversial views. This he refused to do. It is important to realize that no one, not even Roger Williams at this time, was prepared to tolerate the practice or advocacy of errors. Williams, for example, didn't simply desire that he and others who had objections to oaths be allowed to avoid them. He insisted that the colony authorities were violating God's wishes in doing so. He was as intolerant of the errors of the majority as his chief critics were of him.

In October 1635 the magistrates ordered that Williams be sent out of the colony. The implementation of the verdict was originally deferred till the following spring, but when Williams continued to meet with others and promulgate the views that had been condemned, orders were sent to seize him and immediately ship him to England. John Winthrop warned Williams, giving his friend the chance to flee to the area around Narragansett Bay, where the land he settled on would become known as Providence, in the colony of Rhode Island. There Williams would continue to search for further truth, briefly becoming a Baptist before abandoning the hopes for a pure church created by men and formulating a position calling for broad religious toleration.

Even before Williams was banished, the foundations of a more severe controversy were being laid in the Boston church. Puritans encouraged the laity to ask questions during church services and to meet separately to further explore matters of faith. One of those who hosted such gatherings in Boston was Anne Hutchinson. John Winthrop later recalled that Mrs. Hutchinson's "ordinary talk was about the things of the Kingdom of God," and that she conducted herself always "in the way of righteousness and kindness."[6] Her voice was but one among many as the godly sought to better understand their relationship with God. But the congregation was united by what one scholar has correctly identified as "mutual forbearance [and] common standards of behavioral orthodoxy," the success of the elders in managing a "well-functioning, satisfying church," and the shared sense of many members that they were one in helping to

achieve the kingdom of God on earth. This unity also depended on a "tolerance for linguistic idiosyncrasies among people perceived as godly."[7]There is no indication prior to 1636 that anyone in that church found anything troubling about these exchanges.

Excited by the freedom to worship and debate as they wished, some of the members of the Boston congregation abandoned the caution with which many customarily pursued the secrets of God's work. Most puritans believed that sanctification was the restoration of the righteousness that Adam had when originally created. Boston newcomers William Dyer and Henry Vane denied this, Dyer arguing that Adam had not been made in the image of God, and Vane similarly asserted that Adam had never received the seal of the spirit. Anne Hutchinson likewise questioned whether God's image in Adam consisted in holiness. She may have also been drifting towards anti-Trinitarianism by questioning the eternal sonship of Christ. She believed that she was directly inspired by the spirit in her understanding of scripture. She, Vane, and others who claimed a union with the holy spirit were worried that the emphasis many clergy and laypeople placed on behavior indicated that they were in danger of drifting into a reliance on the antichristian covenant of works (the idea that men could earn salvation by their actions). Critics felt that Vane and Hutchinson were suggesting that the presence of the spirit made the instructions of scripture superfluous.

All of this was anathema to Thomas Shepard, the minister of the nearby town of Newton (soon to be renamed Cambridge), and it was he who first sought to brand some of those views as heterodox. Shepard took it upon himself to act the part of heresy hunter in attacking what he was convinced were the false teachings of Boston pastor John Cotton and the erroneous beliefs of his disciples. By doing so he initiated a process of polarization where individuals of various opinions gradually abandoned dialogue and began to hurl negative labels at one another with about as much accuracy as one finds in modern political campaigns. Simplify, exaggerate, and demonize your opponents became the strategy adopted by both emerging camps. As each side came to believe the categorization they had shaped to define their opponents, they hardened their own stance in ways that must have surprised anyone who had observed the dialogue and tolerance that once categorized the affairs of the colony. It is important to note that Hutchinson and her most zealous supporters were not seeking the right to simply hold to their own positions in peace. They actively asserted that the majority of clergy were preaching false doctrine that needed to be prohibited. As with Roger Williams, the dissenters were as intolerant of their opponents as their opponents were of Hutchinson.

Shepard and Thomas Dudley played the lead roles in trying to condemn errors and narrowly define what would be acceptable in the puritan city on a hill. It was Shepard who mobilized the majority of ministers in the region to oppose the doctrines originating in Boston and threatening to infect members of their own congregations. Dudley played a key role in the prosecution of Anne Hutchinson during her civil trial in 1637. At one point Dudley sought to implicate John Cotton in her views in a way that would have made it impossible for that clergyman to remain in Massachusetts, but Winthrop cut Dudley off before he could proceed down that road. Winthrop clearly was focused on keeping Cotton within the perimeter fence of orthodoxy. Shepard also played a decisive role in the separate church trial that led to Anne's excommunication from the Boston congregation.

Despite their successes, Dudley and Shepard did not achieve all they hoped for. Winthrop helped to create a middle way that was broad enough to save Cotton and others who had originally dabbled in the controversial views. While the perimeter fence defining orthodoxy was not redrawn to encompass as much variety of expression as Winthrop would have liked to include, it was not drawn as rigidly as Dudley and Shepard would have wished.

Today's students need to avoid the error made by the protagonists in the puritan debates of simplifying the positions taken by the various figures in the controversy. We also need to avoid interpreting the events in terms of twenty-first century values. There is no question that the values and concerns of men and women like Winthrop, Dudley, Williams, and Hutchinson are different from ours. But focusing on how they sought to define the limits of their society may help us to understand our own struggles to define the limits of acceptable belief and behavior.

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[1] I have borrowed the term from Alexandra Walsham, who uses it in her excellent analysis of *Charitable Hatred: Tolerance and Intolerance in England, 1500–1700* (Manchester, England: Manchester University Press, 2006).

[2] While "Puritan" and "Puritanism" are often capitalized by American authors, I believe that using the forms "puritan" and "puritanism" serve as a reminder that there was never a settled puritan church or set of official doctrines; puritanism was a movement rather than a static or established institution.

[3] John Winthrop, "A Model of Christian Charity," which may be found in *Winthrop Papers, Volume 2: 1623–1630* (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1931) and on many online sites.

[4] Richard S. Dunn, James Savage, and Laetitia Yeandle, eds., *The Journal of John Winthrop 1640–1649* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 44.

[5] Anne Bradstreet, "To The Memory of My Dear and Ever-Honored Father, Thomas Dudley," in Jeannine Hensley, ed., *The Works of Anne Bradstreet* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1967), 203.

[6] John Winthrop, *A Short History of the Rise, Reign, and Ruin of the Antinomians, Familists, and Libertines* (1644), in David D. Hall, ed., *The Antinomian Controversy, 1636–1638* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990), 308.

[7] Michael P. Winship, *Making Heretics: Militant Protestantism and Free Grace in Massachusetts, 1636–1641* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 62.

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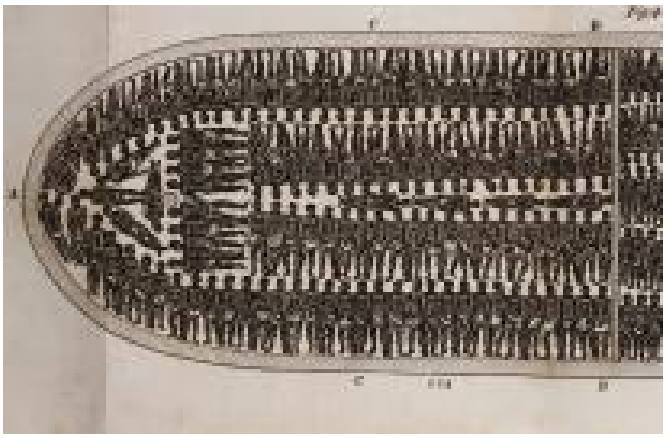
Document #5

African Immigration to Colonial America
By Ira Berlin



Sketch of the hold of a slave ship from Thomas Clarkson, The History of the Rise, Progress and Accomplishment of the Abolition of the African Slave-trade (London, 1808). (Gilder Lehrman Collection)

African American life in the United States has been framed by migrations, forced and free. A forced migration from Africa—the transatlantic slave trade—carried black people to the Americas. A second forced migration—the internal slave trade—transported them from the Atlantic coast to the interior of the American South. A third migration—this time initiated largely, but not always, by black Americans—carried black people from the rural South to the urban North. At the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first, African American life is again being transformed by another migration, this time a global one, as peoples of African descent from all parts of the world enter the United States.

While each of these massive movements shaped and reshaped African American life, none was more important than the first, the so-called Middle Passage from Africa to America. More than any other single migration the Middle Passage has come to epitomize the experience of people of African descent throughout the Atlantic world. The nightmarish weeks and sometimes months locked in the

holds of stinking slave ships speak to the traumatic loss of freedom, the degradation of enslavement, and the long years of bondage that followed. But the Middle Passage also represents the will to survive, the determination of black people not to be dehumanized by dehumanizing circumstances, and the confidence that freedom would eventually be theirs and that they would take their rightful place as a people among peoples.

The transatlantic slave trade had its beginning in the middle of the fifteenth century when Portuguese ships sailed down the West African coast. The intention was to trade for gold and spices, but the voyagers found another even more valuable commodity—human beings. Over time, the trade in men and women supplanted other commerce, and the slaves' destination changed from Europe to the Americas, where plantations growing commodities for the international market initiated the massive transfer of African peoples. In all, some eleven to twelve million Africans were forcibly carried to the Americas. Of those, roughly one-half million (or about 4.5 percent) were taken to mainland North America or what became the United States.

The first black men and women arrived in mainland North America in the sixteenth century, often accompanying European explorers. For the next century or so, they continued to trickle onto the continent in small numbers, often not from Africa itself but from Europe, the Antilles, or other parts of the Atlantic littoral. Dubbed "Atlantic Creoles" because of their connection with the ocean that linked Africa, Europe, and the Americas, many of these first arrivals spoke the language of their enslavers and were familiar with the various religions, commercial conventions, and systems of jurisprudence of the Atlantic. Entering frontier societies in which Europeans also worked in some form of bound labor (indentured servitude being the most prominent), black men and women employed their knowledge of the Atlantic world to integrate themselves into the European settlements. Much like other settlers, free and unfree, they joined churches, participated in exchange economies, and formed families.

With the advent of the plantation in mainland North America, the nature of slavery and then the slave trade changed. The beginnings of plantation production—tobacco in the Chesapeake in the late seventeenth century and rice in the Lowcountry in the early eighteenth century—increased the level of violence, exploitation, and brutality in these regions. Slaves worked harder, propelling their owners to new, previously unimagined heights of wealth and power. As they did, slave owners expanded their plantations and demanded more and more slaves, as slaves proved to be an extraordinarily valuable form of labor. Not only were they workers, but they reproduced themselves, adding to the owners' wealth. Rather than arriving in ones and twos from the Atlantic littoral, boatloads of captives—generally drawn from the African interior—crossed the ocean. Although slavers deposited their human cargoes in ports from Providence to New Orleans, the vast majority of slaves who disembarked in mainland North America did so in the Chesapeake (largely Virginia and Maryland) and the Lowcountry (largely South Carolina, and Georgia).

Slaves imported directly from Africa—distinguished from Atlantic Creoles—first landed in the Chesapeake in large numbers during the last decades of the seventeenth century. Following the legalization of chattel bondage in the 1660s, they slowly replaced European and African indentured servants as the main source of plantation labor. Although black people never challenged white numerical dominance in the region, they achieved majorities in a few localities. For many European settlers, it seemed as if the Chesapeake would "some time or other be confirmed by the name of New Guinea."

Just as the Chesapeake was about to become an extension of West Africa, the dynamics of black life changed dramatically. Slaves in the Chesapeake, in the words of one European observer, proved "very prolifick among themselves." By the 1730s, births to slave women outnumbered imports, and the black population was increasing naturally. Although transatlantic slavers continued to deliver their cargoes to the great estuary, the proportion of Africans declined as the indigenous African American population increased. By mid-century, the majority of enslaved men and women in the Chesapeake had never seen Africa. At the start of the American Revolution, the first Great Migration was over in the Chesapeake. A native people began to sink deep roots in soils of mainland North America.

The slave trade continued, however, in the Lowcountry of South Carolina and Georgia. There the forced migration from Africa followed a trajectory similar to that of the Chesapeake, but it started later and continued longer. As a result, the number of Africans who entered the Lowcountry—almost 400,000—was more than double the number of Africans who came to the Chesapeake. Sullivan's Island, a tiny quarantine station in Charleston harbor, became the Ellis Island of black America. Although importation again slackened during the American Revolution, at war's end the pent-up demand for slaves pushed importation to new heights. Lowland slave owners purchased over 100,000 Africans between 1787, when South Carolina reopened the African trade, and 1808, when the legal trade to the United States ended. Thereafter, American planters continued to smuggle slaves into the country, although the illegal imports composed but a small portion of the slave population.

For much of eighteenth century, black people in South Carolina and Georgia—unlike those in Maryland and Virginia—resided in an immigrant society, more an extension of Africa than of Europe. With the slave trade open and the influx of "saltwater slaves" nearly continuous, lowland slaves had great difficulty forming families and reproducing themselves. The gender ratio among the newly arriving saltwater slaves was usually dramatically skewed, and acculturated slaves sometimes were reluctant to create families with the new arrivals. But by the middle of the eighteenth century, the black population of the Lowcountry began to reproduce itself and the number of African Americans grew, although it did so in tandem with newly arrived Africans. If at mid-century slaves in the Chesapeake had few opportunities to converse with Africans, Africans and African Americans in the Lowcountry knew each other well.

Slavers also deposited their cargoes in other parts of the mainland North America—New England, the middle colonies, the Floridas, and the lower Mississippi Valley. Everywhere planters preferred so-called "men-boys," along with "women-girls," young adults whom they could put to work immediately and who would reproduce the labor force. "Negroes from 15 to 25 years of Age suite this market best," observed one Charleston slave trader. Among the young, planters preferred men over women.

The captives' nationality was no more random than their age or sex. Europeans slavers developed specialties, in some measure to meet the demands of their customers on both sides of the Atlantic, whose preferences and needs grew increasingly well defined over time. Preferences on both side of the Atlantic determined, to a considerable degree, which enslaved Africans went where and when, populating the mainland with unique combinations of African peoples and creating distinctive regional variations in the Americas. Igbo peoples constituted the majority of African slaves in Virginia and Maryland, so much so that some historians have denominated colonial Virginia as "Igbo land." A different pattern emerged in Lowcountry South Carolina and Georgia, where slaves from central Africa predominated from the beginning of large-scale importation, so that if Virginia was Igbo land, the Lowcountry might be likened to a new Angola.

But if patterns of African settlement can be discerned, they never created regional homogeneity. The general thrust of the slave trade was toward heterogeneity, throwing different people together in ways that undermined the transfer of any single culture. Mainland North America became a jumble of African nationalities. Their interaction—not their homogeneity—created new African American cultures.

The reasons were many. Nationality or ethnicity in Africa did not follow neat geographic boundaries. Even before the beginnings of the transatlantic slave trade, African people were on the move. Numerous peoples—speaking a variety of languages, embracing different beliefs, and engaging in a multiplicity of domestic arrangements—shared the physical space that became catchment areas for slave traders. A raid on a particular village necessarily took many different peoples. The long march to the coast—during which some slaves died, others escaped, and still others were captured or purchased—added to the diversity of captives lodged in the seaside barracoons. Likewise, on the American side of the Atlantic not all slave purchasers knew or cared much about the origins of their slaves. As a result, the nature of the slave trade, particularly to mainland North America, only rarely allowed for transatlantic continuities.

No matter what their sex, age, and nationality, Africans shipped to the New World endured the trauma of enslavement. Captured deep in the African interior, Africans faced a long, deadly march to the coast. Traveling sometimes for months, they were passed from group to group, as many different African nations participated in the slave trade. But whoever drove the captives to their unwanted destiny, the circumstances of their travel were extraordinarily taxing. In some places, some forty percent of the slaves died between their initial capture in the interior and their arrival on the coast.

The captives then faced the nightmarish transatlantic crossing. The depths of human misery and the astounding death toll of men and women packed in the stinking hulls still remains difficult to fathom. Stripped naked and bereft of their every belonging, they boarded the ship and encountered—often for the first time—white men. Brandishing hot irons to mark their captives in the most personal way, these "white men with horrible looks, red faces, and long hair" left more than a physical scar. Many enslaved Africans concluded that the white men were in league with the devil, if not themselves devils. For other Africans, the trauma of having their skin seared confirmed that they were bound for the slaughterhouse to be eaten by the cannibals, who had stamped them in much the way animals were marked.

Surviving the Middle Passage was but the first of the many tests faced by the forced immigrants. Once African peoples disembarked, new anxieties compensated for whatever relief they gained from the end of the shipboard journey. Indeed the shock of arrival only repeated the trauma of African enslavement. Staggering to their feet, bodies still bent from their weeks below deck, shaking with

apprehension, the captives were fitted with a new set of shackles—a painful welcome to their new homeland. The captives again confronted the auction block and the prospect of being poked and prodded by strange white men speaking strange languages, intent on demonstrating their mastery. Marched in chains to some isolated, backwoods plantation, forced to labor long hours at unfamiliar tasks, enslaved black men and women began their lives in mainland North America. It was a grim existence, as their debilitating work regime, drafty dormitories, and bland rations invited an early death. Within months of arrival, many of the new immigrants—ridiculed as "outlandish" by their owners—were dead.

But slowly, inexorably, the survivors made the new land their own. Transplanted Africans began to master the languages of North America, learned to traverse the countryside, formed friendships, pieced together new lineages from real and fictive kin, and created a new sacred world. Their children, who knew no other land, took root in American soil and made the land that had been forced on their parents their own. Like most other Americans, they too were the children of immigrants—but immigrants of a very different kind.

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