England's Colonies

Over the centuries, the island nation of England had developed political practices and governing principles quite different from those on the continent of Europe. England's parliamentary monarchy was unique among European governments. It began with the Magna Carta (Great Charter) of 1215, a statement of fundamental rights and liberties that nobles forced the king to approve. The Magna Carta established the basic principle that everyone was equal before the law, and no person—not even a king or queen—was above the law.

Much more than the absolute monarchs of France and Spain, English rulers shared power with the nobility and a lesser aristocracy, known as the gentry, whose representatives formed the legislature known as Parliament, made up of the House of Lords and the House of Commons. The most important power allocated to Parliament was the authority to impose taxes. By controlling government tax revenue, Parliament exercised great leverage over the monarchy.

Religious Conflict and War

When Queen Elizabeth, who never married, died in 1603 without a child of her own to inherit the throne, James VI of Scotland, her distant cousin, became King James I of England. While Elizabeth had ruled through constitutional authority, James ominously claimed to govern by “divine right,” which meant he answered only to God.

James I confronted a divided Church of England, with the reform-minded Puritans in one camp and the Anglican establishment, headed by the

Focus Questions

1. What motivated England to establish American colonies?
2. What were the characteristics of the English colonies in the Chesapeake region, the Carolinas, the middle colonies—Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, and Delaware—and New England prior to 1700?
3. In what ways did the English colonists and Native Americans adapt to each other's presence?
4. What role did indentured servants and the development of slavery play in colonial America?
5. How did the English colonies become the most populous and powerful region in North America by 1700?
archbishop and bishops, in the other. In seventeenth-century England, those who criticized or abandoned the Anglican Church were called Dissenters. The Puritans were dissenters who believed that the Church of England needed further "purifying." They demanded that all "papist" (Roman Catholic) rituals be eliminated. No use of holy water. No organ music. No elegant robes (then called vestments). No jeweled gold crosses. No worship of saints. No kneeling for communion. No tyrannical bishops and archbishops.

The Puritans wanted to simplify religion to its basics: people worshipping God in plain, self-governing congregations without all the formal trappings of Catholic and Anglican ceremonies and wealth. They had hoped the new king would support their efforts, but James I instead sought to banish them from England.

Some Puritans eventually decided that the Church of England was so corrupt and corrupting that it should simply be abandoned, so they created their own congregations separate from the Anglican churches, thus earning the name Separatists.

Such rebelliousness infuriated the leaders of the Church of England, who required people by law to attend Anglican church services. During the late sixteenth century, the Separatists (also called Nonconformists) were "hunted and persecuted on every side." English authorities imprisoned Separatist leaders, three of whom were hanged. In 1604, James I vowed to make the Separatists "conform or I will hurl them out of the land or do worse." Many Separatists left England to escape persecution, and some, who would eventually be known as Pilgrims, decided to sail for America.

James's son, Charles I, succeeded his father in 1625 and proved to be an even more stubborn defender of absolute royal power: he raised taxes without consulting the House of Commons and House of Lords, harassed the Puritans, and took the shocking step of disbanding Parliament from 1629 to 1640.

The monarchy went too far, however, when it forced Anglican forms of worship on Presbyterian Scots. In 1638, Scotland rose in revolt, and in 1640, King Charles, desperate for money to fund his army and save his skin, revived Parliament, ordering its members to raise taxes for the defense of his kingdom against the rampaging Scots. Parliament, led by militant Puritans, refused.

In 1642, when the king tried to arrest five members of Parliament, a bloody civil war erupted in England between Royalists and Parliamentarians, leading many New England Puritans to return home to fight against the Royalist army. In 1646, parliamentary forces led by Oliver Cromwell captured King Charles and, in an unprecedented public trial, convicted him of high treason and contempt of Parliament, labeling him a "tyrant, traitor, murderer, and public enemy." He was beheaded in 1649. As it turned out, however, the Puritans had killed a king, but they had not slain the monarchy.

Oliver Cromwell, the Puritan leader of the parliamentary coup, ruled over England like a military dictator, calling himself Lord Protector. He outlawed Roman Catholics and Anglicans, but his dictatorship fed growing resentment. Many Royalists, called Cavaliers, escaped by sailing to Virginia. After Cromwell's death in 1658, the army allowed new elections for Parliament and in 1660 supported the Restoration of the monarchy under young Charles II, eldest son of the executed king.

Unlike his father, King Charles II agreed to rule jointly with Parliament. His younger brother, the Duke of York (who became James II upon succeeding to the throne in 1685), was more rigid. He openly embraced Catholicism in Protestant England, had political opponents murdered or imprisoned, defied Parliament, and appointed Roman Catholics to key positions.

The English people tolerated James II's rule so long as they expected one of his Protestant daughters, Mary or Anne, to succeed him. In 1688, however, the birth of a royal son who would be raised in the Roman Catholic tradition stirred a revolt. Determined to prevent a Catholic monarchy, political, religious, and military leaders urged the king's Protestant daughter, Mary Stuart, and her Protestant husband, the ruling Dutch prince, William III of Orange, to displace James II and assume the English throne as joint husband and wife monarchs. When William landed in England with a Dutch army, King James II, not wanting to lose his head, fled to France.

Amid this dramatic transfer of power, which soon became known as the Glorious Revolution, Parliament reasserted its right to counterbalance the authority of the monarchy. Kings and queens could no longer suspend Parliament, create armies, or impose taxes without Parliament's consent. The monarchy would henceforth derive its power not from God but from the people.
AMERICAN COLONIES

PEOPLE AND PROFITS During these eventful years, all but one of England’s North American colonies—Georgia—were founded. From the outset, English colonization differed significantly from the Spanish pattern, in which all aspects of colonial life were regulated by the government.

The English government treated its original American colonies much like it dealt with neighboring Ireland. The Irish had been conquered by the English during the reign of Queen Elizabeth. England thereafter extended its control over the Catholic Irish through the “planting” of new Protestant settlements in Ireland called plantations. By confiscating Irish lands and repopulating them with English and Scottish Protestants, the government sought to reduce the influence of Roman Catholicism and smother any rebellious nationalism in conquered Ireland. In time, the English would impose their rule and religion upon the Native Americans as they had been imposed upon the Irish.

England envied the riches taken from the New World by Spain, especially the enormous amounts of gold and silver. However, the English colonies in America were quite different from the Spanish colonies. Spanish settlements were royal expeditions; much of the wealth and lands the Spanish accumulated in the Americas became the property of the monarchs who funded the conquistadores. In contrast, English colonization in the Americas was led by two different groups that sometimes overlapped: those seeking freedom from religious persecution, both Protestants and Catholics, and those seeking land and wealth.

In addition, English colonies in America were private business ventures or collective religious experiments rather than government enterprises. And they were expensive. Few individuals were wealthy enough to finance a colony over a long period.

Those Englishmen interested in colonization thus banded together to share the financial risks of starting colonies in the “American wilderness.” Investors purchased shares of stock to form joint-stock companies. That way, large amounts of money could be raised and, if a colony failed, no single investor would suffer the whole loss. If a colony succeeded, the profits would be shared among the investors.

Yet while English monarchs did not fund the colonial expeditions, they did grant the royal charters (legal authorization) needed to launch them. The joint-stock companies represented the most important organizational innovation of the Age of Exploration, and they provided the first instruments of English colonization in America.

SELF-SUSTAINING COLONIES The English settlements in America were much more compact than those in New Spain, and the native peoples along the Atlantic coast were less numerous, more scattered, and less wealthy than the Mexica and the Incas.

Unlike the male-dominated French and Spanish colonies, where fur traders and conquistadores often lived among the Indians and intermarried, most English settlers viewed the Indians as devilish threats to be removed as they created family-based agricultural and trading communities.

England’s colonies were also much more populous than the Spanish and French colonies in North America. In 1660, there were 58,000 colonists in New England and along the Chesapeake Bay compared with 3,000 in New France and 5,000 in Dutch New Netherland. By 1750, English colonists (male and female) still outnumbered the French (mostly male) nearly 20 to 1 (1.3 million to 70,000), whereas in the northern areas of New Spain, the lands that became Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Florida, and California, there were only 20,000 Spaniards.

The English government and individual investors had two primary goals for their American colonies: (1) to provide valuable raw materials such as timber for shipbuilding, tobacco for smoking, and fur pelts for hats and coats; and (2) to develop a thriving consumer market for English manufactured goods. To populate the colonies, the English encouraged social rebels (including convicts), religious dissenters, and the homeless and landless to migrate to America, thereby reducing social and economic tensions at home.

By far, the most powerful enticement to colonists was to offer them land and the promise of a better way of life—what came to be called the American dream. Land, plentiful and cheap, was English America’s miraculous treasure—once it was taken from the Native Americans. What virtually all of the diverse immigrants shared was the courage to risk everything for a new life of adventure in America. In the process of discovering a New World of opportunities and dangers, they also discovered and recreated themselves as Americans.

THE LANDLESS ENGLISH During the late sixteenth century, England experienced a population explosion that outstripped its economy’s ability to support the surplus of landless workers. Many of those poor laborers would find their way to America. An additional social strain for the English poor was the enclosure of farmlands on which peasants had lived and worked for generations. As trade in woolen products grew, landlords decided to “enclose” farmlands and evict the farmworkers in favor of grazing sheep.

The enclosure movement of the sixteenth century, coupled with the rising population, generated the great number of beggars and vagrants who wandered across England during the late sixteenth century and gained immortality in
the line from the Mother Goose tale: “Hark, hark, the dogs do bark. The beggars have come to town.”

The problems created by this uprooted peasant population provided a compelling reason to send many of them abroad to colonies in America and the Caribbean. As the Reverend Richard Hakluyt, an English geographer, explained, “Valiant youths rusting [from] lack of employment” would flourish in the New World and produce crops and materials that would enrich England.

**VIRGINIA** In 1606, King James I chartered a joint-stock enterprise called the Virginia Company. It was owned by merchant investors (including the wealthiest merchant in London) seeking to profit from the gold and silver they hoped to find in America. King James also gave the Virginia Company a spiritual mission by ordering the settlers to take the “Christian religion” to the Indians, who “live in darkness and miserable ignorance of the true knowledge and worship of God.”

In 1607, the Virginia Company sent to America three tiny ships carrying about 100 men and boys. In May, after five storm-tossed months at sea, they reached Chesapeake Bay, which extends 200 miles from north to south along the present-day states of Virginia and Maryland. To avoid Spanish raiders, the English colonists chose to settle about forty miles inland along a large river with a northwest bend. They called the river the James, in honor of the English king, and named their first settlement James Fort, later renamed Jamestown.

On a low-lying island surrounded by boggy salt marshes swarming with malaria-infested mosquitoes, the sea-weary colonists built a fort with thatched huts and a church. They had come to America overflowing with misperceptions. They expected to find gold, friendly Indians, and easy living. Instead they found disease, drought, starvation, violence, and death. Virtually every colonist fell ill within a year after arriving in Virginia as they moved into a new disease environment against which they had no natural immunities.

Summers in Virginia were much hotter and more humid than in England. The early settlers also struggled to find enough to eat, for most of them were either poor townsmen unfamiliar with farming or “gentleman” adventurers who despised manual labor. “A more damned crew hell never vomited,” said the president of the Virginia Company.

The leaders of the company expected the Native Americans to submit to the authority of the colonists. They were wrong. The 14,000 Indians living along the Virginia coast were dominated by the **Powhatan Confederacy**. Powhatan, as the English called him, was the supreme chief of several hundred villages (of about 100 people each) organized into thirty chiefdoms in eastern Virginia.

At the time, the Powhatan Confederacy may have been the most powerful group of native peoples along the entire Atlantic coast. Focused on raising corn, they lived in oval-shaped houses framed with bent saplings and covered with bark or mats. Their walled villages included forts, buildings for storing corn, and temples.

Chief Powhatan (his proper name was Wahunsenacock) lived in an imposing lodge on the York River not far from Jamestown, where he was protected by forty bodyguards and supported by a hundred wives. Colonist John Smith reported that the chieftain “sat covered with a great robe, made of raccoon skins, and all the tails hanging by,” flanked by “two rows of men, and behind them as many women, with all their heads and shoulders painted red.”

The Powhatans, Smith reported, were “generally tall and straight,” “very ingenious,” and handsome, the black hair on their heads half shaven and half grown long. Some adorned their heads with feathers and chains hanging from their pierced ears. Many painted their bodies. Unlike the English, only a few grew beards. During the winter, they wore fur skins and in the summer were mostly naked, covered only by grasses or leaves.

In simple huts made of saplings and bark, the Powhatans lived together in family clusters. Some villages had 20 such huts; others had 200. The Powhatan men, Smith stressed, went to great pains never to engage in “woman’s work.” When they were not hunting, fishing, or fighting, they sat around watching the “women and children do the rest of the work,” gardening, making baskets and pottery, cooking, and “all the rest.”

Powhatan was as much an imperialist as the English or Spanish. He forced the chieftains of rival peoples he had conquered to give him corn. Upon learning of the English settlement at Jamestown, he planned to impose his will on the “Strangers” as well. When Powhatans happened upon a group of Englishmen stealing their corn, they killed all seventeen of them, stuffing their mouths with ears of corn.

The inexperienced colonists found a match for Chief Powhatan in John Smith, a canny, iron-willed twenty-seven-year-old mercenary (soldier for hire) who arrived the next year with more colonists. The Virginia Company, impressed by Smith’s exploits in foreign wars, had appointed him a member of the council to manage the new colony in America.

It was a wise decision. Of the original 105 settlers, only 38 survived the first nine months. At one point, said Smith, all their food was gone, “all help abandoned, each hour expecting the fury of the savages.” After recognizing their “desperate extremity,” the Powhatans brought corn to rescue the starving strangers.
Thereafter, Smith imposed strict military discipline and forced all to work long days in the fields. He also bargained effectively with the Indians. Through his dictatorial efforts, Jamestown survived. But it was not easy. As he explained, the quarreling colonists were a sorry lot, "ten times more fit to spoil a commonwealth than . . . to begin one."

When no gold or silver was discovered near Jamestown, the Virginia Company shifted its money-making efforts to the sale of land, which would rise in value as the colony grew in population. The company recruited hundreds of new investors and settlers with promises that Virginia would "make them rich."

The influx of settlers nearly overwhelmed the struggling colony. During the winter of 1609–1610, the colony's food supply again ran out, and most of the English colonists died of disease or starvation. Desperate settlers consumed their horses, cats, and dogs, then rats and mice. A few even ate their leather shoes and boots and the starch in their shirt collars. One hungry man killed, salted, and ate his pregnant wife. Horrified by such cannibalism, his fellow colonists tortured and executed him. But the cannibalism continued.
as the starvation worsened. "So great was our famine," Smith wrote, "that a savage we slew and buried, the poorer sort [of colonists] took him up again and ate him."

In June 1610, as the surviving colonists prepared to abandon Jamestown and return to England, a new governor, Lord De La Warr, arrived with three ships and 150 men. They established new settlements upstream at Henrico (Richmond) and two more downstream, near the mouth of the James River.

It was a critical turning point for the colony. After Lord De La Warr returned to England in 1611, Sir Thomas Gates took charge of the Virginia settlements and imposed a strict system of laws. The penalties for running away included shooting, hanging, and burning. When a man was caught stealing oatmeal, the authorities thrust a long needle through his tongue, chained him to a tree, and let him starve to death as a grisly example to the community. Gates also ordered the colonists to attend church services on Thursdays and Sundays. Religious uniformity became an essential instrument of public policy and civil duty in colonial Virginia.

Over the next several years, the Jamestown colony limped along until at last the settlers found a profitable crop: tobacco. The plant had been grown on Caribbean islands for years, and smoking had become a popular habit in Europe. In 1612, settlers began growing Virginia tobacco for export to England. By 1620, the colony was shipping 50,000 pounds of tobacco each year; by 1670, Virginia and Maryland were exporting 15 million pounds annually.

As large-scale tobacco growing emerged, farmers needed additional cleared lands for planting and more workers to grow tobacco. If "all our riches for the present do consist in Tobacco," explained a Jamestown planter, then it followed that "our principal wealth ... consisteth in servants." Another planter said they wanted "lusty laboring men ... capable of hard labor, and that can bear and undergo heat and cold."

**INDENTURED SERVANTS** To support their deepening investment in tobacco lands, planters purchased indentured servants (colonists who exchanged several years of labor for the cost of passage to America and the eventual grant of land), thus increasing the flow of immigrant workers to the colony.

Indentured servitude became the primary source of laborers in English America during the colonial period. Of the 500,000 English immigrants to America from 1610 to 1775, some 350,000 came as indentured servants, most of them penniless young men and boys that the English government was eager to be rid of. In the 1630s, the gender ratio in Virginia was 6 men to every woman; by the 1650s it had dropped to 3 to 1.

Not all indentured servants came to the colonies voluntarily. Many homeless children in London were "kid-napped" and sold into servitude in America. In addition, Parliament in 1717 declared that convicts could avoid prison or the hangman by relocating to the colonies, and some 30,000 made their way to the New World.

Newspapers in American ports announced the arrival of indentured servants for sale. One advertisement noted a shipload of "healthy indentured men and women servants . . . a variety of tradesmen, good farmers, stout laborers . . . whose indentures will be disposed of, on reasonable terms, for cash."

Buyers of workers preferred the strongest young men and the most attractive women. Those who were sick or older proved harder to sell, and often they were added to a sale as a "bonus." Some middlemen would buy the whole shipload of servants and then load them on wagons to sell in outlying communities. While most men labored on farms or plantations, young indentured women tended to work as household servants, learning the skills of spinning, sewing, cooking, and cleaning.

Once in America, servants were provided food and a bed, but life was harsh and their rights were limited. Masters could sell or loan or rent servants to others without their permission. Marriage required the master's permission. Masters could whip servants or chain them in iron collars and extend their length of service as penalty for bad behavior or for running away.

Being indentured was almost like being a slave, but servants, unlike slaves, could file a complaint about abuse with the local court. Elizabeth Sprigs, for example, a servant in Maryland, reported of her "toiling day and night, and then [being] tied up and whipped to that degree you would not beat an animal, scarce [fed] anything but Indian corn and salt."

The most important difference between servanthood and slavery was that it did not last a lifetime. When the indenture ended, usually after four to seven years, the servant could claim the "freedom dues" set by custom and law: tools, clothing, food, and, on occasion, small tracts of land.

Some former servants did very well. In 1629, seven members of the Virginia legislature were former indentured servants, and fifteen served in the Maryland Assembly in 1637. Such opportunities were much less common in England or Europe, giving people even more reasons to travel to America.

**POCAHONTAS** One of the most remarkable Powhatans was Pocahontas, the favorite daughter of Chief Powhatan. In 1607, then only eleven years old, she figured in perhaps the best-known story of the settlement, her plea for the life of John Smith, who had gotten into trouble by trespassing on Powhatan's
rushed to claim them as wives by providing 125 pounds of tobacco to cover the cost of each transatlantic passage.

Also in 1619, a Dutch ship called the *White Lion* stopped at Jamestown and unloaded "20 Negars," the first enslaved Africans known to have reached English America. Thus began an inhumane system that would grow rapidly while spurring dramatic economic growth, sowing moral corruption, and generating horrific suffering for African Americans.

By 1624, some 14,000 English men, women, and children had migrated to Jamestown, although only 1,132 had survived or stayed, and many of them were in "a sickly and desperate state." In that year, an English court dissolved the struggling Virginia Company, and "weak and miserable" Virginia became a royal colony.

The settlers were now free to own property and start businesses. Their governors, however, would thereafter be appointed by the king. Sir William Berkeley, who arrived as the royal governor in 1642, presided over the colony's rapid growth for most of the next thirty-five years. Tobacco prices surged, and wealthy planters began to dominate social and political life.

**BACON'S REBELLION** The relentless stream of new settlers into Virginia exerted constant pressure on Indian lands and created growing social tensions among whites. The largest planters in the colony sought to live like the wealthy "English gentlemen" who owned huge estates in the English countryside. In Virginia, these men acquired the most fertile land along the coast and rivers, compelling freed servants to become farmworkers or forcing them inland in order to gain their own farms. In either case, the poorest Virginians found themselves at a disadvantage. By 1676, one fourth of the free white men were landless. They roamed the countryside, squatting on private property, working at odd jobs, poaching game, and struggling to survive.

The simmering tensions among the landless colonists contributed to the tangled events that came to be called Bacon's Rebellion. The royal governor,
William Berkeley, noted that “poor, indebted, discontented, and armed” Virginia colonists were ripe for rebellion. The discontent erupted when a squabble over hogs between a white planter and Native Americans on the Potomac River led to the murder of the planter’s herdsman and, in turn, to retaliation by frontier vigilantes, who killed some two dozen Indians. When five native chieftains were later murdered, enraged Indians took revenge on frontier settlements.

Scattered attacks continued southward to the James River, where Nathaniel Bacon’s overseer was killed. In 1676, when Governor Berkeley refused to take action against the Indian raiders, Bacon defied the governor’s authority by assuming command of a rebel group of more than 1,000 men determined to terrorize the “protected and darling Indians.” Bacon said he would kill all the Indians in Virginia and promised to free any servants and slaves who joined him.

Bacon’s Rebellion quickly became a battle of landless servants, small farmers, and even some slaves against Virginia’s wealthiest planters and political leaders. Bacon’s ruthless assaults against peaceful Indians and his greed for power and land (rather than any commitment to democratic principles) sparked his conflict with the governing authorities and the planter elite.

For his part, Governor Berkeley opposed Bacon’s plan to destroy the Indians not because he liked Indians but because he didn’t want warfare to disrupt the profitable deerskin trade the colonists enjoyed with the Native Americans. Bacon, whose ragtag “army” had now dwindled to a few hundred, issued a “Declaration of the People of Virginia” accusing Berkeley of corruption and attempted to take the governor into custody. Berkeley’s forces resisted—feeably—and Bacon’s men burned Jamestown in frustration.

Bacon, however, could not celebrate the victory long; he fell ill and died a month later. With Bacon dead, the rebellion gradually disintegrated. Governor Berkeley had twenty-three of the rebels hanged. For such severity, the king denounced Berkeley as a “fool” and recalled him to England, where he died within a year.

MARYLAND In 1634, ten years after Virginia became a royal colony, a neighboring settlement appeared on the northern shore of Chesapeake Bay. Named Maryland in honor of English queen Henrietta Maria, its 12 million acres were granted to Sir George Calvert, Lord Baltimore, by King Charles I. It became the first proprietary colony—that is, it was owned by an individual, not by a joint-stock company.

Calvert had long been one of the king’s favorites. In 1619, he was appointed one of two royal secretaries of state for the nation. Forced to resign after a squabble with the king’s powerful advisers, Calvert used the occasion of his resignation to announce that he had converted from Anglicanism to Catholicism.

Thereafter, Calvert persistently asked the new king, James II, to grant him a charter for an American colony to the north of Virginia. However, Calvert died before the king could act on his request, so the charter was awarded to his son, Cecilius Calvert, the second Lord Baltimore, who actually founded the colony.
Calvert wanted Maryland to be a refuge for English Catholics, a persecuted minority in Anglican England. Yet he also wanted the colony to be profitable and to avoid antagonizing Protestants, so he instructed his brother, Leonard, the colony's first proprietary governor, to ensure that Catholic colonists worship in private and remain "silent upon all occasions of discourse concerning matters of religion."

In 1634, the Calverts planted the first settlement in coastal Maryland at St. Marys, near the mouth of the Potomac River, about eighty miles up the Chesapeake Bay from Jamestown. They sought to learn from the mistakes made at Jamestown. First, they recruited a more committed group of colonists—families intending to stay in the colony rather than single men seeking quick profits. Second, the Calverts did not want Maryland to be a colony of scattered farms and settlements like Virginia, or to become dependent solely on tobacco. They wanted to create a more diversified agriculture and build fortified towns designed to promote social interaction. Third, they wanted to avoid extremes of wealth and poverty by ensuring that the government would "do justice to every man" without partiality. And, fourth, to avoid the chronic Indian wars suffered in Virginia, the Calverts resolved to purchase land from the Native Americans rather than take it by force.

The charter from the king gave the Calverts power to make laws with the consent of the freemen (that is, all property holders). Yet they could not attract enough Roman Catholics to develop a self-sustaining economy. The majority of the servants who came to the colony were Protestants, both Anglicans and Puritans. To recruit servants and settlers, the Calverts offered them small farms, most of which grew tobacco. Unlike Virginia, which struggled for its first twenty years, Maryland succeeded more quickly because of its focus on growing tobacco from the start. Its long coastline along the Chesapeake Bay gave planters easy access to shipping.

Despite the Calverts' caution "concerning matters of religion," sectarian squabbles impeded the Maryland colony's early development. When Oliver Cromwell and the Puritans took control in England after the Civil War, Cecilius Calvert, a Catholic like his father, feared he might lose the colony. To avoid such a catastrophe, he wrote the Toleration Act (1649), which welcomed all Christians, regardless of their denomination or beliefs. (It also promised to execute anyone who denied the divinity of Jesus.)

Lord Baltimore convinced the Maryland legislature to pass the Toleration Act in the hope that it would protect the Catholic minority in Maryland. But it did not work. Protestants in Maryland seized control of the government, deprived Lord Baltimore of his governing rights, and rescinded the Toleration Act in 1654, only to see it reinstalled three years later by Oliver Cromwell. The act deservedly stands as a landmark to human liberty, even though it was enacted more out of expediency than conviction.

The once-persecuted Puritans had become persecutors themselves, at one point driving Lord Baltimore out of his own colony. Were it not for its success in growing tobacco, Maryland may well have disintegrated. In 1692, following the Glorious Revolution in England, Catholicism was banned in Maryland. Only after the American Revolution would Marylanders again be guaranteed religious freedom.

**Settling New England**

Unlike Maryland and Virginia, the New England colonies were initially intended to be self-governing religious utopias based on the teachings of John Calvin. Dedham, Massachusetts, for example, was founded in the 1630s by English Puritans who signed a written agreement promising to live together in peace and harmony while giving complete obedience to God. The New England settlers were not indentured servants as in the Chesapeake but were mostly middle-class families that could pay their own way across the Atlantic. Most male settlers were small farmers, merchants, seamen, or fishermen. New England also attracted more women than did the southern colonies.

Although its soil was not as fertile as that of the Chesapeake region and its growing season was much shorter, New England was a healthier place to live. Because of its colder climate, settlers avoided the infectious diseases like malaria that ravaged the southern colonies. During the seventeenth century, only 21,000 colonists arrived in New England, compared with the 120,000 who went to the Chesapeake Bay colonies. But by 1700, New England's thriving white population exceeded that of Maryland and Virginia.

The Pilgrims and Puritans who arrived in Massachusetts in the 1620s were on a divine mission to create a model Christian society. In the new land, these self-described "saints" intended to purify their churches of all Catholic and Anglican rituals and enact a code of laws and a government structure based upon biblical principles. Unlike the Anglican Church, which allowed anyone, including sinners, to join, the Puritans would limit membership in their churches only to saints—those who had been chosen by God for salvation. They also sought to stamp out gambling, swearing, and Sabbath breaking. Such holy settlements, they hoped, would provide a beacon of righteousness for a wicked England to emulate.
PLYMOUTH The first permanent English settlement in New England was established by Separatists who were forced to leave England because of their refusal to worship in Anglican churches. The Separatist saints demanded that each congregation govern itself rather than be ruled by a bureaucracy of bishops and archbishops. Separatists had first gathered in Scrooby, an English village, only to be forced out, resettling in the English town of Boston before many of them left England for Holland, where, over time, they worried that their children were becoming Dutch.

In September 1620, about 100 women, men, and children, some of whom were called “Strangers” rather than Separatists because they were not part of the religious group, crammed aboard the tiny Mayflower, a leaky vessel only 100 feet long, and headed across the Atlantic bound for the Virginia colony, where they had obtained permission to settle. Storms, however, blew the ship off course to Cape Cod, just south of what became Boston, Massachusetts. “Being thus arrived at safe harbor, and brought safe to land,” William Bradford wrote, “they fell upon their knees and blessed the God of Heaven who had brought them over the vast and furious ocean.”

Since they were outside the jurisdiction of any organized government, the forty-one Separatists on board the Mayflower signed the Mayflower Compact, a covenant (group contract) to form a church. The civil government grew out of the church government, and the members of each were identical. The signers of the Mayflower Compact at first met as the General Court of Plymouth Plantation, like a town meeting, which chose the governor and his

![Crossing the Atlantic](image) Sailors on a sixteenth-century oceangoing vessel navigating by the stars.

- Why did Pilgrims found the Plymouth colony?
- How were the settlers of the Massachusetts Bay Colony different from those of Plymouth?
- What was the origin of the Rhode Island colony?
assistants (or council). Other property owners were later admitted as members, or "freemen," but only church members were eligible to join the General Court. Eventually, as the colony grew, the General Court became a legislative body of elected representatives from the various towns.

The Plymouth colonists settled in a deserted Wampanoag Indian village that had been devastated by smallpox. The Pilgrims named their hillside colony Plymouth, after the English port from which they had embarked. They, too, experienced a difficult "starving time" as had the early Jamestown colonists. During the first winter, half of the Pilgrims died, including thirteen of the eighteen married women. Only the discovery of stored Indian corn buried underground enabled the colony to survive.

**Massachusetts Bay** The Plymouth colony was soon overshadowed by its much larger neighbor, the Massachusetts Bay Colony, which was also intended to be a holy Protestant commonwealth. The Massachusetts Bay Puritans, however, differed from the Pilgrims and Anglicans in important ways. They wanted to "purify" the Church of England from within, not separate from it. They were called Congregationalists because their churches were self-governing rather than ruled by an Anglican bishop in distant England. Their congregations limited membership to "visible saints"—those who could demonstrate receipt of the gift of God's grace.

In 1629, King Charles I gave a royal charter to the Massachusetts Bay Company, which was planted in New England the following year. It consisted of a group of Calvinist Puritans led by John Winthrop, a prosperous lawyer with intense religious convictions. Winthrop wanted the new American colony to be a haven for Puritans and a model Christian community—a city upon a hill," as he declared. To that end, he shrewdly took advantage of an oversight in the company charter: it did not require that the joint-stock company maintain its home office in England. Winthrop's group took the royal charter with them, thereby transferring government authority from London to Massachusetts, where they hoped to govern themselves.

Winthrop was a strong leader, virtually a dictator, who believed that the government should enforce religious beliefs and ensure social stability. He and the Puritans had no tolerance for other religious views in New England. Catholics, Anglicans, Quakers, and Baptists were punished, imprisoned, banished, and sometimes executed.

Even Puritans who spoke out against religious or political policies were quickly condemned. For example, Anne Hutchinson, the strong-willed, intelligent wife of a prominent merchant, raised thirteen children and hosted meetings in her Boston home to discuss sermons.

Soon, however, the discussions turned into large gatherings at which Hutchinson shared her strong feelings about religious matters. According to one participant, she "preaches better Gospel than any of your black coats [male ministers]." Blessed with vast biblical knowledge and a quick wit, Hutchinson claimed to know which of her neighbors had truly been saved and which were damned, including ministers. She quickly was viewed as a "dangerous" woman.

A pregnant Hutchinson was hauled before the all-male General Court in 1637 for trying to "undermine the Kingdom of Christ," and for two days she sparred on equal terms with the Puritan leaders. Her ability to cite chapter-and-verse biblical defenses of her actions led an exasperated Governor Winthrop to explode: "We are your judges, and not you ours. . . . We do not mean to discourse [debate] with those of your sex." He told Hutchinson that she had "stepped out of your place" as a woman in a man's world. As the trial continued, an overwrought Hutchinson was eventually haled into convicting herself by claiming direct revelations from God—blasphemy in the eyes of Puritans.
In 1638, Winthrop and the General Court banished the pregnant Hutchinson as a “leper” not fit for “our society.” She initially resettled with her family and about sixty followers on an island south of Providence, Rhode Island. The hard journey took its toll, however. Hutchinson grew sick, and her baby was stillborn, leading her critics in Massachusetts Bay to claim that the “monstrous birth” was God’s way of punishing her. Hutchinson’s spirits never recovered. After her husband’s death, in 1642, she moved near New Amsterdam (New York City), which was then under Dutch control. The following year, she and six of her children were massacred by Indians. Her murder, wrote a spiteful John Winthrop, was “a special manifestation of divine justice.”

**REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT** The transfer of the Massachusetts Bay Colony’s royal charter, whereby an English trading company evolved into a provincial government, was a unique venture in colonization. Unlike “Old” England, New England had no powerful lords or bishops, kings or queens. The Massachusetts General Court, wherein power rested under the royal charter, consisted of all the shareholders (property owners who were also called freemen). At first, the freemen had no power except to choose “assistants,” who in turn elected the governor and deputy governor. In 1634, however, the freemen turned themselves into the General Court, with two or three deputies to represent each town.

A final stage in the democratization of the Massachusetts Bay government came in 1644, when the General Court organized itself like the English Parliament, with a House of Assistants, corresponding roughly to the House of Lords, and a House of Deputies, corresponding to the House of Commons. All decisions had to be ratified by a majority in each house.

The Puritans who had fled religious persecution ensured that their liberties in America were spelled out and protected. Over time, membership in a Puritan church replaced the purchase of stock as the means of becoming a freeman, or voter, in Massachusetts Bay.

**RHODE ISLAND** More by accident than design, the Massachusetts Bay Colony became the staging area for other New England colonies created by people dissatisfied with Puritan control. Young Roger Williams (1603–1683), who had arrived from England in 1631, was among the first to cause problems, precisely because he was the purest of Puritans—a Separatist. He criticized Puritans for not completely cutting ties to the “whorish” Church of England.

Where John Winthrop cherished strict governmental and clerical authority, Williams stubbornly championed individual liberty and criticized the way the Indians were being shoved aside. The combative Williams posed a radical question: If one’s salvation depends solely upon God’s grace, as John Calvin had argued, why bother to have churches at all? Why not give individuals the right to worship God in their own way?

In Williams’s view, true *puritanism* required complete separation of church and state and freedom from all coercion in matters of faith. “Forced worship,” he declared, “stinks in God’s nostrils.”

Such “dangerous opinions” led Governor Winthrop and the General Court to banish Williams to England. Before authorities could ship him back,
however, he slipped away during a blizzard and found shelter among the Narragansett Indians. In 1636, he bought land from the Indians and established a town he named Providence, at the head of Narragansett Bay, the first permanent settlement in Rhode Island and the first in America to allow complete freedom of religion.

From the beginning, Rhode Island was the most democratic of the colonies, governed by the heads of households rather than by church members. Newcomers could be admitted to full citizenship by a majority vote, and the colony welcomed all who fled religious persecution in Massachusetts Bay. For their part, Puritans in Boston came to view Rhode Island as a refuge for rogues. A Dutch visitor reported that the new colony was "the sewer of New England. All the cranks of New England retire there."

 CONNECTICUT, NEW HAMPSHIRE, AND MAINE  In 1636, the Reverend Thomas Hooker led three church congregations from Massachusetts Bay to Connecticut, where they organized a self-governing colony. In 1639, the Connecticut General Court adopted the Fundamental Orders, a series of laws that provided for a "Christian Commonwealth" like that of Massachusetts, except that voting was not limited to church members. The Connecticut constitution specified that the Congregational churches would be the colony's official religion. The governor was commanded to rule according to "the word of God."

To the north, most of what are now the states of New Hampshire and Maine was granted in 1622 to Sir Ferdinando Gorges and Captain John Mason. In 1629, Mason and Gorges divided their territory, with Mason taking the southern part, which he named the Province of New Hampshire, and Gorges taking the northern part, which became the Province of Maine.

During the early 1640s, Massachusetts took over New Hampshire, and in the 1650s it extended its authority to the scattered settlements in Maine. This led to lawsuits, and in 1678 English judges decided against Massachusetts in both cases. In 1679, New Hampshire became a royal colony, but Massachusetts continued to control Maine. A new Massachusetts charter in 1691 finally incorporated Maine into Massachusetts.

The English Civil War in America

By 1640, English settlers in New England and around Chesapeake Bay had established two great beachheads on the Atlantic coast, with the Dutch colony of New Netherland in between. After 1640, however, the struggle between

king and Parliament in England diverted attention from colonization, and migration to America dwindled for more than twenty years. During the English Civil War (1642–1651) and Oliver Cromwell's Puritan dictatorship (1653–1658), the struggling colonies were left pretty much alone by the mother country.

In 1643, Massachusetts Bay, Plymouth, Connecticut, and New Haven—formed the New England Confederation to provide joint defense against the Dutch, French, and Indians. In some ways, the confederation behaved like a nation unto itself. It made treaties, and in 1653 it declared war against the Dutch, who were accused of inciting Indian attacks. Massachusetts, far from the scene of trouble, failed to cooperate, greatly weakening the confederation.

Virginia and Maryland also defied Cromwell's dictatorship. Virginia burgesses (legislators) in 1649 denounced the Puritans' execution of King Charles and claimed that his son, Charles II, was the lawful king. The colony grew rapidly during its years of independent government before reverting to royal control when William Berkeley returned as governor in 1660 after the monarchy was restored in England.

Cromwell allowed the colonies great flexibility but was not indifferent to Britain's North American empire. He fought trade wars with the Dutch, and his navy harassed England's traditional enemy, Catholic Spain, in the Caribbean. In 1655, a British force wrested Jamaica from Spanish control.

The Restoration of King Charles II in 1660 led to an equally painless reinstatement of previous governments in the colonies. Agents hastily dispatched by the colonies won reconfirmation of the Massachusetts charter in 1662 and the very first royal charters for Connecticut and Rhode Island in 1662 and 1663. All three remained self-governing corporations. Plymouth still had no charter, but it went unmolested. New Haven, however, was absorbed into Connecticut.

The Restoration in the Colonies

The Restoration of Charles II to the British throne in 1660 revived interest among the English in colonial expansion. Within twelve years, the English would conquer New Netherland and settle Carolina. In the middle region, formerly claimed by the Dutch, four new colonies emerged: New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware. The new colonies were awarded by the king to men (proprietors) who had remained loyal to the monarchy during the civil war. In 1663, for example, Charles II granted Carolina to eight prominent supporters, who became lords proprietor (owners) of the region.
THE CAROLINAS  From the start, the southernmost mainland colony in
the seventeenth century consisted of two widely separated areas that eventually
became two different Carolina colonies, North and South. The northern-
most part, called Albemarle, had been settled in the 1650s by colonists from
Virginia. For half a century, Albemarle remained an isolated cluster of farms
along the shores of Albemarle Sound.

The eight Lords Proprietors focused on more-promising sites in southern
Carolina. To speed their efforts to generate profits, they recruited experienced

English planters from the tiny Caribbean island of Barbados, the oldest, rich-
est, and most heavily populated colony in English America.

The English in Barbados had developed a hugely profitable sugar plantation
system based on the hard labor of enslaved Africans. The "king sugar" colony, the
easternmost island in the West Indies, was dominated by a few extraordinarily
wealthy planters who exercised powerful political influence in the mother coun-
try. The renowned philosopher John Locke reported that the English planters on
Barbados "endeavored to rule all."

They also worked their slaves to death; the mortality rate for both slaves
and whites in Barbados was twice that in Virginia, forcing English planters on
the island to buy huge numbers of additional slaves each year as replacements.
By 1670, however, all available land on Barbados had been claimed, and the
sons and grandsons of the planter elite were forced to look elsewhere to find
estates of their own. They seized the chance to settle South Carolina and bring
the Barbadian plantation system to the new colony.

The first English colonists arrived in South Carolina in 1669 at Charles
town (later named Charleston). Over the next twenty years, half the South
Carolina colonists came from Barbados and other island colonies in the
Caribbean, such as Nevis, St. Kitts, and Jamaica. In a reference to Barbados and
the other Caribbean colonies, John Yeamans, an Englishman in Caro-
olina, explained in 1666 that "these settlements have been made and upheld by
Negroes and without constant supplies of them cannot subsist."

From the start, South Carolina was a slave-based colony. In their efforts to
recruit slaveholding planters, the Lords Proprietors placed advertisements like
the following in the Barbados newspaper: "To the owner of every negro man
or slave brought thither [to Carolina] within the first year, 20 acres, and for
every woman negro or slave, 10 acres; and all men negroes or slaves after that
time and within the first five years, 10 acres; and for every woman negro or
slave, 5 acres."

Planters from the Caribbean colonies brought enormous numbers of
enslaved Africans to Carolina to clear land, plant crops, and herd cattle. Caro-
olina, a Swiss immigrant said, "looks more like a negro country than like a
country settled by white people."

The government of Carolina grew out of a unique document, the Fundamental
Constitutions of Carolina, drafted by one of the eight proprietors, Lord
Anthony Ashley Cooper, with the help of his secretary, John Locke. Its pro-
visions for a formal titled nobility encouraged awarding large land grants to
prominent Englishmen. From the beginning, however, headrights were given
to every immigrant who could pay for passage across the Atlantic. The Funda-
mental Constitutions granted religious toleration, which gave Carolina a greater

- How were the Carolina colonies created?
- What were the impediments to settling North Carolina?
- How did the Lords Proprietor settle South Carolina?
- What were the major items traded by settlers in South Carolina?
degree of religious freedom (extending to Jews and “heathens”) than England or any other colony except Rhode Island.

In 1712, the Carolina colony was formally divided into two: North and South. After rebelling against the lords proprietor, South Carolina became a royal colony in 1719. North Carolina remained under the proprietors’ rule until 1729, when it, too, became a royal colony.

Rice became the dominant commercial crop in coastal South Carolina because it was perfectly suited to the hot, humid growing conditions. Rice, like sugarcane and tobacco, was a labor-intensive crop, and planters preferred enslaved Africans to work their plantations, in part because west Africans had been growing rice for generations. Both Carolinas also had huge forests of yellow pine trees that provided lumber and other key materials for shipbuilding. The sticky resin from pine trees could be boiled to make tar, which was needed to waterproof the seams of wooden ships (which is why North Carolinians came to be called Tar Heels).

ENSLAVING INDIANS One of the quickest ways to make money in the early years of Carolina’s development was through trade with local Indians. In the late seventeenth century, English merchants began traveling southward from Virginia into the Piedmont region of Carolina, where they developed a prosperous commerce in deerskins with the Catawbas. Between 1699 and 1715, Carolina exported to England an average of 54,000 deerskins per year, where they were transformed into leather gloves, belts, hats, work aprons, and book bindings.

The growing trade in deerskins entwined Indians in a dependent relationship with Europeans that would prove disastrous to their traditional ways of life. English traders quickly became interested in buying enslaved Indians as well as deerskins. They gave Indians goods, firearms, and rum as payment for their capturing rivals to be sold as slaves.

The profitability of captive Indian workers prompted a frenzy of slaving activity among English settlers. As many as 50,000 Indians, mostly women and children, were sold as slaves in Charles Town between 1670 and 1715. More enslaved Indians were exported during that period than Africans were imported, and thousands of others were sold to “slavers” who took them to islands in the West Indies through New England ports.

The growing trade in enslaved Native Americans triggered bitter struggles between rival Indian nations and helped ignite unprecedented colonial violence. In 1712, the Tuscaroras of North Carolina attacked German and English colonists who had encroached upon their land. North Carolina authorities appealed to South Carolina for aid, and the colony, eager for more slaves, dispatched two expeditions made up mostly of Indian allies—Yamasees,

The Broiling of Their Fish over the Flame In this drawing by John White, Algonquian men in North Carolina broil fish, a dietary staple of coastal societies.

Cherokee chiefs A print depicting seven Cherokee chieftains taken from Carolina to England in 1730.
Cherokees, Creeks, and Catawbas. They destroyed a Tuscarora town, executed 162 male warriors, and took 392 women and children captive for sale in Charles Town. The surviving Tuscaroras fled north, where they joined the Iroquois.

The Tuscarora War in North Carolina sparked more conflict in South Carolina. The Yamasees felt betrayed when white traders paid them less for their Tuscarora captives than they wanted. What made this shortfall so acute was that the Yamasees owed debts to traders totaling 100,000 deerskins. To recover their debts, white traders cheated Yamasees, confiscated their lands, and began enslaving their women and children. In April 1715, the enraged Yamasees attacked coastal plantations and killed more than 100 whites.

The governor mobilized all white and black men to defend the colony; other colonies supplied weapons. But it wasn't until the governor bribed the Cherokees to join them that the Yamasee War ended—in 1717. The defeated Yamasees fled to Spanish-controlled Florida. By then, hundreds of whites had been killed and dozens of plantations destroyed and abandoned. To prevent another conflict, the colonial government outlawed all private trading with Indians.

The end of the Yamasee War did not stop infighting among the Indians, however. For the next ten years or so, the Creeks and Cherokees engaged in a costly blood feud, much to the delight of the English. One Carolinian explained that their challenge was to figure out “how to hold both [tribes] as our friends, for some time, and assist them in cutting one another's throats without offending either. This is the game we intend to play if possible.” Between 1700 and 1730, the indigenous population in the Carolinas dwindled from 15,000 to just 4,000.

The Middle Colonies and Georgia

The area between New England and the Chesapeake—Maryland and Virginia—included the “middle colonies” of New York, New Jersey, Delaware, and Pennsylvania that were initially controlled by the Netherlands. By 1670, the mostly Protestant Dutch had the largest merchant fleet in the world and the highest standard of living. They controlled northern European commerce and had become one of the most diverse and tolerant societies in Europe—and England's most ferocious competitor in international commerce.

New Netherland Becomes New York

In London, King Charles II decided to pluck out that old Dutch thorn in the side of the English colonies in America: New Netherland. The Dutch colony was older than New England. The Dutch East India Company (organized in 1602) had hired an English sea captain, Henry Hudson, to explore America in hopes of finding a northwest passage to the spice-rich Indies. Sailing along the coast of North America in 1609, Hudson crossed Delaware Bay and then sailed up the river eventually named for him in what is now New York State. The Hudson River would become one of the most strategically important waterways in all of America, wide and deep enough for oceangoing vessels to travel far north into the interior of the colony, where valuable furs were acquired from Indians.

Like Virginia and Massachusetts, New Netherland was created as a profit-making enterprise. And like the French, the Dutch were interested mainly in the fur trade, as the European demand for beaver hats created huge profits. In 1610, the Dutch established fur-trading posts on Manhattan Island and upriver at Fort Orange (later called Albany).

In 1626, the Dutch governor purchased Manhattan (an Indian word meaning “island of many hills”) from the Indians for 60 guilders, or about $1,000 in current values. The Dutch then built a fort and a fur-trading post at the lower end of the island. The village of New Amsterdam (eventually New York City), which grew up around the fort and expanded north to Wall Street, where the Dutch built a defensive wall, became the capital of New Netherland.

New Netherland was a corporate colony governed by the newly organized Dutch West India Company. It controlled political life, appointing the colony's governor and advisory council and not allowing any form of legislature. All commerce with the Netherlands had to be carried in the company's ships, and the company controlled the beaver trade with the Indians.

In 1629, the Dutch West India Company decided that it needed more settlers outside Manhattan to help protect New Amsterdam, the colony’s “front door” at the mouth of the Hudson River, from possible Indian attack. To encourage settlers to move into the surrounding countryside, it awarded wealthy individuals a large estate called a patronship in exchange for populating it with forty adults within four years. Like a feudal lord, the patron provided cattle, tools, and buildings. His tenants, in turn, paid him rent, used his gristmill for grinding flour, gave him first option to purchase surplus crops, and submitted to a court he established.

These arrangements amounted to transplanting the feudal manor to the New World, and it met with as little success as similar efforts in Maryland and South Carolina. Most settlers, wanting their own farms, took advantage of the company's provision that they could have as farms (bouweries) all the land they could improve.

Dutch settlements gradually emerged wherever fur pelts might be found. In 1638, a Swedish trading company established Fort Christina at the site of
present-day Wilmington, Delaware, and scattered settlements up and down the Delaware River. The Dutch in 1665 took control of New Sweden.

Unlike most of the other European colonies in the Americas, the Dutch embraced ethnic and religious diversity. In 1579, the treaty creating the Dutch Republic declared that "everyone shall remain free in religion and... no one may be persecuted or investigated because of religion."

Both the Dutch Republic and New Netherland welcomed exiles from the constant religious strife in Europe: Spanish and German Jews, French Protestants (Huguenots), English Puritans, and Catholics. There were even Muslims in New Amsterdam, where eighteen different languages were spoken.

In September 1654, a French ship arrived in New Amsterdam harbor carrying twenty-three Sephardim, Jews of Spanish-Portuguese descent. They had come seeking refuge from Portuguese-controlled Brazil and were the first Jewish settlers to arrive in North America.

The anti-Semitic colonial governor, Peter Stuyvesant, refused to accept them, however. Dutch officials overruled him, pointing out that it would be "unreasonable and unfair" to refuse to provide Jews a safe haven. They reminded Stuyvesant that some of the West India Company shareholders in the Netherlands were Jews. They told him that they wanted to "allow everyone to have his own belief, as long as he behaves quietly and legally, gives no offense to his neighbor, and does not oppose the government."

It would not be until the late seventeenth century that Jews could worship in public, however. Such restrictions help explain why the American Jewish community grew so slowly. In 1773, more than 100 years after the first Jewish refugees arrived, Jews represented only one tenth of 1 percent of the entire colonial population. Not until the nineteenth century would the American Jewish community experience dramatic growth.

The Dutch West India Company tolerated Jews, but its priority was making profits. In 1626, the company began importing enslaved Africans to meet its labor shortage. By the 1650s, New Amsterdam had one of the largest slave markets in America, although most of the African slaves sold there were sent to Virginia and Maryland.

The extraordinary success of the Dutch economy also proved to be its downfall, however. Like imperial Spain, the Dutch Empire expanded too rapidly. The Dutch dominated European trade with China, India, Africa, Brazil,
and the Caribbean, but they could not control their far-flung possessions. It did not take long for European rivals to exploit the sprawling empire’s weak points. By the mid-seventeenth century, England and the Netherlands were locked in ferocious commercial warfare.

The New Netherland governors were mostly stubborn autocrats, either corrupt or inept, and especially clumsy at Indian relations. They depended upon a small army for defense, and the residents of Manhattan, many of whom were not Dutch, were often contemptuous of the government. In 1664, the diverse colonists showed almost total indifference when Governor Peter Stuyvesant called them to defend the colony against a threatening English fleet. Stuyvesant finally surrendered the colony without firing a shot.

The English conquest of New Netherland had been led by James Stuart, Duke of York, who would become King James II. Upon the capture of New Amsterdam, his brother, King Charles II, granted the entire Dutch region to him. The Dutch, however, negotiated an unusual surrender agreement that allowed New Netherlanders to retain their property, churches, language, and local officials. The English renamed both New Netherland and the city of New Amsterdam as New York, in honor of James, the Duke of York.

NEW JERSEY Shortly after the conquest of New Netherland, the Duke of York granted the lands between the Hudson and Delaware Rivers to Sir George Carteret and Lord John Berkeley (brother of Virginia’s governor) and named the territory for Carteret’s native Jersey, an island in the English Channel. In 1676, by mutual agreement, the new colony was divided into East and West Jersey, with Carteret taking the east and Berkeley the west. Finally, in 1682, Carteret sold out to a group of investors.

New settlements gradually arose in East Jersey. Disaffected Puritans from New Haven founded Newark, Carteret’s brother brought a group to found Elizabethtown (named for Queen Elizabeth), and a group of Scots founded Perth Amboy. In the west, facing the Delaware River, a scattering of Swedes, Finns, and Dutch remained, but they were soon overwhelmed by swarms of English and Welsh Quakers, as well as German and Scots-Irish settlers. In 1702, East and West Jersey were united as the single royal colony of New Jersey.

Pennsylvania The Quakers, as the Society of Friends was called (because they believed that no one could know Christ without “quaking and trembling”), became the most controversial of the radical religious groups that emerged from the turbulence of the English Civil War. Founded in England in 1647 by George Fox, a saintly roving preacher who often traveled barefoot, the Friends rebelled against all forms of political and religious authority, including salaried ministers, military service, and paying taxes. They insisted that everyone, not just a select few, could experience “God’s free gospel,” a personal revelation from God, what they called the “Inner Light” of the Holy Spirit.
Quakers held radical beliefs for the time: they believed that people were essentially good and could achieve salvation through a personal emotional communion with God that would enable them to be a “candle of the Lord.” They demanded complete religious freedom for everyone and promoted equality of the sexes, including the full participation of women in religious affairs. They discarded all formal religious rituals and embraced a fierce pacifism. Like Fox, some early Quakers went barefoot, others wore rags, and a few went naked and smeared themselves with excrement to demonstrate their “primitive” commitment to Christ.

The Quakers suffered often violent abuse for their odd behavior because their beliefs were so threatening to the social and religious order. Quakers would gather outside Anglican or Congregational churches, where one of them would try to “outreach” the minister inside. Authorities accused them of disrupting “peace and order” and undermining “religion, Church order, and the state.” New England Puritans banned, tortured, and executed them.

Quakers were especially hated because they refused to acknowledge the supremacy of Puritanism. So that Quakers could be more readily recognized and jailed, they were defaced by the authorities in New England. Their nostrils were slit, their ears lopped off, their tongues pierced by a red-hot rod, or their foreheads branded with the letter H, for “heretic.”

But the Quakers kept coming. In fact, the Friends often sought out such abuse and martyrdom as a sign of their intense Christian commitment. Mary Dyer, a follower of Anne Hutchinson who was banished from Massachusetts, later became a Quaker and returned to the colony to visit jailed Quakers. She was eventually arrested and sentenced to death. At the last minute, however, her son convinced the court to release her—against her wishes—on the condition that she relocate to Rhode Island.

In April 1660, however, Dyer went back to Massachusetts in a suicidal effort to protest the “wicked [anti-Quaker] law against God’s people and offer up her life there.” The mother of six was again sentenced to death. “The will of the Lord be done,” she said. “Yes, joyfully shall I go.” She was hanged.

The settling of English Quakers in West Jersey encouraged other Friends to migrate, especially to the Delaware River side of the colony, where William Penn’s Quaker commonwealth, the colony of Pennsylvania, soon arose. Penn, the son of wealthy Admiral Sir William Penn, had attended Oxford University, from which he was expelled for criticizing the university’s requirement that students attend daily chapel services. His furious father banished his rebellious son from their home.

The younger Penn lived in France for two years, then studied law before moving to Ireland to manage the family’s estates. There the twenty-two-year-old Penn was arrested in 1666 for attending a Quaker meeting. Much to the chagrin of his parents, he became a Quaker and was arrested several times for his religious convictions.

Upon his father’s death, Penn inherited a fortune, including a huge tract of land in America, which the king urged him to settle as a means of riding England of Quakers. The land was named, at the king’s insistence, for Penn’s father—Pennsylvania (literally, “Penn’s Woods”), and it was larger than England itself. Penn aggressively encouraged people of different religions from different countries to settle in his new colony, which he called a “holy experiment,” for he hoped that people of all faiths and nations would live together in harmony.
By the end of 1681, thousands of immigrants had responded to Penn's offer, and a bustling town was emerging at the junction of the Schuylkill and Delaware Rivers. Penn called it Philadelphia (meaning "City of Brotherly Love").

The relations between the Native Americans and the Pennsylvanians Quakers were unusually good because of the Quakers' friendliness and Penn's policy of purchasing land titles from the Native Americans. For some fifty years the settlers and the Native Americans lived in peace.

The colony's government, which rested on three Frames of Government drafted by Penn, resembled that of other proprietary colonies except that the freemen (property owners) elected the council members as well as the assembly. The governor had no veto, although Penn, as proprietor, did. Penn hoped to show that a colonial government could operate in accordance with Quaker principles, that it could maintain peace and order, and that religion could flourish without government support and with absolute freedom of conscience.

Over time, however, the Quakers struggled to forge a harmonious colony. In Pennsylvania's first ten years, it went through six governors. A disappointed Penn wrote from London: "Pray stop those scurvy quarrels that break out to the disgrace of the province."

**DELAWARE** In 1682, the Duke of York granted Penn the area of Delaware, another part of the former Dutch territory (which had been New Sweden before being acquired by the Dutch in 1655). At first, Delaware—taking its name from the Delaware River, which had been named to honor Thomas West (Baron De La Warr), Virginia's first colonial governor—became part of Pennsylvania, but after 1704 it was granted the right to choose its own assembly. From then until the American Revolution, Delaware had a separate assembly but shared Pennsylvania's governor.

**GEORGIA** Georgia was the last of the English colonies to be established. In 1732, King George II gave the land between the Savannah and Altamaha Rivers to twenty-one English trustees appointed to govern the Province of Georgia, named in honor of the king. In two respects, Georgia was unique among the colonies: it was to provide a military buffer protecting the Carolinas against Spanish-controlled Florida and to serve as a social experiment bringing together settlers from different countries and religions, many of them refugees, debtors, or "miserable wretches" making up the "worthy poor." General James E. Oglethorpe, a prominent member of Parliament, was appointed to head the colony designed to provide a haven for the "poor children and other poor that pester the streets of London."

In 1733, colonists founded Savannah on the Atlantic coast near the mouth of the Savannah River. The town, designed by Oglethorpe, featured a grid of crisscrossing roads graced by numerous parks. Protestant refugees from Austria began to arrive in 1734, followed by Germans and German-speaking Moravians and Swiss. The addition of Welsh, Highland Scots, Sephardic Jews, and others gave the early colony a diverse character like that of Charleston, South Carolina.

As a buffer against Spanish Florida, the Georgia colony succeeded, but as a social experiment creating a "common man's utopia," it failed. Initially, landholdings were limited to 500 acres to promote economic equality. Liquor was banned, as were lawyers, and the importation of slaves was forbidden. But the idealistic rules soon collapsed as the colony struggled to become self-sufficient. The regulations against rum and slavery were widely disregarded and finally abandoned.

In 1754, Georgia became a royal colony. It developed slowly over the next decade but grew rapidly after 1763. Georgians exported rice, lumber, beef, and pork, and they carried on a profitable trade with the islands in the West Indies. Almost unintentionally, the colony became an economic success and a slave-centered society.
Why did European settlement lead to the expansion of hostilities among the Indians?
What were the consequences of the trade and commerce between the English settlers and the southern indigenous peoples?
How were the relationships between the settlers and the
NATIVE PEOPLES AND ENGLISH SETTLERS

Most English colonists adopted a strategy for dealing with the Indians quite different from that of the French and the Dutch. Merchants from France and the Netherlands focused on exploiting the profitable fur trade. The thriving commerce in animal skins—especially beaver, otter, and deer—helped spur exploration of the vast American continent. It also both enriched and devastated the lives of Indians.

To get fur pelts, the French and Dutch built trading outposts in upper New York and along the Great Lakes, where they established friendly relations with the Hurons, Algonquians, and other Indians. The Hurons and Algonquians also sought French support in their ongoing wars with the mighty Iroquois nations. In contrast to the French experience in Canada, the English colonists were more interested in pursuing their “God-given” right to hunt and farm on Indian lands and to fish in Indian waters.

NATIVE AMERICANS AND CHRISTIANITY  The New England Puritans aggressively tried to convert Native Americans to Christianity and “civilized” living. They insisted that Indian converts abandon their religion, language, clothes, names, and villages, and forced them to move to what were called “praying towns” to separate them from their “heathen” brethren. One reason that Roger Williams of Rhode Island was considered so dangerous by the Puritan leaders was his insistence that all faiths—including those of the Indians—should be treated equally. He labeled efforts by governments to impose Puritanism on everyone “soul rape.”

THE PEQUOT WAR  Indians in the English colonies who fought to keep their lands were forced out or killed. New England Puritans, like the English colonists in Virginia, viewed Indians as demonic savages, “barbarous creatures,” and “merciless and cruel heathens.” As one colonist asserted, Indians had no place in a “new England.”

In 1636, settlers in Massachusetts accused a Pequot of murdering a colonist; the English took revenge by burning a Pequot village. As the Indians fled, the Puritans killed them—men, women, and children. The militia commander declared that God had guided his actions “to smite our Enemies . . . and give us their land for an Inheritance.”

Sassacus, the Pequot chief, organized the survivors and counterattacked. During the ensuing Pequot War of 1637, the colonists and their Narragansett allies set fire to an Indian village near West Mystic, in the Connecticut Valley, and killed those who tried to escape. William Bradford, the governor of Plymouth, admitted that it was “a fearful sight” to see the Indians “frying in the fire and the streams of blood quenching” the flames, but “the victory seemed a sweet sacrifice” delivered by God.

Under the terms of the Treaty of Hartford (1638), the Pequot Nation was dissolved. Refugees fled in all directions. Sassacus escaped to the Mohawks in New York, with whom he pleaded to spare his life. They did not. In fact, they sent his scalp to the English as a peace offering.

KING PHILIP’S WAR  After the Pequot War, relations between colonists and Indians improved somewhat, but the continuing influx of English settlers and the decline of the beaver population eventually reduced the Native Americans to poverty. By 1675, the Indians and English settlers had come to fear each other deeply.

The era of peaceful coexistence came to a bloody end during the last quarter of the seventeenth century. Native American leaders, especially the chief of the Wampanoags, Metacomet (known to the colonists as King Philip),

Algonquian ceremony celebrating harvest  As with most Native Americans, the Algonquians’ dependence on nature for survival shaped their religious beliefs.
resented English efforts to convert Indians to Christianity. In the fall of 1674, John Sassamon, a Christian Indian who had graduated from Harvard College, warned the English that the Wampanoags were preparing for war.

A few months later, Sassamon was found dead in a frozen pond. Colonial authorities convicted three Wampanoags of murder and hanged them. Enraged Wampanoag warriors then burned Puritan farms on June 20, 1675. Three days later, an Englishman shot a Wampanoag; the Wampanoags retaliated by ambushing and beheading a group of Puritans.

The shocking violence on both sides soon spun out of control in what came to be called King Philip’s War, or Metacomet’s War. The brutal fighting resulted in more deaths and destruction in New England in proportion to the population than any American conflict since, including the Civil War. Vengeful bands of warriors destroyed twelve towns and attacked forty others.

Within a year, colonists conducted a surprise attack that killed 300 Narragansett warriors and 400 women and children. The Narragansetts retaliated by destroying Providence, Rhode Island, and threatening Boston itself, prompting a prominent minister to call it “the saddest time with New England that was ever known.”

The situation grew so desperate that the colonies passed America’s first conscription laws, drafting into the militia all males between the ages of sixteen and sixty. In the summer of 1676, Metacomet’s wife and only son were captured, leading the chieftain to cry: “My heart breaks; now I am ready to die.”

In the end, staggering casualties and shortages of food and ammunition wore down the Narragansetts. Some surrendered; many succumbed to disease, and others fled to the west. Those who remained were forced into villages supervised by English officials. Metacomet initially escaped, only to be hunted down and killed. The victorious colonists marched his severed head to Plymouth, where it stayed atop a pole for twenty years. Metacomet’s wife and son were sold into slavery in the Caribbean. By the end of King Philip’s War, three quarters of the Indians in New England had been killed.

**THE IROQUOIS LEAGUE** The same combination of forces that wiped out the Indian populations of New England and the Carolinas affected the native peoples around New York City and the lower Hudson Valley. The inability of Indian groups to unite effectively against the Europeans, as well as their vulnerability to infectious diseases, doomed them to conquest and exploitation.

In the interior of New York, however, a different situation arose. There, sometime before 1600, the Iroquois nations—Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, and Mohawk—had been convinced by Hiawatha, a Mohawk, to forge an alliance.

The Iroquois League, known to its members as the Haudenosaunee, or Great Peace, became so strong that the outnumbered Dutch and, later, English traders, were forced to work with them to acquire beaver pelts. By the early seventeenth century, a council of some fifty sachems (chieftains) oversaw the 12,000 members of the Iroquois League. Its capital was Onondaga, a bustling town a few miles south of what later became Syracuse, New York.

The League was governed by a remarkable constitution, called the Great Law of Peace, which had three main principles: peace, equity, and justice. Each person was to be a shareholder in the wealth of the nation. The constitution

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**King Philip’s War** A 1772 engraving by Paul Revere depicts Metacomet (King Philip), leader of the Wampanoags.

**Wampum belt** These valued belts were woven and exchanged to certify treaties or record transactions.
established a Great Council of fifty male royaneh (religious-political leaders), each representing one of the female-led clans of the Iroquois nations. The Great Law of Peace gave essential power to the people. It insisted that every time the royaneh dealt with "an especially important matter or a great emergency" they had to "submit the matter to the decision of their people," both men and women, for their consent.

The search for furs and captives led Iroquois war parties to range widely across what is today eastern North America. They gained control over a huge area from the St. Lawrence River to Tennessee and from Maine to Michigan. For more than twenty years, warfare raged across the Great Lakes region between the Iroquois (supported by Dutch and English fur traders) and the Algonquians and Hurons (and their French allies).

In the 1690s, the French and their Indian allies destroyed Iroquois crops and villages, infected them with smallpox, and reduced the male population by more than a third. Facing extermination, the Iroquois made peace with the French in 1701. During the first half of the eighteenth century, they stayed out of the almost constant wars between the two European powers, which enabled them to play the English off against the French while creating a thriving fur trade for themselves.

Slavery in the Colonies

Slavery in North America  By 1700, enslaved Africans made up 11 percent of the total American population (slaves would comprise more than 20 percent by 1770). But slavery differed greatly from region to region. Africans were a tiny minority in New England (about 2 percent). Because there were no large plantations in New England and fewer slaves were owned, "family slavery" prevailed, with masters and slaves usually living under the same roof.

Slavery was much more prevalent in the Chesapeake colonies and the Carolinas. By 1730, the black slave population in Virginia and Maryland had become the first in the Western Hemisphere to achieve a self-sustaining rate of population growth. By 1750, about 80 percent of the African American slaves in the Chesapeake Bay region, for example, had been born there.

Slavery's African Roots  The transport of African captives across the Atlantic to the Americas was the largest forced migration in world history. More than 10 million people eventually made the terrifying journey to the Western Hemisphere, the vast majority of them going to Portuguese Brazil or Caribbean sugar islands such as Barbados and Jamaica.

Enslaved Africans spoke as many as fifty different languages and worshipped many different gods. Some had lived in large kingdoms and others in dispersed villages. In their homelands, Africans had preyed upon other Africans for centuries. Warfare was almost constant, as rival tribes conquered, kidnapped, enslaved, and sold one another.

Slavery in Africa, however, was less brutal than in the Americas. In Africa, slaves lived with their captors, and their children were not automatically enslaved. The involvement of Europeans in transatlantic slavery, whereby captives were sold and shipped to other nations, was much worse.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, African slave traders brought captives to dozens of "slave forts" along the West African coast owned by virtually every European nation: Sweden, Denmark, France, Great Britain, the Netherlands, and Portugal. After languishing for weeks or months, the captured Africans were one day led down tunnels to waiting ships owned by
European slave traders. As one of them remembered, “it was a most horrible scene; there was nothing to be heard but rattling of chains, smacking of whips, and groans and cries of our fellow men.”

Once purchased, the captives were branded on the back or buttocks with a company mark, chained, and loaded onto mostly British-owned slave ships. They were packed below deck and subjected to a four-week to six-month transatlantic voyage, known as the Middle Passage because it served as the middle leg of the so-called triangular trade in which British ships traveled on the first leg to West Africa, where they exchanged rum, clothing, and guns for slaves. The slaves then were taken on the second leg of the triangle to American ports, where the ships were loaded with commodities and timber before returning to

Britain and Europe on the final of the three legs of the triangular trade. By the mid-eighteenth century, Britain was the largest slaving nation in the world.

One in six African captives died during the Middle Passage to America, and slave revolts aboard the floating prisons were not uncommon. Yet many of the English engaged in slave trafficking considered their work highly respectable. “What a glorious and advantageous trade this is,” wrote slave trader James Houston. “It is the hinge on which all the trade of this globe moves.”

The rapid growth of slavery in the Western Hemisphere was driven by high profits and justified by a widespread racism that viewed Africans as beasts of burden rather than human beings. Once in America, Africans were treated as property (chattel), herded in chains to public slave auctions, and sold to the highest bidder.

On large southern plantations that grew tobacco, sugarcane, or rice, groups of slaves were organized into work gangs supervised by black “drivers” and white overseers. The slaves were often quartered in barracks, fed like livestock, and issued ill-fitting work clothes and shoes so uncomfortable that many preferred to go barefoot. Colonial laws allowed whites to use brutal means to discipline slaves. They were whipped, branded, shackled, castrated, or sold

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**THE AFRICAN SLAVE TRADE, 1500–1800**

- How were Africans captured and enslaved?
- Describe how captive Africans were treated during the Middle Passage.
- How did enslaved African Americans create a new culture in the colonies?
away, often to the Caribbean islands, where few survived the harsh working conditions of harvesting sugarcane.

Enslaved Africans, however, found ingenious ways to cope. Some rebelled against their captors by resisting work orders, sabotaging crops and stealing tools, faking illness or injury, or running away. If caught, runaways faced terrible punishment. They also faced uncertain freedom. Where would they run to in a society ruled by whites and governed by racism?

**SLAVE CULTURE** In the process of being forced into lives of bondage in a new world, Africans from diverse homelands forged a new identity as African Americans. At the same time, they wove into American culture many strands of their heritage, including new words such as *tabby, tote, goober, yam,* and *banana,* as well as the names of the Coosaw, Pee Dee, and Wando Rivers.

More significant were African influences upon American music, folklore, and religious practices. Slaves often used songs, stories, and religious preachings to circulate coded messages expressing their distaste for masters or overseers. The fundamental theme of slave religion, adapted from the Christianity that was forced upon them, was deliverance: God would eventually free them and open the gates to heaven's promised land.

**THRIVING COLONIES**

By the early eighteenth century, the English colonies in the New World had outstripped those of both the French and the Spanish. English America, both the mainland colonies and those in the Caribbean, had become the most populous, prosperous, and powerful of the European empires in the Americas. On average, American colonists were better fed, clothed, and housed than their counterparts in Europe.

Yet the English colonization of North America included failures as well as successes. Many settlers found hard labor, desperation, and an early death in the New World. Others flourished only because they were able to exploit Indians, indentured servants, or Africans.

The English colonists enjoyed crucial advantages over their European rivals. While the tightly controlled colonial empires of Spain and France stifled innovation, the English colonies were organized as profit-making enterprises with a minimum of royal control. Where New Spain was dominated by wealthy men who controlled vast estates and often intended to return to Spain, many English colonists ventured to America because, for them, life in England had grown intolerable. The leaders of the Dutch and non-Puritan English colonies, unlike the Spanish and French, welcomed people from a variety of nationalities and religions who came in search of a new life. Perhaps most important, the English colonies enjoyed a greater degree of self-government, which made them more dynamic and creative than their French and Spanish counterparts.

Throughout the seventeenth century, geography reinforced England’s emphasis on the concentrated settlements of its American colonies. The farthest western expansion of English settlement stopped at the eastern slopes of the Appalachian Mountains. To the east lay the wide expanse of ocean, which served as a highway for the transport of people, ideas, commerce, and ways of life from Europe to America. But the ocean also served as a barrier that separated old ideas from new, allowing the English colonies to evolve in a “new world”—while developing new ideas about economic freedom and political liberties that would flower later in the eighteenth century.