

# 1

## THREE OLD WORLDS CREATE A NEW 1492–1600

### CHAPTER OUTLINE

- American Societies
- North America in 1492
- African Societies
- European Societies
- Early European Explorations
- Voyages of Columbus, Cabot, and Their Successors
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- The Columbian Exchange
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### AMERICAN SOCIETIES

Human beings originated on the continent of Africa, where humanlike remains about 3 million years old have been found in what is now Ethiopia. Over many millennia, the growing population slowly dispersed to the other continents. Because the climate was then far colder than it is now, much of the earth's water was concentrated in huge rivers of ice called glaciers. Sea levels were accordingly lower, and land masses covered a larger proportion of the earth's surface than they do today. Scholars long believed the earliest inhabitants of the Americas crossed a land bridge known as Beringia (at the site of the Bering Strait) approximately twelve thousand to fourteen thousand years ago. Yet striking new archaeological discoveries in both North and South America suggest that parts of the Americas may have been settled much earlier, perhaps by seafarers. Some geneticists now theorize that three successive waves of migrants began at least thirty thousand years ago. About 12,500 years ago, when the climate warmed and sea levels rose, Americans were separated from the peoples living on the connected continents of Asia, Africa, and Europe.

#### Ancient America

The first Americans are called Paleo-Indians. Nomadic hunters of game and gatherers of wild plants, they spread throughout North and South America, probably moving as bands composed of extended families. By about 11,500 years ago, the Paleo-Indians

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## CHRONOLOGY

<b>12,000–10,000 B.C.E.</b>	Paleo-Indians migrate from Asia to North America across the Beringia land bridge
<b>7000 B.C.E.</b>	Cultivation of food crops begins in America
<b>ca. 2000 B.C.E.</b>	Olmec civilization appears
<b>ca. 300–600 C.E.</b>	Height of influence of Teotihuacán
<b>ca. 600–900 C.E.</b>	Classic Mayan civilization
<b>1000 C.E.</b>	Ancient Pueblos build settlements in modern states of Arizona and New Mexico
<b>1001</b>	Norse establish settlement in “Vinland”
<b>1050–1250</b>	Height of influence of Cahokia Prevalence of Mississippian culture in modern midwestern and southeastern United States
<b>14th century</b>	Aztec rise to power
<b>1450s–80s</b>	Portuguese explore and colonize islands in the Mediterranean Atlantic
<b>1477</b>	Marco Polo’s <i>Travels</i> describes China
<b>1492</b>	Columbus reaches Bahamas
<b>1494</b>	Treaty of Tordesillas divides land claims between Spain and Portugal in Africa, India, and South America
<b>1496</b>	Last Canary Island falls to Spain
<b>1497</b>	Cabot reaches North America
<b>1513</b>	Ponce de León explores Florida
<b>1518–30</b>	Smallpox epidemic devastates Indian population of West Indies and Central and South America
<b>1519</b>	Cortés invades Mexico
<b>1521</b>	Aztec Empire falls to Spaniards
<b>1524</b>	Verrazzano sails along Atlantic coast of United States
<b>1534–35</b>	Cartier explores St. Lawrence River
<b>1534–36</b>	Vaca, Estevan, and two companions walk across North America
<b>1539–42</b>	Soto explores southeastern United States
<b>1540–42</b>	Coronado explores southwestern United States
<b>1587–90</b>	Raleigh’s Roanoke colony vanishes
<b>1588</b>	Harriot publishes <i>A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia</i>

were making fine stone projectile points, which they attached to wooden spears and used to kill and butcher bison (buffalo), woolly mammoths, and other large mammals then living in the Americas. But as the Ice Age ended and the human population increased, all the large American mammals except the bison disappeared.

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Scholars disagree about whether overhunting or the change in climate caused their demise. In either case, deprived of their primary source of meat, Paleo-Indians found new ways to survive.

By approximately nine thousand years ago, the residents of what is now central Mexico began to cultivate food crops, especially maize (corn), squash, beans, avocados, and peppers. In the Andes Mountains of South America, people started to grow potatoes. As knowledge of agricultural techniques improved and spread through the Americas, vegetables and maize proved a more reliable source of food than hunting and gathering. Except for those living in the harshest climates, most Americans started to adopt a more sedentary style of life so that they could tend fields regularly. Some established permanent settlements; others moved several times a year among fixed sites. They cleared forests through the use of controlled burning. The fires not only created cultivable lands by killing trees and fertilizing the soil with ashes but also opened meadows that attracted deer and other wildlife. All the American cultures emphasized producing sufficient food. Although they traded such items as shells, flint, salt, and copper, no society ever became dependent on another group for items vital to its survival.

Wherever agriculture dominated the economy, complex civilizations flourished. Such societies, assured of steady supplies of grains and vegetables, no longer had to devote all their energies to subsistence. Instead, they were able to accumulate wealth, produce ornamental objects, trade with other groups, and create elaborate rituals and ceremonies. In North America, the successful cultivation of nutritious crops, such as maize, beans, and squash, seems to have led to the growth and development of all the major civilizations: first the large city-states of Mesoamerica (modern Mexico and Guatemala) and then the urban clusters known collectively as the Mississippian culture and located in the present-day United States. Each of these societies, historians and archaeologists now believe, reached its height of population and influence only after achieving success in agriculture. Each later declined and collapsed after reaching the limits of its food supply, with dire political and military consequences.

### **Mesoamerican Civilizations**

Archaeologists and historians still know little about the first major Mesoamerican civilization, the Olmecs, who about four thousand years ago lived near the Gulf of Mexico in cities dominated by temple pyramids. The Mayas and Teotihuacán, which developed approximately two thousand years later, are better recorded. Teotihuacán, founded in the Valley of Mexico about 300 B.C.E. (Before the Common Era), eventually became one of the largest urban areas in the world, housing perhaps 100,000 people in the fifth century C.E. (Common Era). Teotihuacán's commercial network extended hundreds of miles in all directions; many peoples prized its obsidian (a green glass), used to make fine knives and mirrors. Pilgrims traveled long distances to visit Teotihuacán's impressive pyramids and the great temple of Quetzalcoatl—the feathered serpent, primary god of central Mexico.

On the Yucatan Peninsula, in today's eastern Mexico, the Mayas built urban centers containing tall pyramids and temples. They studied astronomy and created an elaborate writing system. Their city-states, though, engaged in near-constant warfare with one another. Warfare and an inadequate food supply caused the

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collapse of the most powerful cities by 900 C.E., thus ending the classic era of Mayan civilization. By the time Spaniards arrived 600 years later, only a few remnants of the once-mighty society remained.

### **Pueblos and Mississippians**

Ancient native societies in what is now the United States learned to grow maize, squash, and beans from Mesoamericans, but the exact nature of the relationship of the various cultures is unknown. (No Mesoamerican artifacts have been found north of the Rio Grande, but some items resembling Mississippian objects have been excavated in northern Mexico.) The Hohokam, Mogollon, and ancient Pueblo peoples of the modern states of Arizona and New Mexico subsisted by combining hunting and gathering with agriculture in an arid region of unpredictable rainfall. Hohokam villagers constructed extensive irrigation systems, but even so, they occasionally had to relocate their settlements when water supplies failed. Between 900 and 1150 C.E. in Chaco Canyon, the Pueblos built fourteen “Great Houses,” multistory stone structures averaging two hundred rooms. The canyon, at the juncture of perhaps four hundred miles of roads, served as a major regional trading and processing center for turquoise, used then as now to create beautiful ornamental objects. Yet the aridity eventually caused the Chacoans to migrate to other sites.

At almost the same time, the unrelated Mississippian culture flourished in what is now the midwestern and southeastern United States. Relying largely on maize, squash, nuts, pumpkins, and venison for food, the Mississippians lived in substantial settlements organized hierarchically. The largest of their urban centers was the City of the Sun (now called Cahokia), near modern St. Louis. Located on rich farmland close to the confluence of the Illinois, Missouri, and Mississippi Rivers, Cahokia, like Teotihuacán and Chaco Canyon, served as a focal point for both religion and trade. At its peak (in the eleventh and twelfth centuries C.E.), the City of the Sun covered more than 5 square miles and had a population of about twenty thousand—small by Mesoamerican standards but larger than any other northern community, and larger than London in the same era.

Although the Cahokians never invented a writing system, these sun-worshippers developed an accurate calendar, evidenced by their creation of a woodhenge—a large circle of tall timber posts aligned with the solstices and the equinox. The city’s main pyramid (one of 120 of varying sizes), today called Monks Mound, was at the time of its construction the third largest structure of any description in the Western Hemisphere; it remains the largest earthwork ever built anywhere in the Americas. It sat at the northern end of the Grand Plaza, surrounded by seventeen other mounds, some used for burials. Yet following 1250 C.E., the city was abandoned, several decades after a disastrous earthquake. Archaeologists believe that climate change and the degradation of the environment, caused by overpopulation and the destruction of nearby forests, contributed to the city’s collapse. Afterwards, warfare increased as large-scale population movements destabilized the region.

### **Aztecs**

Far to the South, the Aztecs (also called Mexicas) migrated into the Valley of Mexico during the twelfth century. The uninhabited ruins of Teotihuacán, which by then had been deserted for at least two

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hundred years, awed and mystified the migrants. Their chronicles record that their primary deity, Huitzilopochtli—a war god represented by an eagle—directed them to establish their capital on an island where they saw an eagle eating a serpent, the symbol of Quetzalcoatl. That island city became Tenochtitlán, the center of a rigidly stratified society composed of hereditary classes of warriors, merchants, priests, common folk, and slaves.

The Aztecs conquered their neighbors, forcing them to pay tribute in textiles, gold, foodstuffs, and human beings who could be sacrificed to Huitzilopochtli. They also engaged in ritual combat, known as flowery wars, to obtain further sacrificial victims. The war god's taste for blood was not easily quenched. In the Aztec year Ten Rabbit (1502), at the coronation of Motecuhzoma II (the Spaniards could not pronounce his name correctly, so they called him Montezuma), thousands of people were sacrificed by having their still-beating hearts torn from their bodies.

The Aztecs believed they lived in the age of the Fifth Sun. Four times previously, they wrote, the earth and all the people who lived on it had been destroyed. They predicted their own world would end in earthquakes and hunger. In the Aztec year Thirteen Flint, volcanoes erupted, sickness and hunger spread, wild beasts attacked children, and an eclipse of the sun darkened the sky. Did some priest wonder whether the Fifth Sun was approaching its end? In time, the Aztecs learned that Thirteen Flint was called, by Europeans, 1492.

## NORTH AMERICA IN 1492

Over the centuries, the Americans who lived north of Mexico adapted their once-similar ways of life to very different climates and terrains, thus creating the diverse culture areas (ways of subsistence) that the Europeans encountered when they arrived (see Map 1.1). Scholars often refer to such culture areas by language group (such as Algonquian or Iroquoian) because neighboring Indian nations commonly spoke related languages. Bands that lived in environments not well suited to agriculture—because of inadequate rainfall or poor soil, for example—followed a nomadic lifestyle. Within the area of the present-day United States, these groups included the Paiutes and Shoshones, who inhabited the Great Basin (now Nevada and Utah). Because of the difficulty of finding sufficient food for more than a few people, such hunter-gatherer bands were small, usually composed of one or more related families. The men hunted small animals, and women gathered seeds and berries. Where large game was more plentiful and food supplies therefore more certain, as in present-day central and western Canada and the Great Plains, bands of hunters were somewhat larger.

In more favorable environments, larger groups combined agriculture with gathering, hunting, and fishing. Those who lived near the seacoasts, like the Chinooks of present-day Washington and Oregon, consumed fish and shellfish in addition to growing crops and gathering seeds and berries. Residents of the interior (for example, the Arikaras of the Missouri River valley) hunted large animals while also cultivating maize, squash, and beans. The peoples of what is now eastern Canada and the northeastern United States also combined hunting, fishing, and agriculture. They regularly used controlled fires both to open land for cultivation and to assist in hunting.

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### MAP 1.1 Native Cultures of North America

The Natives of the North American continent effectively used the resources of the regions in which they lived. As this map shows, coastal groups relied on fishing, residents of fertile areas engaged in agriculture, and other peoples employed hunting (often combined with gathering) as a primary mode of subsistence.

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Extensive trade routes linked distant peoples. For instance, hoe and spade blades manufactured from stone mined in modern southern Illinois have been found as far northeast as Lake Erie and as far west as the Plains. Commercial and other interactions among disparate groups speaking different languages were aided by the universally understood symbol of friendship—the calumet, a feathered tobacco pipe offered to strangers at initial encounters.

### **Gendered Division of Labor**

Societies that relied primarily on hunting large animals, such as deer and buffalo, assigned that task to men, allotting food preparation and clothing production to women. Before such nomadic bands acquired horses from the Spaniards, women—occasionally assisted by dogs—also carried the family’s belongings whenever the band relocated. Such a sexual division of labor was universal among hunting peoples, regardless of their location. So, too, among seacoast peoples women gathered shellfish along the shore while men fished from boats. Yet agricultural societies assigned work in divergent ways. The Pueblo peoples, who lived in sixty or seventy autonomous villages and spoke five different languages, defined agricultural labor as men’s work. In the east, large clusters of peoples speaking Algonquian, Iroquoian, and Muskogean languages allocated most agricultural chores to women, although men cleared the land. In all the farming societies, women gathered wild foods and prepared food for consumption or storage, whereas men were responsible for hunting.

Everywhere in North America, women cared for young children, while older youths learned adult skills from their same-sex parent. Children generally had a great deal of freedom. Young people commonly chose their own marital partners, and in most societies couples could easily divorce if they no longer wished to live together. In contrast to the earlier Mississippian cultures, populations in these societies remained at a level sustainable by existing food supplies, largely because of low birth rates. Infants and toddlers were nursed until the age of two or even longer, and taboos prevented couples from having sexual intercourse during that period.

### **Social Organization**

The southwestern and eastern agricultural peoples had similar social organizations. They lived in villages, sometimes with a thousand or more inhabitants. The Pueblos resided in multistory buildings constructed on terraces along the sides of cliffs or other easily defended sites. Northern Iroquois villages (in modern New York State) were composed of large, rectangular, bark-covered structures, or long houses; the name Haudenosaunee, which the Iroquois called themselves, means “People of the Long House.” In the present-day southeastern United States, Muskogean and southern Algonquians lived in large houses made of thatch. Most of the eastern villages were surrounded by wooden palisades and ditches to aid in fending off attackers.

In all the agricultural societies, each dwelling housed an extended family defined matrilineally (through a female line of descent). Mothers, their married daughters, and their daughters’ husbands and children all lived together. Matrilineal descent did not imply matriarchy, or the wielding of power by women, but

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rather served as a means of reckoning kinship. Matrilineal ties also linked extended families into clans. The nomadic bands of the Prairies and Great Plains, by contrast, were most often related patrilineally (through the male line). They lacked settled villages and defended themselves from attack primarily through their ability to move to safer locations when necessary.

**War and Politics** The defensive design of native villages discloses the significance of warfare in pre-Columbian America. Long before Europeans arrived, residents of the continent fought one another for control of the best hunting and fishing territories, the most fertile agricultural lands, or the sources of essential items, such as salt (for preserving meat) and flint (for making knives and arrowheads). Bands of Americans protected by wooden armor battled while standing in ranks facing each other, the better to employ their clubs and throwing spears, which were effective only at close quarters. They began to shoot arrows from behind trees only when they confronted European guns, which rendered their armor useless. People captured by the enemy in such wars were sometimes enslaved and dishonored by losing their previous names and identities, but slavery was never an important source of labor in pre-Columbian America.

American political structures varied considerably. Among Pueblos, the village council, composed of ten to thirty men, was the highest political authority; no government structure connected the villages. Nomadic hunters also lacked formal links among separate bands. The Iroquois, by contrast, had an elaborate political hierarchy incorporating villages into nations and nations into a confederation. A council comprising representatives from each nation made crucial decisions of war and peace for the entire confederacy. In all the North American cultures, civil and war leaders divided political power and wielded authority only so long as they retained the confidence of the people. Autocratic rulers held sway only in southeastern chiefdoms descended from the Mississippians. Women more often assumed leadership roles among agricultural peoples, especially those in which females were the primary cultivators, than among nomadic hunters. Female sachems (rulers) led Algonquian villages in what is now Massachusetts, but women never became heads of hunting bands. Iroquois women did not become chiefs, yet clan matrons exercised political power. The older women of each village chose its chief and could both start wars (by calling for the capture of prisoners to replace dead relatives) and stop them (by refusing to supply warriors with necessary foodstuffs).

**Religion** All the American peoples were polytheistic, worshipping a multitude of gods. Each group's most important beliefs and rituals were closely tied to its means of subsistence. The major deities of agricultural peoples like the Pueblos and Muskogean were associated with cultivation, and their chief festivals centered on planting and harvest. The most important gods of hunters like those living on the Great Plains were associated with animals, and their major festivals were related to hunting. A band's economy and women's role in it helped to determine women's potential as religious leaders. Women held the most prominent positions in those agricultural societies in which they were

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also the chief food producers, whereas in hunting societies men took the lead in religious as well as political affairs.

A wide variety of cultures, comprising more than 10 million people, thus inhabited America north of Mexico when Europeans arrived. The hierarchical kingdoms of Mesoamerica bore little resemblance to the nomadic hunting societies of the Great Plains or to the agriculturalists of the Northeast or Southwest. The diverse inhabitants of North America spoke well over one thousand different languages. For obvious reasons, they did not consider themselves one people, nor did they think of uniting to repel the European invaders.

## AFRICAN SOCIETIES

Fifteenth-century Africa, like fifteenth-century America, housed a variety of cultures adapted to different terrains and climates. Many of these cultures were of great antiquity. In the north, along the Mediterranean Sea, lived the Berbers, who were Muslims, or followers of the Islamic religion founded by the prophet Mohammed in the seventh century C.E. On the east coast of Africa, Muslim city-states engaged in extensive trade with India, the Moluccas (part of modern Indonesia), and China. In these ports, sustained contact and intermarriage among Arabs and Africans created the Swahili language and culture. Through the East African city-states passed the Spice Route, water-borne commerce between the eastern Mediterranean and East Asia; the rest followed the long land route across Central Asia known as the Silk Road.

South of the Mediterranean coast in the African interior lie the great Saharan and Libyan Deserts, vast expanses of nearly waterless terrain crisscrossed by trade routes passing through oases. The introduction of the camel in the fifth century C.E. made long-distance travel possible, and as Islam expanded after the ninth century, commerce controlled by Muslim merchants helped to spread similar religious and cultural ideas throughout the region. Below the deserts, much of the continent is divided between tropical rain forests (along the coasts) and grassy plains (in the interior). People speaking a variety of languages and pursuing different subsistence strategies lived in a wide belt south of the deserts. South of the Gulf of Guinea, the grassy landscape came to be dominated by Bantu-speaking peoples, who left their homeland in modern Nigeria about two thousand years ago and slowly migrated south and east across the continent.

### West Africa (Guinea)

West Africa was a land of tropical forests and savanna grasslands where fishing, cattle herding, and agriculture had supported the inhabitants for at least ten thousand years before Europeans set foot there in the fifteenth century. The northern region of West Africa, or Upper Guinea, was heavily influenced by the Islamic culture of the Mediterranean. By the eleventh century C.E., many of the region's inhabitants had become Muslims. Trade via camel caravans between Upper Guinea and the Muslim Mediterranean was sub-Saharan Africa's major connection to Europe and West Asia. Africans sold ivory, gold, and slaves to northern merchants to obtain salt, dates, silk, and cotton cloth.

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Upper Guinea runs northeast-southwest from Cape Verde to Cape Palmas. The people of its northernmost region, the so-called Rice Coast (present-day Gambia, Senegal, and Guinea), fished and cultivated rice in coastal swamplands. The Grain Coast, to the south, was thinly populated and not readily accessible from the sea because it had only one good harbor (modern Freetown, Sierra Leone). Its people concentrated on farming and raising livestock.

In Lower Guinea, south and east of Cape Palmas, most Africans were farmers who practiced traditional religions, rather than Islam. Believing that spirits inhabited particular places, they invested those places with special significance. Like the agricultural peoples of the Americas, they developed rituals intended to ensure good harvests. Throughout the region, individual villages composed of kin groups were linked into hierarchical kingdoms. At the time of initial European contact, decentralized political and social authority characterized the region.

### **Complementary Gender Roles**

The societies of West Africa, like those of the Americas, assigned different tasks to men and women. In general, the sexes shared agricultural duties. Men also hunted, managed livestock, and did most of the fishing. Women were responsible for childcare, food preparation, manufacture, and trade. They managed the extensive local and regional networks through which families, villages, and small kingdoms exchanged goods.

Despite their different economies and the rivalries among states, the peoples of Lower Guinea had similar social systems organized on the basis of what anthropologists have called the dual-sex principle. In Lower Guinea, each sex handled its own affairs: just as male political and religious leaders governed men, so females ruled women. In the Dahomean kingdom, for example, every male official had his female counterpart; in the thirty little Akan states on the Gold Coast, chiefs inherited their status through the female line, and each male chief had a female assistant who supervised other women. Many West African societies practiced polygyny (one man's having several wives, each of whom lived separately with her children). Thus, few adults lived permanently in marital households, but the dual-sex system ensured that their actions were subject to scrutiny by members of their own sex.

Throughout Guinea, religious beliefs stressed complementary male and female roles. Both women and men served as heads of the cults and secret societies that directed the spiritual life of the villages. Young women were initiated into the Sandé cult, young men into Poro. Neither cult was allowed to reveal its secrets to the opposite sex. Although West African women (unlike some of their Native American contemporaries) rarely held formal power over men, female religious leaders did govern other members of their sex within the Sandé cult, enforcing conformity to accepted norms of behavior and overseeing their spiritual well-being.

### **Slavery in Guinea**

West African law recognized both individual and communal land ownership, but men seeking to accumulate wealth needed access to labor—wives, children, or slaves—who could work the land. West Africans enslaved for life therefore composed essential elements of the economy. Africans could be enslaved as punishment for crimes, but

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more often such slaves were enemy captives or people who voluntarily enslaved themselves or their children to pay debts. An African who possessed bondspople had a right to the products of their labor, although the degree to which slaves were exploited varied greatly, and slave status did not always descend to the next generation. Some slaves were held as chattel; others could engage in trade, retaining a portion of their profits; and still others achieved prominent political or military positions. All, however, found it difficult to overcome the social stigma of enslavement, and they could be traded or sold at the will of their owners.

West Africans, then, were agricultural peoples, skilled at tending livestock, hunting, fishing, and manufacturing cloth from plant fibers and animal skins. Both men and women worked communally, in family groups or alongside others of their own sex. They were accustomed to a relatively egalitarian relationship between the sexes, especially within the context of religion. Carried as captives to the Americas, they became essential to transplanted European societies that used their labor but had little respect for their cultural traditions.

## EUROPEAN SOCIETIES

In the fifteenth century, Europeans, too, were agricultural peoples. The daily lives of Europe's rural people had changed little for several hundred years. Split into numerous small, warring countries, Europe was divided linguistically, politically, and economically, yet in social terms Europeans' lives exhibited many similarities. In the hierarchical European societies, a few families wielded autocratic power over the majority of the people. English society in particular was organized as a series of interlocking hierarchies; that is, each person (except those at the very top or bottom) was superior to some, inferior to others. At the base of such hierarchies were people held in various forms of bondage. Although Europeans were not subjected to perpetual slavery, Christian doctrine permitted the enslavement of "heathens" (non-Christians), and some Europeans' freedom was restricted by such conditions as serfdom, which tied them to the land if not to specific owners. In short, Europe's kingdoms resembled those of Africa or Mesoamerica but differed greatly from the more egalitarian societies found in America north of Mexico.

### Gender, Work, Politics, and Religion

Most Europeans, like most Africans and Americans, lived in small villages. Only a few cities dotted the landscape, most of them seaports or political capitals. European farmers, called peasants, owned or leased separate landholdings, but they worked the fields communally. Because fields had to lie fallow (unplanted) every second or third year to regain fertility, a family could not ensure itself a regular food supply unless all villagers shared annually the work and the crops. Men did most of the fieldwork; women helped out chiefly at planting and harvest. In some regions men concentrated on herding livestock. Women's duties consisted primarily of childcare and household tasks, including preserving food, milking cows, and caring for poultry. If a woman's husband was a city artisan or storekeeper, she might assist him in business. Because Europeans kept domesticated animals (pigs, goats, sheep, and cattle) for meat, hunting had little economic importance in their cultures. Instead, hunting was primarily a sport for male aristocrats.

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Unlike in Africa or America, where women often played prominent roles in politics and religion, men dominated all areas of life in Europe. A few women—notably Queen Elizabeth I of England—achieved status or power by right of birth, but the vast majority were excluded from positions of political authority. European women also generally held inferior social, religious, and economic positions, yet they wielded power in their own households over children and servants. In contrast to the freedom children enjoyed in American families, European children were tightly controlled and subjected to harsh discipline.

Christianity was the dominant European religion. In the West, authority rested in the Catholic Church, based in Rome and led by the pope, who directed a wholly male clergy. Although Europeans were nominally Catholic, many adhered to local belief systems the church deemed heretical and proved unable to extinguish. Kings would ally themselves with the church when it suited their needs but often acted independently. Yet even so, the Christian nations of Europe from the twelfth century on publicly united in a goal of driving nonbelievers (especially Muslims) not only from their own domains but also from the holy city of Jerusalem, which caused the series of wars known as the Crusades. Nevertheless, in the fifteenth century, Muslims dominated the commerce and geography of the Mediterranean world, especially after they conquered Constantinople (capital of the Christian Byzantine empire) in 1453. Few would have predicted that Christian Europeans would ever be able to challenge that dominance.

### Effects of Plague and Warfare

When the fifteenth century began, European nations were slowly recovering from the devastating epidemic of plague known as the Black Death, which first struck them in 1346.

The Black Death seems to have arrived in Europe from China, traveling with long-distance traders along the Silk Road to the eastern Mediterranean. The disease then recurred with particular severity in the 1360s and 1370s. Although no precise figures are available and the impact of the Black Death varied from region to region, the best estimate is that fully one-third of Europe's people died during those terrible years. A precipitous economic decline followed—in some regions more than half of the workers had died—as did severe social, political, and religious disruption because of the deaths of clergymen and other leading figures.

As plague ravaged the population, England and France waged the Hundred Years' War (1337–1453), initiated because English monarchs had claimed the French throne. The war interrupted overland trade routes connecting England and Antwerp (in modern Belgium) to Venice, a Christian trading center, and thence to India and China. England, on the periphery of the Mediterranean commercial core, exported wool and cloth to Antwerp in exchange for spices and silks from the East. Needing a new way to reach their northern trading partners, eastern Mediterranean merchants forged a maritime route to Antwerp. Using a triangular, or lateen, sail (rather than the then-standard square rigging) improved the maneuverability of ships, enabling vessels to sail out of the Mediterranean and north around the European coast. Other developments of key importance were the acquisition of a Chinese invention, the compass, and the perfection of navigational instruments like the astrolabe and the quadrant, which allowed oceangoing sailors to estimate their position (latitude) by measuring the relationship of the sun, moon, or certain stars to the horizon.

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### Political and Technological Change

After the Hundred Years' War, European monarchs forcefully consolidated their previously diffuse political power and raised new revenues through increased taxation of an already hard-pressed peasantry. The long military struggle led to new pride in national identity, which eclipsed the prevailing regional and dynastic loyalties. In England, Henry VII in 1485 founded the Tudor dynasty and began uniting a previously divided land. In France, the successors of Charles VII unified the kingdom. Most successful of all were Ferdinand of Aragón and Isabella of Castile, who married in 1469, founding a strongly Catholic Spain. In 1492, they defeated the Muslims who had lived in Spain and Portugal for centuries, thereafter expelling all Jews and Muslims from their domain.

The fifteenth century also brought technological change to Europe. Movable type and the printing press, invented in Germany in the 1450s, made information more accessible than ever before. Printing stimulated the Europeans' curiosity about fabled lands across the seas, lands they could now read about in books. The most important such works were Ptolemy's *Geography*, a description of the known world written in ancient times, first published in 1475 and later updated with new finds; and Marco Polo's *Travels*, published in 1477. The *Travels* recounted a Venetian merchant's adventures in thirteenth-century China and intriguingly described that nation as bordered on the east by an ocean. Polo's account circulated widely among Europe's educated elites, first in manuscript and later in print. The book led many Europeans to believe they could trade directly with China in ocean-going vessels instead of relying on the Silk Road or the Spice Route through East Africa. A transoceanic route, if it existed, would allow northern Europeans to circumvent the Muslim and Venetian merchants who hitherto had controlled their access to Asian goods.

### Motives for Exploration

Technological advances and the growing strength of newly powerful national rulers made possible the European explorations of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Each country craved easy access to African and Asian goods—silk, dyes, perfumes, jewels, sugar, gold, and especially spices such as pepper, cloves, cinnamon, and nutmeg. Spices were desirable not only for seasoning food but also because they were believed to have medicinal and magical properties. Their allure stemmed largely from their rarity, their extraordinary cost, and their mysterious origins. They passed through so many hands en route to London or Seville that no European knew exactly where they came from. (Nutmeg, for example, grew only on nine tiny islands in the Moluccas, now eastern Indonesia.) Avoiding intermediaries in Venice and Constantinople, and acquiring such valuable products directly, would improve a nation's income and its standing relative to other countries, in addition to supplying its wealthy leaders with coveted luxury items.

A concern for spreading Christianity around the world supplemented the economic motive. The linking of materialistic and spiritual goals seems contradictory today, but fifteenth-century Europeans saw no necessary conflict between the two. Explorers and colonizers—especially Roman Catholics—honestly sought to convert “heathen” peoples to Christianity. At the same time, they hoped to increase their

nation's wealth by establishing direct trade with Africa, China, India, and the Moluccas.

## EARLY EUROPEAN EXPLORATIONS

To establish that trade, European mariners first had to explore the oceans. Seafarers needed not just the maneuverable vessels and navigational aids increasingly used in the fourteenth century but also knowledge of the sea, its currents, and especially its winds. Wind would power their ships. But how did the winds run? Where would Atlantic breezes carry their square-rigged ships, which, even with the addition of a triangular sail, needed to run before the wind (that is, to have the wind directly behind the vessel)?

### Sailing the Mediterranean Atlantic

Europeans learned the answers to these questions in the region called the Mediterranean Atlantic, the expanse of ocean located south and west of Spain and bounded by the islands of the Azores (on the west) and the Canaries (on the south), with the Madeiras in their midst. Europeans reached all three sets of islands during the fourteenth century—first the Canaries in the 1330s, then the Madeiras and the Azores. The Canaries proved a popular destination for mariners from Iberia, the peninsula that includes Spain and Portugal. Sailing to the Canaries from Europe was easy because strong winds known as the Northeast Trades blow southward along the Iberian and African coastlines. The voyage took about a week, and the volcanic peaks on the islands made them difficult to miss even with imprecise navigational instruments.

The problem was getting back. The Iberian sailor attempting to return home faced a major obstacle: the very winds that had brought him so quickly to the Canaries now blew directly at him. Rowing and tacking back and forth against the wind were similarly tedious and ineffectual. Confronted by contrary winds, mariners had traditionally waited for the wind to change, but the Northeast Trades blew steadily. So they developed a new technique: sailing “around the wind.” That meant sailing as directly against the wind as was possible without being forced to change course. In the Mediterranean Atlantic, a mariner would head northwest into the open ocean, until—weeks later—he reached the winds that would carry him home, the so-called Westerlies. Those winds blow (we now know, although the seafarers at first did not) northward along the coast of North America before heading east toward Europe.

This solution must at first have seemed to defy common sense, but it became the key to successful exploration of both the Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans. Once a sailor understood the winds and their allied currents, he no longer feared leaving Europe without being able to return. Faced with a contrary wind, he simply had to sail around it until he found a wind to carry him in the proper direction.

### Islands of the Mediterranean Atlantic

During the fifteenth century, armed with knowledge of the winds and currents of the Mediterranean Atlantic, Iberian seamen regularly visited the three island groups, all of which they could reach in two weeks or less. The uninhabited

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Azores were soon settled by Portuguese migrants who raised wheat for sale in Europe and sold livestock to passing sailors. The Madeiras also had no native peoples, and by the 1450s Portuguese colonists were employing slaves (probably Jews and Muslims brought from Iberia) to grow large quantities of sugar for export to the mainland. By the 1470s, Madeira had developed a colonial plantation economy. For the first time in world history, a region was settled explicitly to cultivate a valuable crop—sugar—to be sold elsewhere. Moreover, because the work involved in large-scale plantation agriculture was so backbreaking, only a supply of enslaved laborers (who could not opt to quit) could ensure the system's continued success.

The Canaries did have indigenous residents—the Guanche people, who began trading animal skins and dyes with their European visitors. After 1402, the French, Portuguese, and Spanish began sporadically attacking the islands. The Guanches resisted vigorously, even though they were weakened by their susceptibility to alien European diseases. One by one, the seven islands fell to Europeans who then carried off Guanches as slaves to the Madeiras or Iberia. Spain conquered the last island in 1496 and subsequently devoted the land to sugar plantations. Collectively, the Canaries and Madeira became known as the Wine Islands because much of their sugar production was directed to making sweet wines.

### **Portuguese Trading Posts in Africa**

While some Europeans concentrated on exploiting the islands of the Mediterranean Atlantic, others used them as steppingstones to Africa. In 1415, Portugal seized control of Ceuta, a Muslim city in North Africa. Prince Henry the Navigator, son of King John I of Portugal, knew that vast wealth awaited the first European nation to tap the riches of Africa and Asia directly. Repeatedly, he dispatched ships southward along the African coast, attempting to discover an oceanic route to Asia. But not until after Prince Henry's death did Bartholomew Dias round the southern tip of Africa (1488) and Vasco da Gama finally reach India (1498), where at Malabar he located the richest source of peppercorns in the world.

Long before that, Portugal reaped the benefits of its seafarers' voyages. Although West African states successfully resisted European penetration of the interior, they allowed the Portuguese to establish trading posts along their coasts. Charging the traders rent and levying duties on goods they imported, the African kingdoms benefited considerably from their new, easier access to European manufactures. The Portuguese gained, too, for they no longer had to rely on trans-Saharan camel caravans. Their vessels earned immense profits by swiftly transporting African gold, ivory, and slaves to Europe. By bargaining with African masters to purchase their slaves and then carrying those bondspeople to Iberia, the Portuguese introduced black slavery into Europe.

### **Lessons of Early Colonization**

An island off the African coast, previously uninhabited, proved critical to Portuguese success. In the 1480s, they colonized São Tomé, located in the Gulf of Guinea. By that time, Madeira had already reached the limit of its capacity to produce sugar. The

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soil of São Tomé proved ideal for raising that valuable crop, and plantation agriculture there expanded rapidly. Planters imported large numbers of slaves from the mainland to work in the cane fields, thus creating the first economy based primarily on the bondage of black Africans.

By the 1490s, even before Christopher Columbus set sail to the west, Europeans had learned three key lessons of colonization in the Mediterranean Atlantic. First, they had learned how to transplant their crops and livestock successfully to exotic locations. Second, they had discovered that the native peoples of those lands could be either conquered (like the Guanches) or exploited (like the Africans). Third, they had developed a viable model of plantation slavery and a system for supplying nearly unlimited quantities of such workers. The stage was set for a pivotal moment in world history.

## VOYAGES OF COLUMBUS, CABOT, AND THEIR SUCCESSORS

Christopher Columbus was well schooled in the lessons of the Mediterranean Atlantic. Born in 1451 in the Italian city-state of Genoa, this largely self-educated son of a wool merchant was by the 1490s an experienced sailor and mapmaker.



Collection of Mary Beth Norton

*A relief carving of a square-rigged vessel, with a lateen sail at the rear for maneuverability. Fittingly, it is found on Vasco da Gama's tomb in the Jéronimos monastery in Belém, Portugal, which is located on the very spot whence he set sail in just such a ship on his voyage to India.*

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Like many mariners of the day, he was drawn to Portugal and its islands, especially Madeira, where he commanded a merchant vessel. At least once he voyaged to the Portuguese outpost on the Gold Coast. There he became obsessed with gold, and there he came to understand the economic potential of the slave trade.

Like all accomplished seafarers, Columbus knew the world was round. But he differed from other cartographers in his estimate of the earth's size: he thought that China lay only three thousand miles from the southern European coast. Thus, he argued, it would be easier to reach Asia by sailing west than by making the difficult voyage around the southern tip of Africa. Experts scoffed at this crackpot notion, accurately predicting that the two continents lay twelve thousand miles apart. When Columbus in 1484 asked the Portuguese rulers to back his plan to sail west to Asia, they rejected what appeared to be a crazy scheme.

### Columbus's Voyage

Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain, jealous of Portugal's successes in Africa, were more receptive to Columbus's ideas. Urged on by some Spanish noblemen and a group of Italian merchants residing in Castile, the monarchs agreed to finance the risky voyage, in part because they hoped the profits would pay for a new expedition to conquer Muslim-held Jerusalem. And so, on August 3, 1492, in command of three ships—the *Pinta*, the *Niña*, and the *Santa Maria*—Columbus set sail from the Spanish port of Palos.

The first part of the journey was familiar, for the ships steered down the North-east Trades to the Canary Islands. There Columbus refitted his square-rigged ships, adding triangular sails to make them more maneuverable. On September 6, the ships weighed anchor and headed out into the unknown ocean.

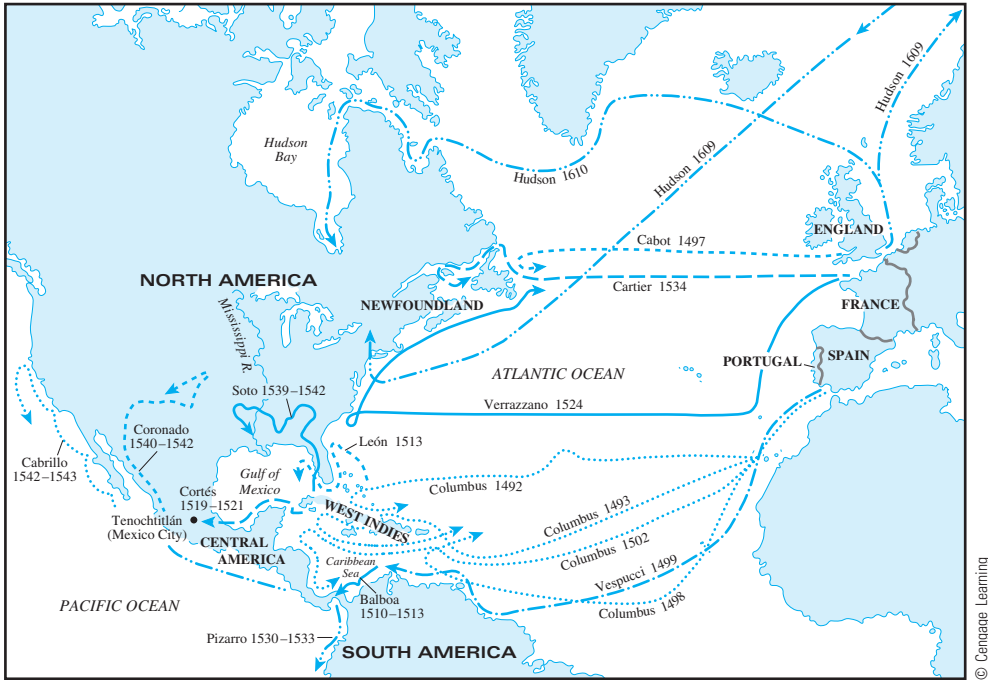
Just over a month later, pushed by favorable trade winds, the vessels found land approximately where Columbus thought Cipangu (Japan) was located (see Map 1.2). On October 12, he and his men landed on an island in the Bahamas, which its inhabitants called Guanahaní but which he renamed San Salvador. (Because Columbus's description of his landfall can be variously interpreted, several different places today claim to be his landing site.) Later, he went on to explore the islands now known as Cuba and Hispaniola, which their residents, the Taíno people, called Colba and Bohío. Because he thought he had reached the East Indies (the Spice Islands), Columbus referred to the inhabitants of the region as "Indians." The Taínos thought the Europeans had come from the sky, and wherever Columbus went crowds of curious Taínos gathered to meet and exchange gifts with him.

### Columbus's Observations

Three themes predominate in Columbus's log, the major source of information on this first encounter. First, he insistently asked the Taínos where he could find gold, pearls, and spices. Each time, his informants replied (via signs) that such products could be obtained on other islands or on the mainland. Eventually, he came to mistrust such answers, noting, "I am beginning to believe ... they will tell me anything I want to hear."

Second, Columbus wrote repeatedly of the strange and beautiful plants and animals. "Here the fishes are so unlike ours that it is amazing.... The colors are so bright that anyone would marvel," he noted, and again, "The song of the little birds might make a man wish never to leave here. I never tire from looking at

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## MAP 1.2 European Explorations in America

In the century following Columbus's voyages, European adventurers explored the coasts and parts of the interior of North and South America.

such luxurious vegetation.” Yet Columbus's interest was not only aesthetic. “I believe that there are many plants and trees here that could be worth a lot in Spain for use as dyes, spices, and medicines,” he observed, adding that he was carrying home to Europe “a sample of everything I can,” so that experts could examine them.

Third, Columbus also described the islands' human residents, and he seized some to take back to Spain. The Taínos were, he said, very handsome, gentle, and friendly, though they told him of the fierce Caniba (today called Caribs) who lived on other islands, raided their villages, and ate some captives (hence today's word *cannibal*). Although Columbus feared and distrusted the Caribs, he believed the Taínos to be likely converts to Catholicism, remarking that “if devout religious persons knew the Indian language well, all these people would soon become Christians.” But he had more in mind than conversion. The islanders “ought to make good and skilled servants,” Columbus declared. It would be easy to “subject everyone and make them do what you wished.”

Thus, the records of the first encounter between Europeans and Americans revealed themes that would be of enormous significance for centuries to come. Europeans wanted to extract profits by exploiting American resources, including plants, animals, and peoples alike, and like Columbus others later divided the native peoples into “good” (Taínos) and “bad” (Caribs). Columbus made three more voyages to the west, exploring most of the major Caribbean islands and sailing

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along the coasts of Central and South America. Until the day he died in 1506 at the age of fifty-five, he believed he had reached Asia. Even before his death, others knew better. Because the Florentine Amerigo Vespucci, who explored the South American coast in 1499, was the first to publish the idea that a new continent had been discovered, Martin Waldseemüller in 1507 labeled the land “America,” as is evident in his map. By then, Spain, Portugal, and Pope Alexander VI had signed the Treaty of Tordesillas (1494), confirming Portugal’s dominance in Africa—and later Brazil—in exchange for Spanish preeminence in the rest of the Americas.

### **Norse and Other Northern Voyagers**

Five hundred years before Columbus, about the year 1001, a Norse expedition under Leif Ericsson had sailed to North America across the Davis Strait, which separated their villages in Greenland from Baffin Island (located northeast of Hudson Bay; see Map 1.1) by just 200 nautical miles, settling at a site they named “Vinland.” Attacks by local residents forced them to depart hurriedly from Vinland after just a few years. In the 1960s, archaeologists determined that the Norse had established an outpost at what is now L’Anse aux Meadows, Newfoundland, but Vinland itself was probably located farther south.

Later Europeans did not know of the Norse explorers, but some historians argue that during the fifteenth century Basque whalers and fishermen (from modern northern France and Spain) located rich fishing grounds off Newfoundland but kept the information secret. Whether or not fishermen crossed the entire Atlantic, they thoroughly explored its northern reaches. Fifteenth-century seafarers voyaged regularly between the European continent, England, Ireland, and Iceland. The mariners who explored the region of North America that was to become the United States and Canada built on their knowledge.

The winds that the northern sailors confronted posed problems on their outbound rather than on their homeward journeys. The same Westerlies that carried Columbus back to Europe blew in the faces of northerners looking west. But mariners soon learned that the strongest winds shifted southward during the winter and that, by departing from northern ports in the spring, they could make adequate headway if they steered northward. Thus, whereas the first landfall of most sailors to the south was somewhere in the Caribbean, those taking the northern route usually reached America along the coast of today’s Maine or Canada.

### **John Cabot’s Explorations**

The European generally credited with “discovering” North America is Zuan Cabboto, known today as John Cabot. More precisely, Cabot brought to Europe the first formal knowledge of the northern continental coastline and claimed the land for England. Like Columbus, Cabot was a master mariner from the Italian city-state of Genoa; the two men probably knew each other well. Calculating that England—which traded with Asia only through a long series of intermediaries stretching from Antwerp to Venice to the Muslim world—would be eager to sponsor exploratory voyages, he gained financial backing from King Henry VII. He set sail from Bristol in late May 1497 in the *Mathew*, reaching North America about a month later. After exploring the coast of modern Newfoundland for a month,

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Cabot rode the Westerlies back to England, arriving just fifteen days after he left North America.

The voyages of Columbus, Cabot, and their successors finally brought the Eastern and Western Hemispheres together. Portuguese explorer Pedro Álvares Cabral reached Brazil in 1500; John Cabot's son Sebastian followed his father to North America in 1507; France financed Giovanni da Verrazzano in 1524 and Jacques Cartier in 1534; and in 1609 and 1610, Henry Hudson explored the North American coast for the Dutch West India Company (see Map 1.2). All were searching primarily for the legendary, nonexistent “Northwest Passage” through the Americas, hoping to find an easy route to the riches of Asia. But in a sign of what was to come, Verrazzano observed that “the [American] countryside is, in fact, full of promise and deserves to be developed for itself. The flora is rich and the fauna abundant.”

## SPANISH EXPLORATION AND CONQUEST

Only in the areas that Spain explored and claimed did colonization begin immediately. On his second voyage in 1493, Columbus brought to Hispaniola seventeen ships loaded with twelve hundred men, seeds, plants, livestock, chickens, and dogs—along with microbes, rats, and weeds. The settlement named Isabela (in the modern Dominican Republic) and its successors became the staging area for the Spanish invasion of America. On the islands of Cuba and Hispaniola, the Europeans learned to adapt to the new environment as did the horses, cattle, and hogs they imported. When the Spaniards moved on to explore the mainland, they rode island-bred horses and ate island-bred cattle and hogs.

### Cortés and Other Explorers

At first, Spanish explorers fanned out around the Caribbean basin. In 1513, Juan Ponce de León reached Florida, and Vasco Núñez de Balboa crossed the Isthmus of Panama to the Pacific Ocean, followed by Pánfilo de Narváez and others who traced the coast of the Gulf of Mexico. In the 1530s and 1540s, conquistadors traveled farther, exploring many regions claimed by the Spanish monarchs: Francisco Vázquez de Coronado journeyed through the southwestern portion of what is now the United States at approximately the same time Hernán de Soto explored the Southeast. Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo sailed along the California coast. Francisco Pizarro, who ventured into western South America, acquired the richest silver mines in the world by conquering the Incas. But the most important conquistador was Hernán Cortés, who in 1521 seized control of the Aztec Empire.

Cortés, an adventurer who first arrived in the Caribbean in 1506, landed a force on the Mexican mainland in 1519 to search for rumored wealthy cities. Near the coast, local Mayas presented him with a group of young enslaved women. One of them, Malinche (whom the Spaniards baptized as a Christian and renamed Doña Marina), had been sold into slavery by the Aztecs and raised by the Mayas. Because she became Cortés's translator, some modern Mexicans regard her as a traitor, but others suggest that she owed no loyalty to people who had enslaved her. In her own day, both Europeans and Aztecs accorded her great respect. Malinche bore Cortés a son, Martín—one of the first *mestizos*, or mixed-blood children—and eventually married one of his officers.

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## Capture of Tenochtitlán

As he traveled toward the Aztec capital, Cortés, with Malinche's help, cleverly recruited peoples whom the Aztecs had long subjugated. The Spaniards' strange beasts (horses, livestock) and noisy weapons (guns, cannon) awed their new allies. Yet the Spaniards, too, were awed. Years later, Bernal Díaz del Castillo recalled his first sight of Tenochtitlán, situated in the midst of Lake Texcoco: "We were amazed and said that it was like the enchantments ... on account of the great towers and cues [temples] and buildings rising from the water, and all built of masonry." Some soldiers asked, he remembered, "whether the things that we saw were not a dream."

The Spaniards came to Tenochtitlán not only with horses and steel weapons but also with smallpox, bringing an epidemic that had begun on Hispaniola. The disease peaked in 1520, fatally weakening Tenochtitlán's defenders. "It spread over the people as great destruction," an Aztec later remembered. "Some it quite covered [with pustules] on all parts—their faces, their heads, their breasts... There was great havoc. Very many died of it." Largely as a consequence, Tenochtitlán surrendered in 1521, and the Spaniards built Mexico City on its site. Cortes and his men seized a fabulous treasure of gold and silver. Thus, less than three decades after Columbus's first voyage, the Spanish monarchs—who treated the American territories as their personal possessions—controlled the richest, most extensive empire Europe had known since ancient Rome.

## Spanish Colonization

Spain established the model of colonization that other countries later attempted to imitate, a model with three major elements. First, the Crown tried to maintain tight control over the colonies, imposing a hierarchical government that allowed little autonomy to American jurisdictions. That control included, for example, carefully vetting prospective emigrants and limiting their number and insisting that the colonies import all their manufactured goods from Spain. In order to encourage social stability, those settlers were then required to live in towns under the authorities' watchful eyes. Roman Catholic priests attempted to ensure the colonists' conformity with orthodox religious views.

Second, men constituted most of the first colonists. Although some Spanish women later immigrated to America, the men took primarily Indian—and, later, African—women as their wives or concubines, a development more often than not encouraged by colonial administrators. They thereby began creating the racially mixed population that characterizes much of Latin America to the present day.

Third, the colonies' wealth was based on the exploitation of both the native population and slaves imported from Africa. The Mesoamerican peoples were accustomed to autocratic rule. Spaniards simply took over the role once assumed by native leaders who had exacted labor and tribute from their subjects. Cortés established the *encomienda* system, which granted Indian villages to individual conquistadors as a reward for their services, thus legalizing slavery in all but name.

In 1542, after cogent criticism from a colonial priest, Bartolomé de las Casas, the monarch formulated a new code of laws to reform the system, forbidding the conquerors from enslaving Indians while still allowing them to collect money and goods from tributary villages. In response to the restrictions and to the declining

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Indian population, the *encomenderos*, familiar with slavery in Spain, began to import Africans in order to increase the labor force under their direct control. They employed Indians and Africans primarily in gold and silver mines, on sugar plantations, and on huge horse, cattle, and sheep ranches. African slavery was far more common on the larger Caribbean islands than on the mainland.

Many demoralized residents of Mesoamerica accepted the Christian religion brought to New Spain by Franciscan and Dominican friars—men who had joined religious orders bound by vows of poverty and celibacy. The friars devoted their energies to persuading Mesoamerican people to move into towns and to build Roman Catholic churches. Spaniards leveled existing cities, constructing cathedrals and monasteries on sites once occupied by Aztec, Incan, and Mayan temples. In such towns, Indians were exposed to European customs and religious rituals designed to assimilate Catholic and pagan beliefs. Friars deliberately juxtaposed the cult of the Virgin Mary with that of the corn goddess, and the Indians adeptly melded aspects of their traditional worldview with Christianity, in a process called *syncretism*. Thousands of Indians residing in Spanish territory embraced Catholicism, at least partly because it was the religion of their new rulers and they were accustomed to obedience.

**Gold, Silver, and Spain's Decline** The New World's gold and silver, initially a boon, ultimately brought about the decline of Spain as a major power. China, a huge country with silver coinage, insatiably demanded Spanish silver, gobbling up an estimated half of the total output of New World mines while paying twice the price current in Europe. Especially after the Spanish began in the 1570s to dispatch silver-laden galleons annually from Acapulco (on Mexico's west coast) to trade at their new settlement at Manila, in the Philippines, Spaniards acquired easy access to luxury Chinese goods such as silk and Asian spices.

The influx of unprecedented wealth led to rapid inflation, which (among other adverse effects) caused Spanish products to be overpriced in international markets and imported goods to become cheaper in Spain. The once-profitable Spanish textile-manufacturing industry collapsed as did scores of other businesses. The seemingly endless income from American colonies emboldened successive Spanish monarchs to spend lavishly on wars against the Dutch and the English. Several times in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the monarchs repudiated the state debt, wreaking havoc on the nation's finances. When the South American gold and silver mines started to give out in the mid-seventeenth century, Spain's economy crumbled, and the nation lost its international importance.

## THE COLUMBIAN EXCHANGE

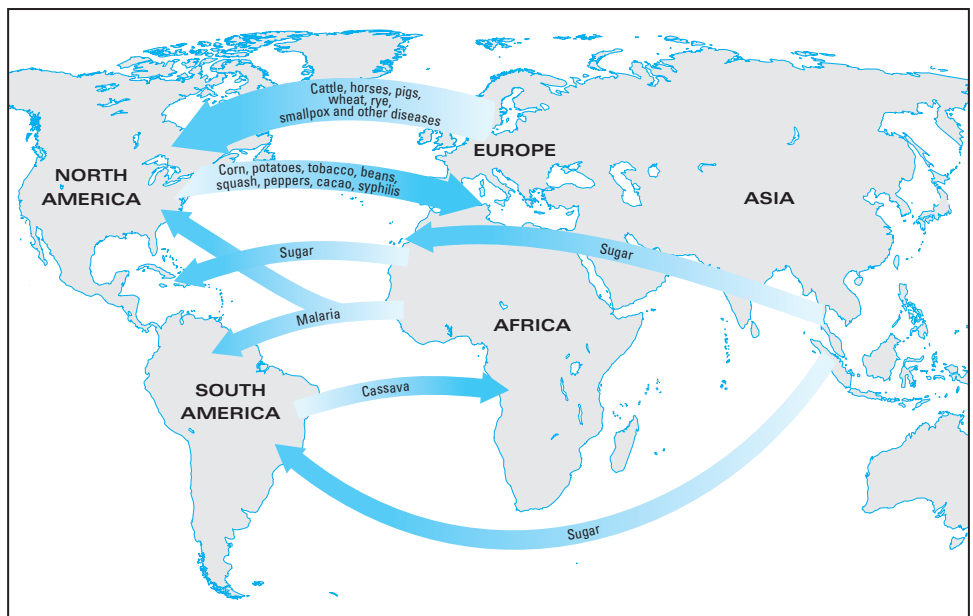
A broad mutual transfer of diseases, plants, and animals (called the Columbian Exchange by historian Alfred Crosby; see Map 1.3) resulted directly from the European voyages of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and from Spanish colonization. The Eastern and Western Hemispheres had evolved separately for thousands of years, developing widely different forms of life. Many large mammals, such as

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cattle and horses, were native to the connected continents of Europe, Asia, and Africa, but the Americas contained no domesticated beasts larger than dogs and llamas. The vegetable crops of the Americas—particularly maize, beans, squash, cassava, and potatoes—were more nutritious and produced higher yields than those of Europe and Africa, such as wheat, millet, and rye. In time, native peoples learned to raise and consume European livestock, and Europeans and Africans became accustomed to planting and eating American crops. The diets of all three peoples were consequently vastly enriched. Partly as a result, the world's population doubled over the next three hundred years. About three-fifths of all crops cultivated in the world today were first grown in the Americas.

### Smallpox and Other Diseases

Diseases carried from Europe and Africa, though, had a devastating impact on the Americas. Indians fell victim to microbes that had long infested the other continents and had repeatedly killed hundreds of thousands but had also often left survivors with some measure of immunity. The statistics are staggering. When Columbus landed on Hispaniola in 1492, approximately half a million people resided there. Fifty years later, that island had fewer than two thousand native inhabitants. Within thirty years of the first landfall at Guanahani, not one Taíno survived in the Bahamas.



### MAP 1.3 Major Items in the Columbian Exchange

As European adventurers traversed the world in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, they initiated the "Columbian Exchange" of plants, animals, and diseases. These events changed the lives of the peoples of the world forever, bringing new foods and new pestilence to both sides of the Atlantic.

Although measles, typhus, influenza, malaria, and other illnesses severely afflicted the native peoples, as at Tenochtitlán the greatest killer was smallpox, spread primarily by direct human contact. Overall, historians estimate that the long-term effects of the alien microorganisms could have reduced the precontact American population by as much as 90 percent. The epidemics recurred at twenty- to thirty-year intervals, frequently appearing either in tandem or in quick succession, so that weakened survivors of one would be felled by a second or third. Large numbers of deaths also disrupted societies already undergoing severe strains caused by colonization, thus rendering native peoples more vulnerable to droughts, crop failures, or other challenging circumstances.

Even far to the north, where smaller American populations encountered only a few Europeans, disease also ravaged the countryside. A great epidemic, probably viral hepatitis, swept through the villages along the coast north of Cape Cod from 1616 to 1618. Again, the mortality rate may have been as high as 90 percent. An English traveler several years later commented that the people had “died on heapes, as they lay in their houses,” and that bones and skulls covered the ruins of villages. Because of this dramatic depopulation of the area, just a few years later English colonists were able to establish settlements virtually unopposed.

The Americans, though, seem to have taken a revenge of sorts. They probably gave the Europeans syphilis, a virulent venereal disease. The first recorded European case of the new ailment occurred in 1493 in Barcelona, Spain, shortly after Columbus’s return from the Caribbean. Although less likely than smallpox to cause immediate death, syphilis was dangerous and debilitating. Carried by soldiers, sailors, and prostitutes, it spread quickly through Europe and Asia, reaching China by 1505.

*A male effigy dating from 200–800 C.E., found in a burial site in Nayarit, Mexico. The lesions covering the figurine suggest that the person it represents is suffering from syphilis, which, untreated, produces these characteristic markings on the body in its later stages. Such evidence as this pre-Columbian effigy has now convinced most scholars that syphilis originated in the Americas—a hypothesis in dispute for many years.*



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### **Sugar, Horses, and Tobacco**

The exchange of three commodities had significant impacts on Europe and the Americas. Sugar, first domesticated in the East Indies, was being grown on the islands of the Mediterranean Atlantic by 1450. The ravenous European demand for sugar—which, after initially regarded as a medicine, became a desirable luxury foodstuff—led Columbus to take Canary Island sugar canes to Hispaniola on his 1493 voyage. By the 1520s, plantations in the Greater Antilles worked by African slaves regularly shipped cargoes of sugar to Spain. Half a century later, the Portuguese colony in Brazil (founded 1532) was producing sugar for the European market on an even larger scale, and after 1640, sugar cultivation became the crucial component of English and French colonization in the Caribbean.

Horses—which, like sugar, were brought to America by Columbus in 1493—fell into the hands of North American Indians during the seventeenth century. Through trade and theft, horses spread among the peoples of the Great Plains, reaching most areas by 1750. Lakotas, Comanches, and Crows, among others, came to use horses for transportation and hunting, calculated their wealth in number of horses owned, and waged war primarily on horseback. Women no longer had to carry the band's belongings on their backs. Some groups that previously had cultivated crops abandoned agriculture. Because of the acquisition of horses, a mode of subsistence that had been based on hunting several different animals, in combination with gathering and agriculture, became one focused almost wholly on hunting buffalo.

In America, Europeans encountered tobacco, which at first they believed to have beneficial medicinal effects. Smoking and chewing the “Indian weed” became a fad in Europe after it was planted in Turkey in the sixteenth century. Despite the efforts of such skeptics as King James I of England, who in 1604 pronounced smoking “loathsome to the eye, hatefull to the Nose, harmful to the brain, [and] dangerous to the Lungs,” tobacco's popularity climbed. Its addictive nicotine and its connection to lung cancer were discovered only in the twentieth century.

The European and African invasion of the Americas therefore had a significant biological component, for the invaders carried plants and animals with them. Some creatures, such as livestock, they brought deliberately. Others, including rats (which infested their ships), weeds, and diseases, arrived unexpectedly. And the same process occurred in reverse. When the Europeans returned home, they deliberately took back such crops as maize, potatoes, and tobacco, along with that unanticipated stowaway, syphilis.

## **EUROPEANS IN NORTH AMERICA**

Europeans were initially more interested in exploiting North America's natural resources than in the difficult task of establishing colonies there. John Cabot had reported that fish were extraordinarily plentiful near Newfoundland, so Europeans rushed to take advantage of abundant codfish, which were in great demand in their homelands as an inexpensive source of protein. The French, Spanish, Basques, and Portuguese regularly fished North American waters throughout the sixteenth

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## LINKS TO THE WORLD

*Maize*

Maize, to Mesoamericans, was a gift from Quetzalcoatl, the plumed serpent god. Cherokees told of an old woman whose blood produced the prized stalks after her grandson buried her body in a cleared, sunny field. For the Abenakis, the crop began when a beautiful maiden ordered a youth to drag her by the hair through a burned-over field. The long hair of the Cherokee grandmother and the Abenaki maiden turned into silk, the flower on the stalks that Europeans called Indian corn. Both tales' symbolic association of corn and women intriguingly supports archaeologists' recent suggestion that—in eastern North America at least—female plant breeders were responsible for substantial improvements in the productivity of maize.

Sacred to all the Indian peoples who grew it, maize was a major part of their diet. They dried the kernels; ground into meal, maize was cooked as a mush or shaped into baked flat cakes, the forerunners of modern tortillas. Indians also heated the dried kernels of some varieties until they popped open, just as is done today. Although the European invaders of North and South America initially disdained maize, they soon learned it could be cultivated in a wide variety of conditions—from sea level to twelve thousand feet, from regions with abundant rainfall

to dry lands with as little as twelve inches of rain a year. Corn was also highly productive, yielding almost twice as many calories per acre as wheat. So Europeans, too, came to rely on corn, growing it not only in their American settlements but also in their homelands.

Maize cultivation spread to Asia and Africa. Today, China is second only to the United States in total corn production, and corn is more widely grown in Africa than any other crop. Still, the United States produces 45 percent of the world's corn—almost half of it in the three states of Illinois, Iowa, and Nebraska—and corn is the nation's single largest crop. More than half of American corn is consumed by livestock. Much of the rest is processed into syrup, which sweetens carbonated beverages and candies, or into ethanol, a gasoline additive that reduces both pollution and dependence on fossil fuels. Corn is an ingredient in light beer and toothpaste. It is used in the manufacture of tires, wallpaper, cat litter, and aspirin. Remarkably, of the ten thousand products in a modern American grocery store, about one-fourth rely to some extent on corn.

Today, this crop bequeathed to the world by ancient American plant breeders provides one-fifth of all the calories consumed by the earth's peoples. The gift of Quetzalcoatl has linked the globe.

century; Verrazzano and Cartier, in 1524 and 1534, respectively, both encountered anonymous vessels already fishing along the American coast. In the early 1570s, after Spain opened its markets to English shipping, the English (who previously had fished near Iceland for home consumption only) eagerly joined the Newfoundland fishery, thereafter selling salt cod to the Spanish in exchange for valuable Asian goods. The English soon became dominant in the region, which by the end of the century was the focal point of a European commerce more valuable than that with the Gulf of Mexico.

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### Trade Among Indians and Europeans

Fishermen quickly realized they could increase their profits by exchanging cloth and metal goods, such as pots and knives, for native trappers' beaver pelts, used to make fashionable hats in Europe. Initially, Europeans traded from ships sailing along the coast, but later they set up outposts on the mainland to centralize and control the traffic in furs. Such outposts were inhabited chiefly by male adventurers, whose major aim was to send as many pelts as possible home to Europe.

The Europeans' demand for furs, especially beaver, was matched by the Indians' desire for European goods that could make their lives easier and establish their superiority over their neighbors. Some bands began to concentrate so completely on trapping for the European market that they abandoned their traditional economies and became partially dependent on others for food. The intensive trade in pelts also had serious ecological consequences. In some regions, beavers were wiped out. The disappearance of their dams led to soil erosion, which increased when European settlers cleared forests for farmland in later decades.

### Contest Between Spain and England

English merchants and political leaders watched enviously as Spain was enriched by its valuable American possessions. In the mid-sixteenth century, English "sea dogs" like John Hawkins and Sir Francis Drake began to raid Spanish treasure fleets sailing home from the Caribbean. Their actions caused friction between the two countries and helped foment a war that in 1588 culminated in the defeat of a huge invasion force—the Spanish Armada—off the English coast. As part of the contest with Spain, English leaders started to think about planting colonies in the Western Hemisphere, thereby gaining better access to valuable trade goods while simultaneously preventing their enemy from dominating the Americas.

Encouraging the queen and her courtiers in that aim was Richard Hakluyt, a clergyman who became fascinated by tales of exploratory voyages while he was a student in the 1560s. He prepared and published English translations of numerous accounts of discoveries around the globe, repeatedly insisting on England's preeminent claim to the North American continent. In *Divers Voyages* (1582) and especially *Principall Navigations* (1589), he argued unreservedly for the benefits of English colonization in such "fertill and temperate places," contending that "there is none, that of right may be more bolde in this enterprize than the Englishmen."

The first English colonial planners saw Spain's possessions as a model and a challenge. They hoped to reproduce Spanish successes by dispatching to America men who would exploit the native peoples for their own and their nation's benefit. A group that included Sir Walter Raleigh began to promote a scheme to establish outposts that could trade with the Indians and provide bases for attacks on New Spain. Approving the idea, Queen Elizabeth I authorized Raleigh to colonize North America.

### Roanoke

After two preliminary expeditions, in 1587 Sir Walter Raleigh sent 117 colonists to the territory he named Virginia, after Elizabeth, the "Virgin Queen." They established a settlement on Roanoke

A watercolor by John White, an artist with Raleigh's second preliminary expedition (and who later was governor of the ill-fated 1587 colony). He identified his subjects as the wife and daughter of the chief of Pomeioc, a village near Roanoke. Note the woman's elaborate tattoos and the fact that the daughter carries an Elizabethan doll, obviously given to her by one of the Englishmen.



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Island, in what is now North Carolina, but in 1590 a resupply ship—delayed in leaving England because of the Spanish Armada—could not find them. The colonists had vanished, leaving only the word *Croatoan* (the name of a nearby island) carved on a tree. Recent tree-ring studies have shown that the North Carolina coast experienced a severe drought between 1587 and 1589, which would have created a subsistence crisis for the settlers and could well have led them to abandon the Roanoke site.

Thus, England's first attempt to plant a permanent settlement on the North American coast failed, as had earlier efforts by Portugal on Cape Breton Island (early 1520s), Spain in modern Georgia (mid-1520s), and France in South Carolina

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and northern Florida (1560s). All three enterprises collapsed because of the hostility of neighboring peoples and colonists' inability to be self-sustaining in foodstuffs. The Portuguese, the Spanish, the first French settlers, and the English could not maintain friendly relations with local Indians, and Spanish soldiers destroyed the Florida French colony in 1565.

### Harriot's *Briefe and True Report*

The explanation for such failings becomes clear in Thomas Harriot's *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia*, published in 1588 to publicize Raleigh's colony. Harriot, a noted scientist who sailed with the second of the preliminary voyages to Roanoke, described the animals, plants, and people of the region for an English readership. His account revealed that, although the explorers depended on nearby villagers for most of their food, they needlessly antagonized their neighbors by killing some of them for what Harriot admitted were unjustifiable reasons.

The scientist advised later colonizers to deal with the native peoples of America more humanely than his comrades had. But the content of his book suggested why that advice would rarely be followed. *A Briefe and True Report* examined the possibilities for economic development in America. Harriot stressed three points: the availability of commodities familiar to Europeans, such as grapes, iron, copper, and fur-bearing animals; the potential profitability of exotic American products, such as maize, cassava, and tobacco; and the relative ease of manipulating the native population to the Europeans' advantage. Should the Americans attempt to resist the English by force, Harriot asserted, the latter's advantages of disciplined soldiers and superior weaponry would quickly deliver victory.

Harriot's *Briefe and True Report* depicted for his English readers a bountiful land full of opportunities for quick profit. The people residing there would, he thought, "in a short time be brought to civilitie" through conversion to Christianity, admiration for European superiority, or conquest—if they did not die from disease, the ravages of which he witnessed. Thomas Harriot understood the key elements of the story, but his prediction was far off the mark. European dominance of North America would be difficult to achieve. Indeed, it never was fully achieved, in the sense Harriot and his compatriots intended.

## SUMMARY

The process of initial contact among Europeans, Africans, and Americans that ended with Thomas Harriot near the close of the sixteenth century began approximately 250 years earlier when Portuguese sailors first set out to explore the Mediterranean Atlantic and the West African coast. Those seamen established commercial ties that brought African slaves first to Iberia and then to the islands the Europeans conquered and settled. The Mediterranean Atlantic and its island sugar plantations nurtured the mariners who, like Christopher Columbus, ventured into previously unknown waters—those who sailed to India and Brazil as well as to the Caribbean and the North American coast. When Columbus first reached the Americas, he thought he had found Asia, his intended destination. Later explorers knew better but, except for the Spanish, regarded the Americas primarily as a barrier

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that prevented them from reaching their long-sought goal of an oceanic route to the riches of China and the Moluccas. Ordinary European fishermen were the first to realize that the northern coasts had valuable products to offer: fish and furs, both much in demand in their homelands.

The Aztecs had predicted that their Fifth Sun would end in earthquakes and hunger. Hunger they surely experienced after Cortés's invasion, and even if there were no earthquakes, their great temples tumbled to the ground nevertheless, as the Spaniards used their stones (and Indian laborers) to construct cathedrals honoring their God and his son, Jesus, rather than Huitzilopochtli. The conquerors employed, first, American and, later, enslaved African workers to till the fields, mine the precious metals, and herd the livestock that earned immense profits for themselves and their mother country.

The initial impact of Europeans on the Americas proved devastating. Flourishing civilizations were markedly altered in just a few short decades. Europeans' diseases killed millions of the Western Hemisphere's inhabitants; their livestock, along with a wide range of other imported animals and plants, irrevocably modified the American environment. Europe, too, was changed: American foodstuffs like corn and potatoes improved nutrition throughout the continent, and American gold and silver first enriched, then ruined, the Spanish economy.

By the end of the sixteenth century, fewer people resided in North America than had lived there before Columbus's arrival. And the people who did live there—Indian, African, and European—resided in a world that was indeed new—a world engaged in the unprecedented process of combining foods, religions, economies, ways of life, and political systems that had developed separately for millennia. Understandably, conflict and dissension permeated that process.

# 2

## EUROPEANS COLONIZE NORTH AMERICA 1600–1650

### CHAPTER OUTLINE

- Spanish, French, and Dutch North America • *VISUALIZING THE PAST Acoma Pueblo* • The Caribbean • English Interest in Colonization • The Founding of Virginia • Life in the Chesapeake • The Founding of New England
- Life in New England • Summary

### SPANISH, FRENCH, AND DUTCH NORTH AMERICA

Spaniards established the first permanent European settlement within the boundaries of the modern United States, but others had initially attempted that feat. Twice in the 1560s Huguenots (French Protestants), who were seeking to escape persecution, planted colonies on the south Atlantic coast. A passing ship rescued the starving survivors of the first colony, located in present-day South Carolina. The second colony, near modern Jacksonville, Florida, was destroyed in 1565 by a Spanish expedition under the command of Pedro Menéndez de Avilés. To ensure Spanish domination of the strategically important region (located near sea-lanes used by Spanish treasure ships bound for Europe), Menéndez set up a small fortified outpost, which he named St. Augustine—now the oldest continuously inhabited European settlement in the United States.

The local Gualte and Timucua nations initially allied themselves with the powerful newcomers and welcomed Franciscan friars into their villages. The relationship did not remain peaceful for long, though, because the natives resisted the imposition of Spanish authority. Still, the Franciscans offered the Indians spiritual solace for the diseases and troubles besetting them after the Europeans' invasion, and eventually they gained numerous converts at missions that stretched westward across Florida and northward into the islands along the Atlantic coast.

#### **New Mexico**

More than thirty years passed after the founding of St. Augustine before conquistadors ventured anew into the

## CHRONOLOGY

- 1558** Elizabeth I becomes queen
- 1565** Founding of St. Augustine (Florida), oldest permanent European settlement in present-day United States
- 1598** Oñate conquers Pueblos in New Mexico for Spain
- 1603** James I becomes king
- 1607** Jamestown founded, first permanent English settlement in North America
- 1608** Quebec founded by the French
- 1610** Founding of Santa Fe, New Mexico
- 1614** Fort Orange (Albany) founded by the Dutch
- 1619** Virginia House of Burgesses established, first representative assembly in the English colonies
- 1620** Plymouth colony founded, first permanent English settlement in New England
- 1622** Powhatan Confederacy attacks Virginia
- 1624** Dutch settle on Manhattan Island (New Amsterdam)  
English colonize St. Kitts, first island in Lesser Antilles settled by Europeans  
James I revokes Virginia Company's charter
- 1625** Charles I becomes king
- 1630** Massachusetts Bay colony founded
- 1634** Maryland founded
- 1636** Williams expelled from Massachusetts Bay, founds Providence, Rhode Island  
Connecticut founded
- 1637** Pequot War in New England
- 1638** Hutchinson expelled from Massachusetts Bay, goes to Rhode Island
- 1642** Montreal founded by the French
- 1646** Treaty ends hostilities between Virginia and Powhatan Confederacy

present-day United States. In 1598, drawn northward by rumors of rich cities, Juan de Oñate, a Mexican-born adventurer whose wife descended from both Cortés and Moctezuma, led a group of about five hundred soldiers and settlers to New Mexico. At first, the Pueblo peoples greeted the newcomers cordially. But when the Spaniards began to use torture, murder, and rape to extort food and clothing from the villagers, the residents of Acoma killed several soldiers, among them Oñate's nephew. The invaders responded ferociously, killing more than eight hundred people and capturing the remainder. All the captives above the age of twelve were ordered enslaved for twenty years, and men older than

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twenty-five had one foot amputated. Not surprisingly, the other Pueblo villages surrendered.

Yet Oñate's bloody victory proved illusory, for New Mexico held little wealth. It also was too far from the Pacific coast to assist in protecting Spanish sea-lanes, which had been one of Oñate's aims (he, like others, initially believed the continent to be much narrower than it actually is). Many of the Spaniards returned to Mexico, but horses remained, transforming the lives of the indigenous inhabitants. Officials considered abandoning the isolated colony, which lay 800 miles north of the nearest Spanish settlement. Still, for defensive purposes, the authorities decided to maintain a small military outpost and a few Christian missions in the area, with the capital at Santa Fe (founded 1610). As in regions to the south, Spanish leaders were granted *encomiendas*, guaranteeing them control over the labor of Pueblo villagers. But in the absence of mines or fertile agricultural lands, such grants yielded small profit.

### Quebec and Montreal

On the Atlantic coast, the French turned their attention northward, to the area that Jacques Cartier had explored in the 1530s. Several times they tried to establish permanent bases along the Canadian coast but failed until 1605, when they founded Port Royal. Then in 1608, Samuel de Champlain set up a trading post at an interior site that the local Iroquois had called Stadacona when Cartier spent the winter there seventy-five years earlier. Champlain renamed it Quebec. He had chosen well: Quebec was the most defensible spot in the entire St. Lawrence River valley, a stronghold that controlled access to the heartland of the continent. In 1642, the French established a second post, Montreal, at the falls of the St. Lawrence (and thus at the end of navigation by oceangoing vessels), a place the Indians called Hochelaga.

Before the founding of these settlements, fishermen served as the major transporters of North American beaver pelts to France, but the new posts quickly took over control of the lucrative trade in furs (see Table 2.1). Only a few Europeans resided in New France; most were men, some of whom married Indian women. The colony's leaders gave land grants along the river to wealthy seigneurs (nobles), who then imported tenants to work their farms. A small number of Frenchmen brought their wives and took up agriculture; even so, more than twenty-five years after Quebec's founding, it had just sixty-four resident families, along with traders and soldiers. With respect to territory occupied and farmed, northern New France never grew much beyond the confines of the river valley between Quebec and Montreal (see Map 2.1). Thus, it differed significantly from New Spain, characterized by scattered cities and direct supervision of Indian laborers.

### Jesuit Missions in New France

French missionaries of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits), a Roman Catholic order dedicated to converting nonbelievers to Christianity, also came to New France. First arriving in Quebec in 1625, the Jesuits, whom the Indians called Black Robes, tried to persuade indigenous peoples to live near French settlements and to adopt European agricultural methods. When that effort failed, the Jesuits concluded that they could introduce Catholicism to their new charges without insisting that they fundamentally

## VISUALIZING THE PAST

*Acoma Pueblo*

Today, as in the late sixteenth century when it was besieged and eventually captured by the Spanish conquistador Juan de Oñate, the Acoma Pueblo sits high atop an isolated mesa. Long before the Spaniards arrived in modern New Mexico, the location was selected because it was easily defensible; some structures that date back to the eleventh

century are still standing in the middle of the village. Building on a mesa 365 feet high was safer than living on the plains below, but it caused other problems—most notably, with the water supply. To this day there is no source of water in the village. Acoma’s residents had to carry water up a steep set of stairs cut into the mesa’s



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*Acoma Pueblo today. The village is now used primarily for ritual purposes; few people reside there permanently, because all water must be trucked in.*

alter their traditional ways of life. Accordingly, the Black Robes learned Indian languages and traveled to remote regions of the interior, where they lived in twos and threes among hundreds of potential converts.

Using a variety of strategies, Jesuits sought to gain the confidence of influential men and to undermine the authority of village shamans, the traditional religious leaders. Trained in rhetoric, Jesuits won admirers with their eloquence. Immune to smallpox (for all had survived the disease already), they explained epidemics among the Indians as God’s punishment for sin, their arguments aided by the ineffectiveness of the shamans’ traditional remedies against the new pestilence. Drawing on European science, Jesuits predicted solar and lunar eclipses. Perhaps most important,

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side (today there is an almost equally steep road). The women of Acoma were and are accomplished potters. Some pots, like the one shown here, were designed with a low

center of gravity. How would that design help women to reach the top of the mesa with much-needed water? How would they carry such pots?



Field Museum of Natural History FMNH Neg # A109898c

*A pot designed for carrying water to the top of the mesa.*

they amazed villagers by communicating with each other over long distances through marks on paper. The Indians' desire to learn how to harness the extraordinary power of literacy was one of the critical factors that made them receptive to the missionaries' spiritual message.

Although the process took many years, Jesuits slowly gained thousands of converts, some of whom moved to reserves set aside for Christian Indians. Catholicism offered women in particular the inspiring role model of the Virgin Mary, personified in Montreal and Quebec by communities of nuns who taught Indian women and children, and ministered to their needs. Many male and female converts followed Catholic teachings with fervor and piety, altering traditional native customs

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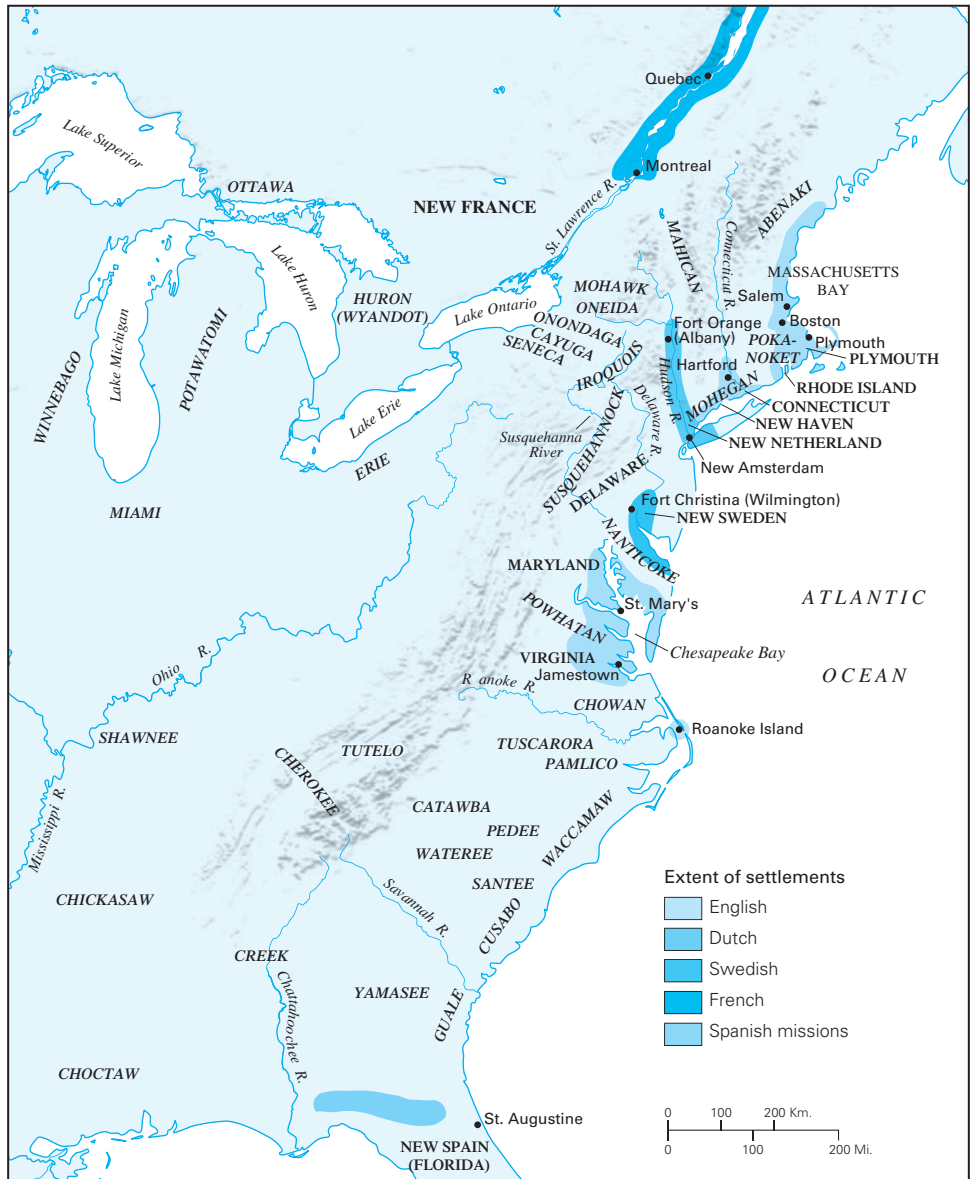
TABLE 2.1 | THE FOUNDING OF PERMANENT EUROPEAN COLONIES IN NORTH AMERICA, 1565–1640

Colony	Founder(s)	Date	Basis of Economy
Florida	Pedro Menéndez de Avilés	1565	Farming
New Mexico	Juan de Oñate	1598	Livestock
Virginia	Virginia Co.	1607	Tobacco
New France	France	1608	Fur trading
New Netherland	Dutch West India Co.	1614	Fur trading
Plymouth	Separatists	1620	Farming, fishing
Maine	Sir Ferdinando Gorges	1622	Fishing
St. Kitts, Barbados, et al.	European immigrants	1624	Sugar
Massachusetts Bay	Massachusetts Bay	1630	Farming, fishing, fur trading
Maryland	Cecilius Calvert	1634	Tobacco
Rhode Island	Roger Williams	1636	Farming
Connecticut	Thomas Hooker	1636	Farming, fur trading
New Haven	Massachusetts migrants	1638	Farming
New Hampshire	Massachusetts migrants	1638	Farming, fishing

of allowing premarital sexual relationships and easy divorce, because Catholic doctrine prohibited both. Yet they resisted Jesuits' attempts to have them adopt strict European child-rearing methods, instead retaining their more relaxed practices. Jesuits, unlike Franciscans in New Mexico, recognized that such aspects of native culture could be compatible with Christian beliefs. Their efforts to attract converts were further aided by their lack of interest in labor tribute or land acquisition.

**New Netherland** Jesuit missionaries faced little competition from other Europeans for native peoples' souls, but French fur traders had to confront a direct challenge. In 1614, only five years after Henry Hudson explored the river that now bears his name, his sponsor, the Dutch West India Company, established an outpost (Fort Orange) on that river at the site of present-day Albany, New York. Like the French, the Dutch sought beaver pelts, and their presence so close to Quebec threatened French domination of the region. The Netherlands, at the time the world's dominant commercial power, aimed primarily at trade rather than at colonization. Thus New Netherland, like New France, remained small, confined largely to a river valley that offered easy access to its settlements. The colony's southern anchor was New Amsterdam, founded in 1624 on Manhattan Island, at the mouth of the Hudson River.

As the Dutch West India Company's colony in North America, New Netherland was a small outpost of a vast commercial empire that extended to Africa, Brazil, the Caribbean, and modern-day Indonesia. Autocratic directors-general ruled the colony



### MAP 2.1 European Settlements and Indian Tribes in Eastern North America, 1650

The few European settlements established in the East before 1650 were widely scattered, hugging the shores of the Atlantic Ocean and the banks of its major rivers. By contrast, America's native inhabitants controlled the vast interior expanse of the continent, and Spaniards had begun to move into the West.

for the company; with no elected assembly, settlers felt little loyalty to their nominal leaders. Few migrants arrived. Even an offer in 1629 of large land grants, or patroonships, to people who would bring fifty settlers to the province failed to attract takers. (Only one such tract—Rensselaerswyck, near Albany—was ever fully developed.) As late as the mid-1660s, New Netherland had only about five thousand inhabitants. Some were Swedes and Finns who resided in the former colony of New Sweden (founded in 1638 on the Delaware River; see Map 2.1), which was seized by the Dutch in 1655. New Sweden's chief legacy to North American settlement was log cabin construction.

The Indian allies of New France and New Netherland clashed in part because of fur-trade rivalries. In the 1640s the Iroquois, who traded chiefly with the Dutch and lived in modern upstate New York, went to war against the Hurons, who traded primarily with the French and lived in presentday Ontario. The Iroquois wanted to become the major supplier of pelts to Europeans and they wanted to ensure the security of their hunting territories. They achieved both goals by using guns supplied by the Dutch to virtually exterminate the Hurons, whose population had already been decimated by a smallpox epidemic. The Iroquois thus established themselves as a major force in the region, one that in the future Europeans could ignore only at their peril.

## THE CARIBBEAN

In the Caribbean, France, the Netherlands, and England collided repeatedly in the first half of the seventeenth century. The Spanish concentrated their colonization efforts on the Greater Antilles—Cuba, Hispaniola, Jamaica, and Puerto Rico. They ignored many smaller islands, partly because of resistance by their Carib inhabitants and partly because the mainland offered greater wealth for less effort. But the tiny islands attracted other European powers: they could provide bases from which to attack Spanish vessels loaded with American gold and silver, and they could serve as sources of valuable tropical products such as dyes and fruits.

### Warfare and Hurricanes

England was the first northern European nation to establish a permanent foothold in the smaller Caribbean islands (the Lesser Antilles), settling on St. Christopher (St. Kitts) in 1624, then later on other islands, such as Barbados (1627) and Providence (1630). France was able to colonize Guadeloupe and Martinique only by defeating the Caribs, whereas the Dutch more easily gained control of tiny St. Eustatius (strategically located near St. Christopher). In addition to indigenous inhabitants, Europeans had to worry about conflicts with Spaniards and with one another. Like Providence Island, many colonies changed hands during the seventeenth century. For example, the English drove the Spanish out of Jamaica in 1655, and the French soon thereafter took over half of Hispaniola, creating the colony of St. Domingue (modern Haiti).

Another danger, too, confronted the new settlers: the great windstorms called by the Taíno people *hurakán*, or, in English, hurricanes. Just nine months after the establishment of the first English outpost on St. Christopher, wrote one colonist,

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“came a Hericano and blew it away.” Two years later, a second storm again devastated the infant colony, leaving the settlers “very miserable,” without housing or adequate provisions. Almost every year in the late summer months, one or two islands suffered significant damage from hurricanes. Survivors expressed awe at the destructive force of the storms, which repeatedly forced them to rebuild and re-plant. To withstand the winds, they designed one- or two-story brick and stone houses with low roofs and heavy wooden shutters over the windows.

### Sugar Cultivation

Why did Europeans try to gain and retain control of such imperiled islands? The primary answer is sugar. Europeans loved sugar, which provided a sweet taste and a quick energy boost and greatly enriched those who grew and processed it for international markets. Entering Europe in substantial quantities at approximately the same time as coffee and tea—the stimulating, addictive, and bitter Asian drinks improved by sweetening—sugar quickly became a crucial element of the European diet.

English residents of Barbados, after first experimenting with tobacco, cotton, and indigo, discovered in the early 1640s that the island’s soil and climate were ideal for cultivating sugar cane. At the time, the world’s supply of sugar came primarily from the Madeiras, the Canaries, São Tomé, and especially Brazil, where farmers, each with a few servants or slaves, grew much of the crop. Sugar cane needed to be processed within two days of being harvested, or the juice would dry, so Brazilian producers quickly took their cane to central mills where it was crushed, boiled down, and finally refined into brown and white sugars.

Barbadians, several of whom visited northeastern Brazil while it was briefly ruled by the Dutch in the 1630s and 1640s, initially copied both the Brazilians’ machinery and their small-scale methods of production, which used an existing work force of servants and slaves. By the mid-1650s, funded by wealthy English merchants and their own profits from raising tobacco and cotton, the more substantial planters expanded their enterprises dramatically. They increased the size of their landholdings, built their own sugar mills, and purchased growing numbers of laborers—first English and Irish servants, then African slaves.

As other Caribbean planters embraced sugarcane cultivation, Barbadians’ profit margins were reduced. Even so, sugar remained the most valuable American commodity for more than one hundred years. In the eighteenth century, sugar grown by large gangs of slaves in British Jamaica and French St. Domingue dominated the world market. Yet, in the long run, the future economic importance of the Europeans’ American colonies lay on the mainland rather than in the Caribbean.

## ENGLISH INTEREST IN COLONIZATION

The failure of Raleigh’s Roanoke colony ended English efforts to settle in North America for nearly two decades. When the English decided in 1606 to try once more, they again planned colonies that imitated the Spanish model. Yet greater success came when they abandoned that model and founded settlements very different from those of other European powers. Unlike Spain, France, or the Netherlands, England eventually sent large numbers of men and women to set up agriculturally

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based colonies on the mainland. Two major developments prompted approximately 200,000 ordinary English men and women to move to North America in the seventeenth century and led their government to encourage their emigration.

### **Social and Economic Change**

The first development was the onset of dramatic social and economic change. In the 150-year period after 1530, largely as a result of the introduction of nutritious American crops, England's population doubled. All those additional people needed food, clothing, and other goods. The competition for goods led to inflation, coupled with a fall in real wages as the number of workers increased. In these new economic and demographic circumstances, some English people—especially those with sizable landholdings that could produce food and clothing fibers for the growing population—substantially improved their lot. Others, particularly landless laborers and those with small amounts of land, fell into poverty. When landowners raised rents, took control of lands that peasants had long been allowed to use in common (enclosure), or decided to combine small holdings into large units, they forced tenants off the land. Consequently, geographical as well as social mobility increased, and the population of the cities swelled. London, for example, more than tripled in size by 1650, when 375,000 residents lived in its crowded buildings.

Wealthy English people reacted with alarm to what they saw as the disappearance of traditional ways of life. Steady streams of the landless and homeless filled the streets and highways. Obsessed with the problem of maintaining order, officials came to believe England was overcrowded. They concluded that colonies established in North America could siphon off England's "surplus population," thus easing social strains at home. For similar reasons, many English people decided they could improve their circumstances by migrating from a small, landscarce, apparently overpopulated island to a large, landrich, apparently empty continent and its nearby islands. Among those attracted by prospects for emigration were younger sons of gentlemen who were excluded from inheriting land by wealthy families' practice of primogeniture, which reserved all real estate for the eldest son. Such economic considerations were rendered even more significant in light of the second development: a major change in English religious practice.

### **English Reformation**

The sixteenth century witnessed a religious transformation that eventually led large numbers of English dissenters to leave their homeland. In 1533 Henry VIII, wanting a male heir and infatuated with Anne Boleyn, asked the pope to annul his marriage to his Spanish-born queen, Catherine of Aragón, despite nearly twenty years of marriage and the birth of a daughter. When the pope refused, Henry left the Roman Catholic Church. He founded the Church of England and—with Parliament's concurrence—proclaimed himself its head. At first, the reformed Church of England differed little from Catholicism in its practices. Under Henry's daughter, Elizabeth I (child of his later marriage to Anne Boleyn), though, new currents of religious belief, which had originated on the European continent early in the sixteenth century, dramatically affected that established church, termed thus because it had the official imprimatur of the government and was supported by tax revenues.

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These currents constituted the Protestant Reformation, led by Martin Luther, a German monk, and John Calvin, a French cleric and lawyer. Challenging the Catholic doctrine that priests were intermediaries between laypeople and God, Luther and Calvin insisted that people could interpret the Bible for themselves. That notion stimulated the spread of literacy: to understand and interpret the Bible, people had to learn how to read. Both Luther and Calvin rejected Catholic rituals, denying the need for an elaborate church hierarchy. They also asserted that the key to salvation was faith in God, rather than—as Catholic teaching had it—a combination of faith and good works. Calvin went further than Luther, stressing God’s omnipotence and emphasizing the need for people to submit totally to God’s will.

### **Puritans, Separatists, and Presbyterians**

Elizabeth I tolerated diverse forms of Christianity as long as her subjects acknowledged her authority as head of the Church of England. During her long reign (1558–1603), Calvin’s ideas gained influence in England, Wales, and especially Scotland. (In Ireland, also part of her realm, Catholicism remained dominant.) The Scottish church eventually adopted Presbyterianism, an organizational system that dispensed with bishops and placed religious authority in bodies of clerics and laymen called presbyteries. By the late sixteenth century, though, many Calvinists—including those who came to be called Puritans, because they wanted to purify the church, or Separatists, because they wanted to leave it entirely—believed that reformers in England and Scotland had not gone far enough. Henry had simplified the church hierarchy, and the Scots had altered it; they wanted to abolish it altogether. Henry and the Scots had subordinated the church to the interests of the state; they wanted a church free from political interference. The established churches of England and Scotland, like the Catholic Church or the official Protestant churches of continental European countries, continued to nominally encompass all residents of the realm. Calvinists in England and Scotland preferred a more restricted definition; they wanted to confine church membership to persons they believed “saved”—those God had selected for salvation before birth.

Paradoxically, though, a key article of their faith insisted that people could not know for certain if they were “saved” because mere mortals could not comprehend or affect their predestination to heaven or hell. Thus, pious Calvinists daily confronted serious dilemmas: if the saved (or “elect”) could not be identified with certainty, how could proper churches be constituted? If one was predestined and could not alter one’s fate, why should one attend church or do good works? Calvinists dealt with the first dilemma by admitting that their judgments as to eligibility for church membership only approximated God’s unknowable decisions. They resolved the second by reasoning that God gave the elect the ability to accept salvation and to lead a good life. Therefore, even though one could not earn a place in heaven by piety and good works, such practices could indicate one’s place in the ranks of the saved.

### **Stuart Monarchs**

Elizabeth I’s Stuart successors, her cousin James I (1603–1625) and his son Charles I (1625–1649), exhibited less tolerance for Calvinists. As Scots, they also had little respect for the traditions of representative government that had developed in England under the Tudors

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TABLE 2.2 | TUDOR AND STUART MONARCHS OF ENGLAND, 1509–1649

Monarch	Reign	Relation to Predecessor
Henry VIII	1509–1547	Son
Edward VI	1547–1553	Son
Mary I	1553–1558	Half-sister
Elizabeth I	1558–1603	Half-sister
James I	1603–1625	Cousin
Charles I	1625–1649	Son

and their predecessors (see Table 2.2). The wealthy landowners who sat in Parliament had grown accustomed to having considerable influence on government policies, especially taxation. But James I, taking a position later endorsed by his son, publicly declared his belief in the divine right of kings. The Stuarts insisted that a monarch's power came directly from God and that his subjects had a duty to obey him. They likened the king's absolute authority to a father's authority over his children.

Both James I and Charles I believed their authority included the power to enforce religious conformity. Because Calvinists—and remaining Catholics in England and Scotland—challenged many of the most important precepts of the established churches, the Stuart monarchs authorized the removal of dissenting clergymen from their pulpits. In the 1620s and 1630s, some Puritans, Separatists, Presbyterians, and Catholics decided to move to America where they hoped to put their diverse religious beliefs into practice unhindered by the Stuarts or the church hierarchy. Some fled hurriedly to avoid arrest and imprisonment.

## THE FOUNDING OF VIRGINIA

The impetus for England's first permanent colony in the Western Hemisphere was both religious and economic. The newly militant English Protestants were eager to combat “popery” both at home and in the Americas. They concurred with Richard Hakluyt, who remarked that if Spaniards, “in their superstition,” had “don so greate things in so shorte space,” surely the adherents of “our true and syncere Religion” could achieve even more remarkable results.

Accordingly, in 1606, a group of merchants and wealthy gentry—some of them aligned with religious reformers—obtained a royal charter for the Virginia Company, organized as a joint-stock company. Such forerunners of modern corporations, initially created for trading voyages and often very profitable, pooled the resources of many small investors through stock sales and spread the risks. Yet the joint-stock company, then as later, proved to be a poor vehicle for establishing colonies because colonies required significant continuing investments of capital. The lack of immediate returns thus generated tension between stockholders and colonists. Although at the outset investors in the Virginia Company anticipated great profits, and neither settlement established by the Virginia Company—one in Maine that collapsed within a year and Jamestown—ever earned much.

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**Jamestown and Tsenacommacah**

In 1607, the company dispatched 104 men and boys to a region near Chesapeake Bay called Tsenacommacah by its native inhabitants. There in May they established the palisaded settlement called Jamestown on a swampy peninsula in a river they also named for their monarch. They quickly constructed small houses and a chapel. Ill-equipped for survival in the unfamiliar environment, the colonists fell victim to dissension and disease as they attempted to maintain traditional English social and political hierarchies. Familiar with Spanish experience, the gentlemen and soldiers at Jamestown expected to rely on local Indians for food and tribute, yet the residents of Tsenacommacah refused to cooperate. Moreover, through sheer bad luck, the settlers arrived in the midst of a severe drought (now known to be the worst in the region for 1,700 years) that persisted until 1612. The lack of rainfall not only made it difficult to cultivate crops but also polluted their drinking water.

The weroance (chief) of Tsenacommacah, Powhatan, had inherited rule over six Algonquian villages and later gained control of some twenty-five others (see Map 2.1). In late 1607 negotiations with Captain John Smith, one of the colony's leaders, the weroance tentatively agreed to an alliance with the Englishmen. In exchange for foodstuffs, Powhatan hoped to acquire guns, hatchets, and swords, which would give him a technological advantage over the enemies of his people. Each side in the alliance wanted to subordinate the other, but neither succeeded.

The fragile relationship soon foundered on mutual mistrust. The weroance relocated his primary village in early 1609 to a place the newcomers could not access easily. Without Powhatan's assistance, the settlement experienced a "starving time" (winter 1609–1610) when many died and at least one colonist resorted to cannibalism. In spring 1610, the survivors packed up to leave on a newly arrived ship but en route out of the James River encountered a new governor, male and female settlers, and added supplies, so they returned to Jamestown. Sporadic skirmishes ensued as the standoff with the Powhatans continued. To gain the upper hand, the settlers in 1613 kidnapped Powhatan's daughter, Pocahontas, and held her hostage. In captivity, she agreed to convert to Christianity and to marry a colonist, John Rolfe. He had fallen in love with her, but she probably married him for diplomatic reasons; their union initiated a period of peace between the English and her people. Funded by the Virginia Company, she and Rolfe sailed to England to promote interest in the colony. Pocahontas died at Gravesend in 1616, probably of dysentery, leaving an infant son who returned to Virginia as a young adult.

Although their royal charter nominally laid claim to a much wider territory, the Jamestown settlers saw their "Virginia" as essentially corresponding to Tsenacommacah. Powhatan's dominion was bounded on the north by the Potomac, on the south by the Great Dismal Swamp, and on the west by the fall line—the beginning of the upland Piedmont. Beyond those boundaries lay the Powhatans' enemies and (especially in the west) lands the Powhatans feared to enter. English people relied on the Powhatans as guides and interpreters, traveling along rivers and precontact paths in order to trade with the Powhatans' partners. For more than half a century, settlement in "Virginia" was confined to Tsenacommacah.

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### Algonquian and English Cultural Differences

In Tsenacommacah and elsewhere on the North American coast, English settlers and local Algonquians focused on their cultural differences—not their similarities—although both groups held deep religious beliefs, subsisted primarily through agriculture, accepted social and political hierarchy, and observed well-defined gender roles. From the outset, English men regarded Indian men as lazy because they did not cultivate crops and spent much of their time hunting (a sport, not work, in English eyes). Indian men thought English men effeminate because they did the “woman’s work” of cultivation. In the same vein, the English believed Algonquian women were oppressed because they did heavy field labor.

The nature of Algonquian and English hierarchies differed. Among Algonquians like the Powhatans, political power and social status did not necessarily pass directly through the male line, instead commonly flowing through sisters’ sons. By contrast, English gentlemen inherited their position from their father. English political and military leaders tended to rule autocratically, whereas Algonquian leaders (even Powhatan) had limited authority over their people. Accustomed to the powerful kings of Europe, the English overestimated the ability of chiefs to make treaties that would bind their people.

Furthermore, Algonquian and English concepts of property differed. Most Algonquian villages held their land communally. Land could not be bought or sold absolutely, although certain rights to use it (for example, for hunting or fishing) could be transferred. Once, most English villagers, too, had used land in common, but because of enclosures in the previous century they had become accustomed to individual farms and to buying and selling land. The English also refused to accept the validity of Indians’ claims to traditional hunting territories, insisting that only land intensively cultivated could be regarded as owned or occupied. As one colonist put it, “salvadge peoples” who “rambled” over a region without farming it could claim no “title or propertye” in the land. Ownership of such “unclaimed” property, the English believed, lay with the English monarchy, in whose name John Cabot had laid claim to North America in 1497.

Above all, the English settlers believed unwaveringly in the superiority of their civilization. Although in the early years of colonization they often anticipated living peacefully alongside indigenous peoples, they always assumed that they would dictate the terms of such coexistence. Like Thomas Harriot at Roanoke, they expected native peoples to adopt English customs and to convert to Christianity. They showed little respect for the Indians when they believed English interests were at stake, as was demonstrated by developments in Virginia once the settlers found the salable commodity they sought.

### Tobacco Cultivation

That commodity was tobacco, the American crop previously introduced to Europe by the Spanish and subsequently cultivated in Turkey. In 1611, John Rolfe planted seeds of a variety from the Spanish Caribbean, which was superior to the strain grown by Virginia Indians. Nine years later, Virginians exported forty thousand pounds of cured leaves; by the late 1620s, shipments had jumped dramatically to 1.5 million pounds. The great tobacco boom had begun, fueled by high prices and substantial

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profits for planters as they responded to escalating demand from Europe and Africa. The price later fell almost as sharply as it had risen, fluctuating wildly from year to year in response to increasing supply and international competition. Nevertheless, tobacco made Virginia prosper.

The spread of tobacco cultivation altered life for everyone. Successful tobacco cultivation required abundant land because the crop quickly drained soil of nutrients. Farmers soon learned that a field could produce only about three satisfactory crops before it had to lie fallow for several years to regain its fertility. Thus, the once-small English settlements began to expand rapidly: eager applicants asked the Virginia Company for land grants on both sides of the James River and its tributary streams. Lulled into a false sense of security by years of peace, Virginians established farms at some distance from one another along the riverbanks—a settlement pattern convenient for tobacco cultivation but dangerous for defense.

**Indian Assaults** Opechancanough, Powhatan's brother and successor, watched the English colonists' expansion and witnessed their attempts to convert natives to Christianity. Recognizing the danger, the war leader launched coordinated attacks along the James River on March 22, 1622. By the end of the day, 347 colonists (about one-quarter of the total) lay dead, and only a timely warning from two Christian converts saved Jamestown itself from destruction.

Virginia reeled from the blow but did not collapse. Reinforced by new shipments of men and arms from England, the settlers repeatedly attacked Opechancanough's villages. A peace treaty was signed in 1632, but in April 1644 the elderly Opechancanough assaulted the invaders one last time, though he must have known he could not prevail. In 1646, survivors of the Powhatan Confederacy formally subordinated themselves to England. Although they continued to live in the region, their efforts to resist the spread of European settlement ended.

**End of Virginia Company** The 1622 assault that failed to destroy the colony did succeed in killing its parent. The Virginia Company never made any profits from the enterprise, for internal corruption and the heavy cost of supporting the settlers offset all its earnings. But before its demise, the company developed two policies that set key precedents. First, to attract settlers, the company in 1617 established the "headright" system. Every new arrival paying his or her own way was promised a land grant of fifty acres; those who financed the passage of others received similar headrights for each person. To ordinary English farmers, many of whom owned little or no land, the headright system offered a powerful incentive to move to Virginia. To wealthy gentry, it promised even more: the possibility of establishing vast agricultural enterprises worked by large numbers of laborers. Two years later, the company introduced a second reform, authorizing the landowning men of the major Virginia settlements to elect representatives to an assembly called the House of Burgesses. English landholders had long been accustomed to electing members of Parliament and controlling their own local governments; therefore, they expected the same privilege in the nation's colonies.

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When James I revoked the charter in 1624, transforming Virginia into a royal colony, he continued the company’s headright policy. Because he distrusted legislative bodies, though, James abolished the assembly. But Virginians protested so vigorously that by 1629 the House of Burgesses was functioning once again. Only two decades after the first permanent English settlement was planted in North America, the colonists successfully insisted on governing themselves at the local level. Thus, the political structure of England’s American possessions came to differ from those of the Spanish, Dutch, and French colonies—all of which were ruled autocratically.

## LIFE IN THE CHESAPEAKE

By the 1630s, tobacco was firmly established as the staple crop and chief source of revenue in Virginia. It quickly became just as important in the second English colony planted on Chesapeake Bay: Maryland, given by Charles I to George Calvert, first Lord Baltimore, as a personal possession (proprietaryship), which was settled in 1634. (Because Virginia and Maryland both border Chesapeake Bay—see Map 2.1—they often are referred to collectively as “the Chesapeake.”) Members of the Calvert family intended the colony to serve as a haven for their persecuted fellow Catholics. Cecilius Calvert, second Lord Baltimore, became the first colonizer to offer freedom of religion to all Christian settlers; he understood that protecting the Protestant majority could also ensure Catholics’ rights. Maryland’s Act of Religious Toleration codified his policy in 1649.

In everything but religion, the two Chesapeake colonies resembled each other. In Maryland as in Virginia, tobacco planters spread out along the riverbanks, establishing isolated farms instead of towns. The region’s deep, wide rivers offered dependable water transportation in an age of few and inadequate roads. Each farm or group of farms had its own wharf, where oceangoing vessels could take on or discharge cargo. Consequently, Virginia and Maryland had few towns, for their residents did not need commercial centers in order to buy and sell goods.

### Demand for Laborers

The planting, cultivation, harvesting, and curing of tobacco were repetitious, time-consuming, and labor-intensive tasks.

Clearing land for new fields, necessary every few years, also demanded heavy labor. Above all else, then, successful Chesapeake farms required workers. But where and how could they be found? Nearby Indians, their numbers reduced by war and disease, could not supply such needs. Nor were enslaved Africans available: traders could more easily and profitably sell slaves to Caribbean sugar planters. Only a few people of African descent, some of them free, initially trickled into the Chesapeake. By 1650, about three hundred blacks lived in Virginia—a tiny fraction of the population.

Chesapeake tobacco farmers thus looked primarily to England to supply their labor needs. Because of the headright system (which Maryland also adopted in 1640), a tobacco farmer anywhere in the Chesapeake could simultaneously obtain both land and labor by importing workers from England. Good management would make the process self-perpetuating: a farmer could use his profits to pay for the passage of more workers and thereby gain title to more land. Success could even

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bring movement into the ranks of the planter gentry that began to develop in the region.

Because men did the agricultural work in European societies, colonists assumed that field laborers should be men. Such laborers, along with a few women, immigrated to America as indentured servants—that is, in return for their passage they contracted to work for periods ranging from four to seven years. Indentured servants accounted for 75 to 85 percent of the approximately 130,000 English immigrants to Virginia and Maryland during the seventeenth century. The rest tended to be young couples with one or two children.

Males between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four composed roughly three-quarters of the servants; only one immigrant in five or six was female. Most of these young men came from farming or laboring families, and many originated in regions of England experiencing severe social disruption. Some had already moved several times within England before relocating to America. Often they came from the middling ranks of society—what their contemporaries called the “common sort.” Their youth indicated that most probably had not yet established themselves in their homeland.

### **Conditions of Servitude**

For such people, the Chesapeake appeared to offer good prospects. Servants who fulfilled the terms of their indenture earned “freedom dues” consisting of clothes, tools, livestock, casks of corn and tobacco, and sometimes even land. From a distance at least, America seemed to offer chances for advancement unavailable in England. Yet immigrants’ lives were difficult. Servants typically worked six days a week, ten to fourteen hours a day, in a climate much warmer than England’s. Their masters could discipline or sell them, and they faced severe penalties for running away. Even so, the laws did give them some protection. For example, their masters were supposed to supply them with sufficient food, clothing, and shelter, and they were not to be beaten excessively. Cruelly treated servants could turn to the courts for assistance, sometimes winning verdicts directing that they be transferred to more humane masters or released from their indenture.

Servants and their owners alike contended with epidemic disease. Immigrants first had to survive the process the colonists called “seasoning,” a bout with disease (probably malaria) that usually occurred during their first Chesapeake summer. They then often endured recurrences of malaria, along with dysentery, typhoid fever, and other illnesses. Consequently, about 40 percent of male servants did not survive long enough to become freedmen. Even young men of twenty-two who successfully weathered their seasoning could expect to live only another twenty years.

For those who survived, though, the opportunities for advancement were real. Until the last decades of the seventeenth century, former servants often became independent farmers (“freeholders”), thereafter living a modest but comfortable existence. Some even assumed positions of political prominence, such as justice of the peace or militia officer. But in the 1670s, tobacco prices entered a fifty-year period of stagnation and decline. Simultaneously, good land grew increasingly scarce and expensive. In 1681, Maryland dropped its legal requirement that servants receive

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land as part of their freedom dues, forcing large numbers of freed servants to live for years as wage laborers or tenant farmers. By 1700, the Chesapeake was no longer the land of opportunity it once had been.

### Standard of Living

Life in the early Chesapeake was hard for everyone, regardless of sex or status. Farmers (and sometimes their wives) toiled in the fields alongside servants, laboriously clearing land, then planting and harvesting tobacco and corn. Because hogs could forage for themselves in the forests and needed little tending, Chesapeake households subsisted mainly on pork and corn, a filling diet but not sufficiently nutritious. Families supplemented this monotonous fare by eating fish, shellfish, and wildfowl, in addition to vegetables such as lettuce and peas, which they grew in small gardens. The near impossibility of preserving food for safe winter consumption magnified the health problems caused by epidemic disease. Salting, drying, and smoking, the only methods the colonists knew, did not always prevent spoilage.

Few households had many material possessions other than farm implements, bedding, and basic cooking and eating utensils. Chairs, tables, candles, and knives and forks were luxury items. Most people rose and went to bed with the sun, sat on crude benches or storage chests, and held plates or bowls in their hands while eating meat and vegetable stews with spoons. The ramshackle houses commonly had just one or two rooms. Colonists devoted their income to improving their farms, buying livestock, and purchasing more laborers instead of improving their standard of living. Rather than making such items as clothing or tools, families imported necessary manufactured goods from England.

### Chesapeake Families

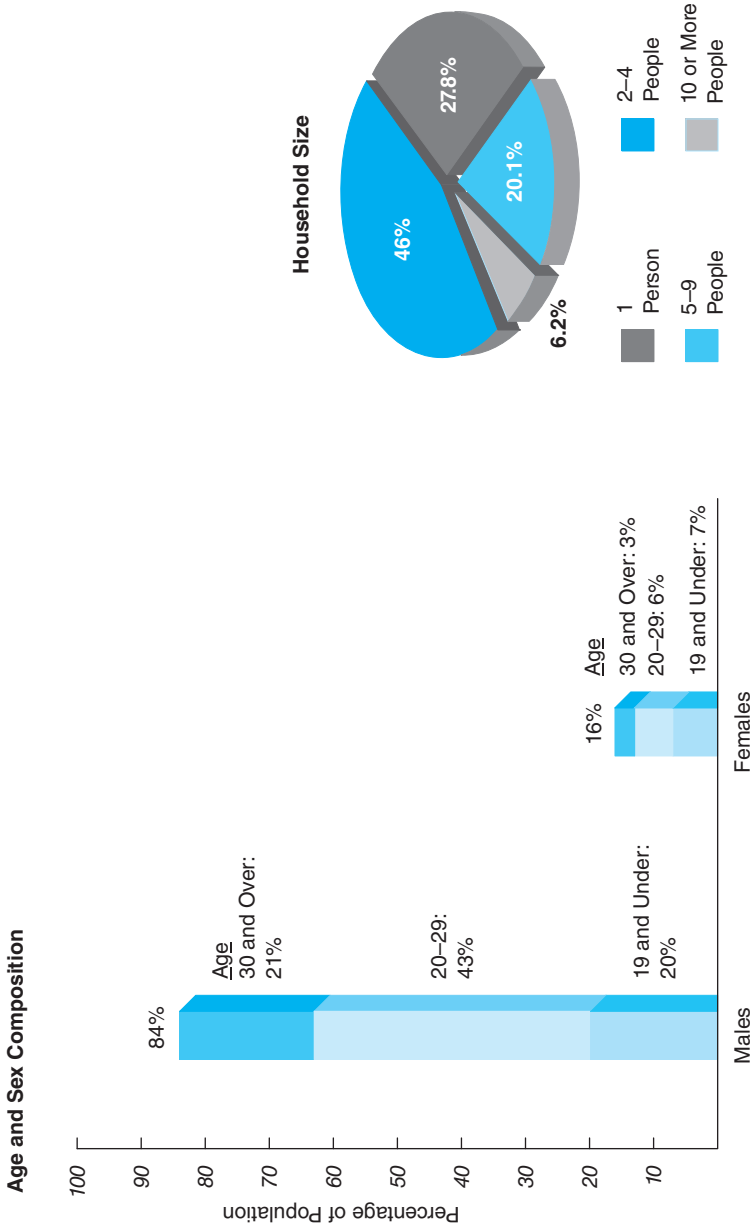
The predominance of males (see Figure 2.1), the incidence of servitude, and the high mortality rates combined to produce unusual patterns of family life. Female servants normally could not marry during their term of indenture because masters did not want pregnancies to deprive them of workers. Many male ex-servants could not marry at all because of the scarcity of women; such men lived alone, in pairs, or as the third member of a household containing a married couple. In contrast, nearly every adult free woman in the Chesapeake married, and widows usually remarried within a few months of a husband's death. Yet because of high infant mortality and because almost all marriages were delayed by servitude or broken by death, Chesapeake women commonly reared only one to three healthy children, in contrast to English women who normally had at least five.

Thus, Chesapeake families were few, small, and short-lived. Youthful immigrants came to America as individuals free of familial control; they commonly died while their children were still young. In one Virginia county, for example, more than three-quarters of the children had lost at least one parent by the time they either married or reached age twenty-one. Those children were put to work as soon as possible on the farms of parents, stepparents, or guardians. Their schooling, if any, was haphazard; whether Chesapeake-born children learned to read or write depended largely on whether their parents were literate and took the time to teach them.

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Wells, Peter S., *The Population of the British Colonies in America Before 1776*. © 1975 Princeton University Press, 2003 renewed PUP. Reprinted by permission of Princeton University Press.



**FIGURE 2.1 Population of Virginia, 1625**

The only detailed census taken in the English mainland North American colonies during the seventeenth century was prepared in Virginia in 1625. It listed a total of 1,218 people, constituting 309 "households" and living in 278 dwellings—so some houses contained more than one family. The chart shows, on the left, the proportionate age and gender distribution of the 765 individuals for whom full information was recorded, and, on the right, the percentage variation in the sizes of the 309 households. The approximately 42 percent of the residents of the colony who were servants were concentrated in 30 percent of the households. Nearly 70 percent of the households had no servants at all.

### Chesapeake Politics

Throughout the seventeenth century, immigrants composed a majority of the Chesapeake population, with important implications for regional political patterns. Most of the members of Virginia’s House of Burgesses and Maryland’s House of Delegates (established in 1635) were immigrants; they also dominated the governor’s council, which simultaneously served as each colony’s highest court, part of the legislature, and executive adviser to the governor. A cohesive, native-born ruling elite emerged only in the early eighteenth century.

Representative institutions based on the consent of the governed usually function as a major source of political stability. In the seventeenth-century Chesapeake, most property-owning white males could vote, and such freeholders chose as their legislators (burgesses) the local elites who seemed to be the natural leaders of their respective areas. But because most such men were immigrants lacking strong ties to one another or to the colonies, the assemblies’ existence did not create political stability. Unusual demographic patterns thus contributed to the region’s contentious politics.

## THE FOUNDING OF NEW ENGLAND

The economic and religious motives that prompted English people to move to the Chesapeake also drew men and women to New England, the region known as North Virginia before Captain John Smith renamed it in 1616 after exploring its coast. But because Puritans organized the New England colonies and because of environmental factors, the northern settlements developed very differently from their southern counterparts. The divergence became apparent even as the would-be colonists left England.

### Contrasting Regional Demographic Patterns

Hoping to exert control over a migration that appeared disorderly (and which included dissenters seeking to flee the authority of the Church of England), royal bureaucrats in late 1634 ordered port officials in London to collect information on all travelers departing for the colonies. The resulting records for the year 1635 are a treasure trove for historians. They document the departure of fifty-three vessels in that year alone—twenty to Virginia, seventeen to New England, eight to Barbados, five to St. Christopher, two to Bermuda, and one to Providence Island. Almost five thousand people sailed on those ships, with two thousand departing for Virginia, about twelve hundred for New England, and the rest for island destinations. Nearly three-fifths of all the passengers were between fifteen and twenty-four years old, reflecting the predominance of young male servants among migrants to America.

But among those bound for New England, such youths constituted less than one-third of the total; nearly 40 percent were older, and another third were younger. Whereas women made up just 14 percent of those going to Virginia, they composed almost 40 percent of the passengers to New England. Such composite figures show that New England migrants often traveled in family groups. They also brought more goods and livestock with them and tended to travel with other people

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from the same region. For example, aboard one vessel, more than half came from York; on another, nearly half came from Buckinghamshire. In short, people migrated to New England together with their close associates. Their lives in North America must have been more comfortable and less lonely than those of their southern counterparts.

### **Contrasting Regional Religious Patterns**

Puritan congregations quickly became key institutions in colonial New England, whereas no church had much impact on the early development of the Chesapeake colonies. Spread-out settlement patterns brought great difficulty to anyone who wanted to organize a church. Catholic and Anglican bishops in England paid little attention to their coreligionists in America, and all Chesapeake congregations languished in the absence of sufficient numbers of ordained clergymen. (For example, in 1665, an observer noted that only ten of the fifty Virginia Church of England parishes had resident clerics.) Not until the 1690s did the Church of England begin to take firmer root in Virginia; by then, it had also replaced Catholicism as the established church in Maryland, and Calvinists were in the minority in both colonies.

In both New England and the Chesapeake, religion affected the lives of pious Calvinists who were expected to reassess the state of their souls regularly. Many devoted themselves to self-examination and Bible study, and families often prayed together each day under the guidance of the husband and father. Yet because even the most pious could never be certain they were numbered among the elect, anxiety about their spiritual state troubled devout Calvinists. This anxiety lent a special intensity to their religious beliefs and to their concern with proper behavior—their own and that of others. During brief periods when they governed Maryland and Virginia, Calvinists attempted to enforce rules of morality Catholics and Anglicans tended to ignore.

### **Separatists**

Separatists who thought the Church of England too corrupt to be salvaged became the first religious dissenters to move to New England. In 1609, a Separatist congregation relocated to Leiden, in the Netherlands, where they found the freedom of worship denied them in Stuart England. But eventually the Netherlands worried them, for the nation that tolerated them also tolerated religions and behaviors they abhorred. Hoping to isolate themselves and their children from the corrupting influence of worldly temptations, these people, known today as Pilgrims, received permission from the Virginia Company to colonize the northern part of its territory.

In September 1620, more than one hundred people, only thirty of them Separatists, set sail from England on the old and crowded *Mayflower*. Like a few English families that had settled permanently along the coast of Newfoundland during the previous decade, the Pilgrims expected to support their colony through profits from codfishery. In November, they landed on Cape Cod, farther north than they had intended. Still, given the lateness of the season, they decided to stay in the region. They moved across Massachusetts Bay to a fine harbor (named Plymouth by John Smith, who had visited it in 1614) and into the empty dwellings of a Pautuxet village whose inhabitants had died in the epidemic of 1616–1618.

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### Pilgrims and Pokanokets

Even before they landed, the Pilgrims had to surmount their first challenge—from the “strangers,” or non-Separatists, who sailed with them to America. Because they landed outside the jurisdiction of the Virginia Company, some of the strangers questioned the authority of the colony’s leaders. In response, the Mayflower Compact, signed in November 1620 on shipboard, established a “Civil Body Politic” as a temporary substitute for a charter. The male settlers elected a governor and initially made all decisions for the colony at town meetings. Later, after more towns had been founded and the population increased, Plymouth, like Virginia and Maryland, created an assembly to which the landowning male settlers elected representatives.

Like the Jamestown settlers before them, the residents of Plymouth were poorly prepared to subsist in the new environment. Only half of the *Mayflower’s* passengers lived to see the spring. That the others survived owed much to the Pokanokets (a branch of the Wampanoags), who controlled the area in which they had settled. Pokanoket villages had suffered terrible losses in the recent epidemic, so to protect themselves from the powerful Narragansetts of the southern New England coast (who had been spared the ravages of the disease), the Pokanokets allied themselves with the newcomers. In the spring of 1621, their leader, Massasoit, agreed to a treaty, and during the colony’s first difficult years the Pokanokets supplied the settlers with essential foodstuffs. The colonists also relied on Squanto, a Pautuxet who, like Malinche, served as a conduit between native peoples and Europeans. Captured by fishermen in the early 1610s and taken to Europe, Squanto had learned to speak English. On his return, he discovered that the epidemic had wiped out his village. Squanto became the settlers’ interpreter and a major source of information about the environment.

### Massachusetts Bay Company

Before the 1620s ended, another group of Puritans (Congregationalists, who hoped to reform the Church of England from within) launched the colonial enterprise that would come to dominate New England and would absorb Plymouth in 1691. Charles I, who became king in 1625, was more hostile to Puritans than his father had been. Under his leadership, the Church of England attempted to suppress Puritan practices, driving clergymen from their pulpits and forcing congregations to worship secretly. Some Congregationalist merchants, concerned about their longterm prospects in England, sent out a body of colonists to Cape Ann (north of Cape Cod) in 1628. The following year, the merchants obtained a royal charter, constituting themselves as the Massachusetts Bay Company.

The new joint-stock company quickly attracted the attention of Puritans who were becoming increasingly convinced that they no longer would be able to practice their religion freely in their homeland. They remained committed to the goal of reforming the Church of England but concluded that they should pursue that aim in America. In a dramatic move, the Congregationalist merchants decided to transfer the Massachusetts Bay Company’s headquarters to New England. The settlers would then be answerable to no one in the mother country and would be able to handle their affairs—secular and religious—as they pleased. Like the Plymouth settlers, they expected to profit from the codfishery; they also planned to export timber products.



J. D. Bangs. Courtesy of Leiden American Pilgrim Museum, The Netherlands

Some scholars now believe that this 1638 painting by Dutch artist Adam Willaerts depicts the Plymouth colony about fifteen years after its founding. The shape of the harbor, the wooden gate, and the houses straggling up the hill all coincide with contemporary accounts of the settlement. No one believes that Willaerts himself visited Plymouth, but people returning from the colony to the Netherlands, where the Pilgrims had lived for years before emigrating, could well have described Plymouth to him.

### Governor John Winthrop

The most important recruit to the new venture was John Winthrop, a member of the lesser English gentry. In October 1629, the Massachusetts Bay Company elected Winthrop as its governor, and until his death twenty years later, he served the colony continuously in one leadership post or another. Winthrop organized the initial segment of the great Puritan migration to America. In 1630, more than one thousand English men and women moved to Massachusetts—most of them to Boston. By 1643, nearly twenty thousand more had followed.

On board the *Arbella*, en route to New England in 1630, John Winthrop preached a sermon, “A Model of Christian Charity,” laying out his expectations for the new colony. Above all, he stressed the communal nature of the endeavor on which he and his fellow settlers had embarked. God, he explained, “hath so disposed of the condition of mankind as in all times some must be rich, some poor, some high and eminent in power and dignity, others mean and in subjection.” But differences in status did not imply differences in worth. On the contrary, God had planned the world so that “every man might have need of other, and from hence they might be all knit more nearly together in the bond of brotherly affection.” In America, Winthrop asserted, “we shall be as a city upon a hill, the eyes of all people are upon us.” If the Puritans failed to carry out their “special commission” from God, “the Lord will surely break out in wrath against us.”

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Winthrop's was a transcendent vision. He foresaw in Puritan America a true commonwealth, a community in which each person put the good of the whole ahead of his or her private concerns. Although, as in seventeenth-century England, that society would be characterized by social inequality and clear hierarchies of status and power, Winthrop hoped its members would live according to the precepts of Christian love. Of course, such an ideal was beyond human reach. Early Massachusetts and its Caribbean counterpart, Providence Island, had their share of bitter quarrels and unchristian behavior. Remarkably, though, in New England the ideal persisted well into the third and fourth generations of the immigrants' descendants.

**Covenant Ideal** The Puritans expressed their communal ideal chiefly in the doctrine of the covenant. They believed God had made a covenant—that is, an agreement or contract—with them when they were chosen for the special mission to America. In turn, they covenanted with one another, promising to work together toward their goals. The founders of churches, towns, and even colonies in Anglo-America often drafted formal documents setting forth the principles on which their institutions would be based. The Pilgrims' Mayflower Compact was a covenant; so, too, was the Fundamental Orders of Connecticut (1639), which laid down the basic law for the settlements established along the Connecticut River valley in 1636 and thereafter.

The leaders of Massachusetts Bay likewise transformed their original joint-stock company charter into the basis for a covenanted community based on mutual consent. Under pressure from landowning male settlers, they gradually changed the General Court—officially the company's small governing body—into a colonial legislature. They also granted the status of freeman, or voting member of the company, to all property-owning adult male church members. Like the Virginians who won the reestablishment of the House of Burgesses after the king had abolished it, the male residents of Massachusetts insisted that their reluctant leaders allow them a greater voice in their government. Less than two decades after the first large group of Puritans arrived in Massachusetts Bay, the colony had a functioning system of self-government composed of a governor and a two-house legislature. The General Court also established a judicial system modeled on England's, although the laws they adopted differed from those of their homeland.

**New England Towns** The colony's method of distributing land helped to further the communal ideal. Unlike Virginia and Maryland, where individual applicants acquired headrights and sited their farms separately, in Massachusetts groups of men—often from the same English village—applied together to the General Court for grants of land on which to establish towns (novel governance units that did not exist in England). The men receiving such grants determined how the land would be distributed. Understandably, the grantees copied the villages whence they had come. First, they laid out lots for houses and a church. Then they gave each family parcels of land scattered around the town center: a pasture here, a woodlot there, an arable field elsewhere.

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They reserved the best and largest plots for the most distinguished residents, including the minister. People who had low status in England received smaller and less desirable allotments. Still, every man and even a few single women obtained land, thus sharply differentiating these villages from their English counterparts. When migrants began to move beyond the territorial limits of Massachusetts Bay into Connecticut (1636), New Haven (1638), and New Hampshire (1638), the same pattern of land grants and town formation persisted. (Only Maine, with coastal regions thinly populated by fishermen and their families, deviated from the standard practice.)

Town centers developed quickly, evolving in three distinctly different ways. Some, chiefly isolated agricultural settlements in the interior, tried to sustain Winthrop's vision of harmonious community life based on diversified family farms. A second group, the coastal towns like Boston and Salem, became bustling seaports, serving as focal points for trade and places of entry for thousands of new immigrants. The third category, commercialized agricultural towns, grew up in the Connecticut River valley, where easy water transportation made it possible for farmers to sell surplus goods readily. In Springfield, Massachusetts, for example, the merchant-entrepreneur William Pyncheon and his son John began as fur traders and ended as large landowners with thousands of acres. Even in New England, then, the entrepreneurial spirit characteristic of the Chesapeake found expression. Yet the plans to profit from timber and fish exports did not materialize quickly or easily; the new settlements lacked the infrastructure necessary to support such enterprises.

### **Pequot War and Its Aftermath**

Migration into the Connecticut valley ended the Puritans' relative freedom from clashes with nearby Indians. The first English people in the valley moved there from Massachusetts Bay under the direction of their minister, Thomas Hooker. Although their new settlements were remote from other English towns, the wide river promised ready access to the ocean. The site had just one problem: it fell within the territory controlled by the powerful Pequots.

The Pequots' dominance stemmed from their role as primary intermediaries in the trade between New England Algonquians and the Dutch in New Netherland. The arrival of English settlers signaled the end of the Pequots' power over such regional trading networks, for previously subordinate bands could now trade directly with Europeans. Clashes between Pequots and English colonists began even before the establishment of settlements in the Connecticut valley, but their founding tipped the balance toward war. The Pequots tried unsuccessfully to enlist other Indians in resisting English expansion. After two English traders were killed (not by Pequots), the English raided a Pequot village. In return, Pequots attacked Wethersfield, Connecticut, in April 1637, killing nine and capturing two. To retaliate, an expedition the following month surrounded and burned the main Pequot town on the Mystic River. The Englishmen and their Narragansett allies slaughtered at least four hundred Pequots, mostly women and children, capturing and enslaving the survivors.

For the next four decades, New England Indians accommodated themselves to the European invasion. They traded with the newcomers and sometimes worked for

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them, but for the most part they resisted acculturation or incorporation into English society. Native Americans persisted in using traditional farming methods, which did not employ plows or fences, and women rather than men continued to be the chief cultivators. When Indian men learned “European” trades in order to survive, they chose those—like broom making, basket weaving, and shingle splitting—that most nearly accorded with their customary occupations and ensured both independence and income. The one European practice they adopted was keeping livestock, for domesticated animals provided excellent sources of meat once earlier hunting territories had been turned into English farms and wild game had consequently disappeared.

### **Missionary Activities**

Although the official seal of the Massachusetts Bay colony showed an Indian crying, “Come over and help us,” most colonists showed little interest in converting the Algonquians to Christianity. Only a few Massachusetts clerics, most notably John Eliot and Thomas Mayhew, seriously undertook missionary work. Eliot insisted that converts reside in towns, farm the land in English fashion, assume English names, wear European-style clothing and shoes, cut their hair, and stop observing a wide range of their own customs. Because Eliot demanded a cultural transformation from his adherents—on the theory that Indians could not be properly Christianized unless they were also “civilized”—he understandably met with little success. At the peak of Eliot’s efforts, only eleven hundred Indians (out of many thousands) lived in the fourteen “Praying Towns” he established, and just 10 percent of those town residents had been formally baptized.

Eliot’s failure to win many converts contrasted sharply with the successful missions in New France. Puritan services lacked Catholicism’s beautiful ceremonies and special appeal for women, and the Calvinist Puritans could not offer pious believers assurances of a heavenly afterlife. Yet on the island of Martha’s Vineyard, Thomas Mayhew showed that it was possible to convert substantial numbers of Indians to Calvinist Christianity. He allowed Wampanoag Christians there to lead traditional lives, and he trained men of their own community to minister to them.

What attracted Indians to such religious ideas? Conversion often alienated new Christians (both Catholic and Puritan) from their relatives and traditions—a likely outcome that must have caused many potential converts to hesitate. But surely many hoped to use the Europeans’ religion as a means of coping with the dramatic changes the intruders had wrought. The combination of disease, alcohol, new trading patterns, and loss of territory disrupted customary ways of life to an unprecedented extent. Shamans had little success in restoring traditional ways. Many Indians must have concluded that the Europeans’ own ideas could provide the key to survival in the new circumstances.

John Winthrop’s description of a great smallpox epidemic that swept through southern New England in the early 1630s reveals the relationship among smallpox, conversion to Christianity, and English land claims. “A great mortality among the Indians,” he noted in his diary in 1633. “Divers of them, in their sickness, confessed that the Englishmen’s God was a good God; and that if they recovered, they would serve him.” But most did not recover: in January 1634, an English scout reported



that smallpox had spread “as far as any Indian plantation was known to the west.” By July, Winthrop observed that most of the Indians within a 300-mile radius of Boston had died of the disease. Therefore, he declared with satisfaction, “the Lord hath cleared our title to what we possess.”

## LIFE IN NEW ENGLAND

New England’s colonizers adopted modes of life that differed from those of both their Algonquian neighbors and their Chesapeake counterparts. Algonquian bands usually moved four or five times each year to take full advantage of their environment. In spring, women planted the fields, but once crops were established, the plants did not need regular attention for several months. Villages then divided into small groups, women gathering wild foods and men hunting and fishing. The villagers returned to their fields for harvest, then separated again for fall hunting. Finally, the people wintered together in a sheltered spot before returning to the fields to start the cycle anew the following spring. Women probably determined the timing of these moves because their activities (gathering wild foods, including shellfish along the shore, and cultivating plants) used the nearby environment more intensively than did men’s.

Unlike the mobile Algonquians, English people lived year-round in the same location. And unlike residents of the Chesapeake, New Englanders constructed sturdy dwellings intended to last. (Some survive to this day.) Household furnishings and house sizes resembled those in the Chesapeake, but New Englanders’ diets were somewhat more varied. They replowed the same fields, believing it was less arduous to employ manure as fertilizer than to clear new fields every few years. Furthermore, they fenced their croplands to prevent them from being overrun by the cattle, sheep, and hogs that were their chief sources of meat. Animal crowding more than human crowding caused New Englanders to spread out across the countryside; all their livestock constantly needed more pasturage.

### **New England Families**

Because Puritans commonly moved to America in family groups, the age range in early New England was wide; and because many more women migrated to New England than to the tobacco colonies, the population could immediately begin to reproduce itself. Lacking such tropical diseases as malaria, New England was also healthier than the Chesapeake and even the mother country, once settlements had survived the difficult first few years. Adult male migrants to the Chesapeake lost about a decade from their English life expectancy of fifty to fifty-five years; their Massachusetts counterparts gained five or more years.

Consequently, whereas Chesapeake population patterns gave rise to families that were few in number, small in size, and transitory, the demographic characteristics of New England made families there numerous, large, and long-lived. In New England, most men married; immigrant women married young (at age twenty, on the average); and marriages lasted longer and produced more children, who were more likely to live to maturity. If seventeenth-century Chesapeake women could expect to rear one to three healthy children, New England women could anticipate raising five to seven.

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The nature of the population had other major implications for family life. The presence of many children combined with Puritans' stress on the importance of reading the Bible led to widespread concern for the education of youth. That people lived in towns meant small schools could be established; girls and boys were taught basic reading by their parents or a school "dame," and boys could then proceed to learn writing and eventually arithmetic and Latin. Further, New England in effect created grandparents because in England people rarely lived long enough to know their children's children. And whereas early Chesapeake parents commonly died before their children married, New England parents exercised a good deal of control over their adult offspring. Young men could not marry without acreage to cultivate, and because of the communal land-grant system, they had to depend on their fathers for that land. Daughters, too, needed a dowry of household goods supplied by their parents. Parents relied on their children's labor and often seemed reluctant to see them marry and start their own households. These needs sometimes led to conflict between the generations. On the whole, though, children seem to have obeyed their parents' wishes, for they had few alternatives.

### Impact of Religion

Puritans controlled the governments of Massachusetts Bay, Plymouth, Connecticut, and the other early northern colonies. Congregationalism was the only officially recognized religion; except in Rhode Island members of other sects had no freedom of worship. Some non-Puritans voted in town meetings, but in Massachusetts Bay and New Haven, church membership was a prerequisite for voting in colony elections. All the early colonies, north and south, taxed residents to build churches and pay ministers' salaries, but only New England based provisions of criminal codes on the Old Testament. Massachusetts's first bodies of law (1641 and 1648) incorporated regulations drawn from scriptures; New Haven, Plymouth, New Hampshire, and Connecticut later copied them. All New Englanders were required to attend religious services, whether or not they were church members, and people who expressed contempt for ministers could be punished with fines or whippings.

The Puritan colonies attempted to enforce strict codes of moral conduct. Colonists there could be tried for drunkenness, card playing, dancing, or even idleness—although the frequent prosecutions for such offenses suggest that New Englanders often disobeyed the laws and thoroughly enjoyed such activities. Couples who had sex during their engagement (as revealed by the birth of a baby less than nine months after their wedding) were fined and publicly humiliated. Men, and a handful of women, who engaged in behaviors that today would be called homosexual were seen as especially sinful and reprehensible, and some were executed.

In New England, church and state were thus intertwined to a greater extent than in the Chesapeake, where few such prosecutions occurred. Puritans objected to secular interference in religious affairs but at the same time expected the church to influence the conduct of politics and the affairs of society. They also believed the state was obliged to support and protect the one true church—theirs. Consequently, although they came to America seeking freedom to worship as they pleased, they saw no contradiction in refusing to grant that freedom to those who held different religious beliefs.

**Roger Williams**

Roger Williams, a Separatist who migrated to Massachusetts Bay in 1631, quickly ran afoul of Puritan orthodoxy. He told his fellow settlers that the king of England had no right to grant them land already occupied by Indians, that church and state should be kept entirely separate, and that Puritans should not impose their ideas on others. Because Puritan leaders placed a heavy emphasis on achieving consensus in both religion and politics, they could not tolerate significant dissent. In October 1635, Massachusetts tried Williams for challenging the validity of the colony's charter and for maintaining that New England Congregationalists had not separated themselves, their churches, or their polity sufficiently from England's corrupt institutions and practices.

Convicted and banished, Williams journeyed in early 1636 to the head of Narragansett Bay, where he founded the town of Providence on land he obtained from the Narragansetts and Wampanoags. Because Williams believed government should not interfere with religion in any way, Providence and other towns in what became Rhode Island adopted a policy of tolerating all religions, including Judaism. Along with Maryland, the tiny colony founded by Williams thus presaged the religious freedom that eventually became one of the hallmarks of the United States.

**Anne  
Hutchinson**

A dissenter who presented a more sustained challenge to Massachusetts' leaders was Mistress Anne Hutchinson. (The title *Mistress* revealed her high status.) A skilled medical practitioner popular with the women of Boston, she greatly admired John Cotton, a minister who stressed the covenant of grace, or God's free gift of salvation to unworthy human beings. By contrast, most Massachusetts clerics emphasized the need for Puritans to engage in good works, study, and reflection in preparation for receiving God's grace. (In its most extreme form, such a doctrine could verge on the covenant of works, or the idea that people could earn their salvation.) After spreading her ideas for months in the context of gatherings at childbirths—when no men were present—Mistress Hutchinson began holding women's meetings in her home to discuss Cotton's sermons. Stressing the covenant of grace, she even asserted that the elect could be assured of salvation and communicate directly with God. Such ideas had an immense appeal for Puritans. Anne Hutchinson offered them certainty of salvation instead of a state of constant anxiety. Her approach also lessened the importance of the institutional church and its ministers.

Thus, Mistress Hutchinson's ideas posed a dangerous threat to Puritan orthodoxy. So in November 1637, officials charged her with having maligned the colony's ministers by accusing them of preaching the covenant of works. For two days, she defended herself cleverly, matching scriptural references and wits with John Winthrop himself. But then Anne Hutchinson triumphantly and boldly declared that God had spoken to her directly, explaining that he would curse the Puritans' descendants for generations if they harmed her. That assertion assured her banishment, for what member of the court could acknowledge the legitimacy of such a revelation? After she had also been excommunicated from the church, she and her family, along with some faithful followers, were exiled to Rhode Island in 1638. Several years later, after she moved to New Netherland, she and most of her children were killed by Indians.

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The authorities in Massachusetts perceived Anne Hutchinson as doubly dangerous to the existing order: she threatened not only religious orthodoxy but also traditional gender roles. Puritans believed in the equality before God of all souls, but they considered actual women (as distinct from their spiritual selves) inferior to men. Christians had long followed Saint Paul’s dictum that women should keep silent in church and submit to their husbands. Mistress Hutchinson did neither. The magistrates’ comments during her trial reveal that they were almost as outraged by her “masculine” behavior as by her religious beliefs. Winthrop charged her with having set wife against husband because so many of her followers were women. A clergyman later told her bluntly, “You have stepped out of your place, you have rather been a Husband than a Wife and a preacher than a Hearer; and a Magistrate than a Subject.”

The New England authorities’ reaction to Anne Hutchinson reveals the depth of their adherence to European gender-role concepts. To them, an orderly society required the obedience of wives to husbands, subjects to rulers, and ordinary folk to gentry. English people intended to change many aspects of their lives by colonizing North America, but not the gendered division of labor, the assumption of male superiority, or the maintenance of social hierarchies.

## SUMMARY

By the middle of the seventeenth century, Europeans had come to North America and the Caribbean to stay, a fact that signaled major changes for the peoples of both hemispheres. These newcomers had indelibly altered not only their own lives but also those of native peoples. Europeans killed Indians with their weapons and diseases and had varying success in converting them to Christianity. Contacts with indigenous peoples taught Europeans to eat new foods, speak new languages, and recognize—however reluctantly—the persistence of other cultural patterns. The prosperity and even survival of many of the European colonies depended heavily on the cultivation of American crops (maize and tobacco) and an Asian crop (sugar), thus attesting to the importance of post-Columbian ecological exchange.

Political rivalries once confined to Europe spread around the globe, as England, Spain, Portugal, France, and the Netherlands vied for control of the peoples and resources of Asia, Africa, and the Americas. In South America, Spaniards reaped the benefits of their gold and silver mines, while French people earned their primary profits from the fur trade (in Canada) and cultivating sugar (in the Caribbean). Sugar also enriched the Portuguese in Brazil. The Dutch concentrated on commerce, trading in furs and sugar in North America and the Caribbean.

Although the English colonies, too, at first sought to rely on trade, they quickly took another form altogether when so many English people of the “middling sort” decided to migrate to North America. To a greater extent than their European counterparts, the English transferred the society and politics of their homeland to a new environment. Their sheer numbers, coupled with their need for vast quantities of land on which to grow their crops and raise their livestock, inevitably brought them into conflict with their Indian neighbors. New England and the Chesapeake differed in the sex ratio and age range of their immigrant populations, the nature of their developing

economies, their settlement patterns, and the impact of religion. Yet they resembled each other in the internal and external conflicts their expansion engendered. In years to come, both regions would become embroiled in increasingly fierce rivalries besetting the European powers. Those rivalries would continue to affect Americans of all races until after the mid-eighteenth century, when France and England fought the greatest war yet known, and the Anglo-American colonies won their independence.

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# 3

## NORTH AMERICA IN THE ATLANTIC WORLD 1650–1720

### CHAPTER OUTLINE

- The Growth of Anglo-American Settlements
- A Decade of Imperial Crises: The 1670s
- The Atlantic Trading System
- *LINKS TO THE WORLD Exotic Beverages*
- Slavery in North America and the Caribbean
- Imperial Reorganization and the Witchcraft Crisis
- Summary

### THE GROWTH OF ANGLO-AMERICAN SETTLEMENTS

Between 1642 and 1646, civil war between supporters of King Charles I and the Puritan-dominated Parliament engulfed the colonists' English homeland. Parliament triumphed, leading to the execution of the king in 1649 and interim rule by the parliamentary army's leader, Oliver Cromwell, during the so-called Commonwealth period. But after Cromwell's death, Parliament decided to restore the monarchy if Charles I's son and heir agreed to restrictions on his authority. Charles II did so, and the Stuarts were returned to the throne in 1660 (see Table 3.1). The new king subsequently rewarded nobles and others who had supported him during the Civil War with huge tracts of land on the North American mainland. The colonies thereby established made up six of the thirteen polities that eventually would form the American nation: New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania (including Delaware), and North and South Carolina (see Map 3.1). Collectively, these became known as the Restoration colonies because they were created by the restored Stuart monarchy. All were proprietorships; in each of them one man or several men held title to the soil and controlled the government.

#### New York

Charles's younger brother James, the duke of York, benefited quickly. In 1664, Charles II gave James the region between the Connecticut and Delaware Rivers, including the Hudson valley and Long Island. That the Dutch had settled there mattered little; the English and the Dutch

## CHRONOLOGY

<b>1642–46</b>	English Civil War
<b>1649</b>	Charles I executed
<b>1651</b>	First Navigation Act passed to regulate colonial trade
<b>1660</b>	Stuarts (Charles II) restored to throne
<b>1663</b>	Carolina chartered
<b>1664</b>	English conquer New Netherland New York founded New Jersey established
<b>1670s</b>	Marquette, Jolliet, and La Salle explore the Great Lakes and Mississippi valley for France
<b>1675–76</b>	Bacon's Rebellion disrupts Virginia government; Jamestown destroyed
<b>1675–78</b>	King Philip's War devastates New England
<b>1680–1700</b>	Pueblo revolt temporarily drives Spaniards from New Mexico
<b>1681</b>	Pennsylvania chartered
<b>1685</b>	James II becomes king
<b>1686–88</b>	Dominion of New England established, superseding all charters of colonies from Maine to New Jersey
<b>1688–89</b>	James II deposed in Glorious Revolution William and Mary ascend throne
<b>1689</b>	Glorious Revolution in America; Massachusetts, New York, and Maryland overthrow colonial governors
<b>1688–99</b>	King William's War fought on northern New England frontier
<b>1691</b>	New Massachusetts charter issued
<b>1692</b>	Witchcraft crisis in Salem; nineteen people hanged
<b>1696</b>	Board of Trade and Plantations established to coordinate English colonial administration Vice-admiralty courts established in America
<b>1701</b>	Iroquois adopt neutrality policy toward France and England
<b>1702–13</b>	Queen Anne's War fought by French and English
<b>1711–13</b>	Tuscarora War (North Carolina) leads to capture or migration of most Tuscaroras
<b>1715</b>	Yamasee War nearly destroys South Carolina

were at the time engaged in sporadic warfare, and the English were also attacking other Dutch colonies. In August, James's warships anchored off Manhattan Island, demanding New Netherland's surrender. The colony complied without resistance.

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TABLE 3.1 | RESTORED STUART MONARCHS OF ENGLAND, 1660–1714

Monarch	Reign	Relation to Predecessor
Charles II	1660–1685	Son
James II	1685–1688	Brother
Mary	1688–1694	Daughter
William	1688–1702	Son-in-law
Anne	1702–1714	Sister, Sister-in-law

TABLE 3.2 | THE FOUNDING OF ENGLISH COLONIES IN NORTH AMERICA, 1664–1681

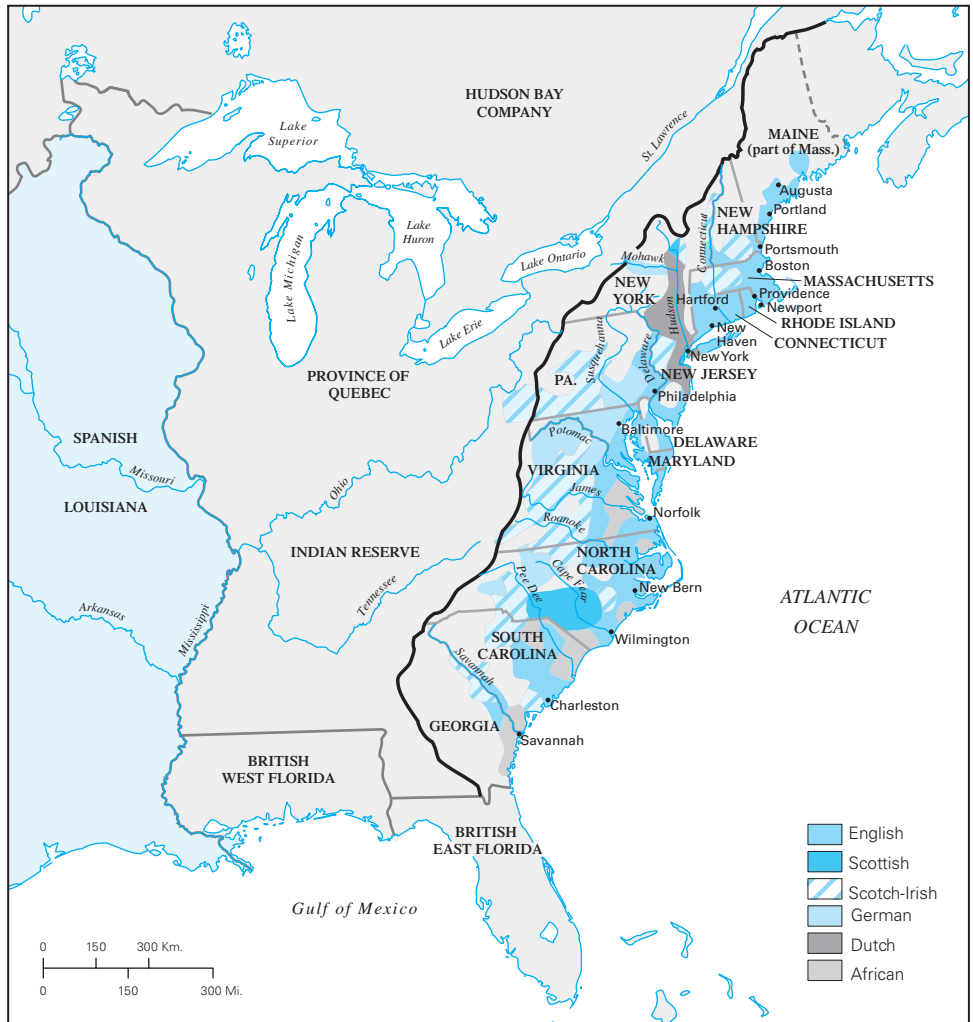
Colony	Founder(s)	Date	Basis of Economy
New York (formerly New Netherland)	James, duke of York	1664	Farming, fur trading
New Jersey	Sir George Carteret, John Lord Berkeley	1664	Farming
North Carolina	Carolina proprietors	1665	Tobacco, forest products
South Carolina	Carolina proprietors	1670	Rice, indigo
Pennsylvania (incl. Delaware)	William Penn	1681	Farming

Although in 1672 the Netherlands briefly retook the colony, the Dutch permanently ceded it in 1674.

Thus, James acquired a heterogeneous possession, which he renamed New York (see Table 3.2). In 1664, a significant minority of English people (mostly Puritan New Englanders on Long Island) already lived there, along with the Dutch and sizable numbers of Indians, Africans, Germans, Scandinavians, and a smattering of other European peoples. The Dutch West India Company had imported slaves into the colony, intending some for resale in the Chesapeake. Many, though, remained in New Netherland as laborers; at the time of the English conquest, almost one-fifth of Manhattan's approximately fifteen hundred free and enslaved inhabitants were of African descent. Slaves then made up a higher proportion of New York's urban population than of the Chesapeake's rural people.

Recognizing the population's diversity, James's representatives moved cautiously in their efforts to establish English authority. The Duke's Laws, a legal code proclaimed in 1665, applied solely to the English settlements on Long Island, only later extended to the rest of the colony. James's policies initially maintained Dutch forms of local government, confirmed Dutch land titles, and allowed Dutch residents to maintain customary legal practices. Each town was permitted to decide which church (Dutch Reformed, Congregational, or Church of England) to support





### MAP 3.1 The Anglo-American Colonies in the Early Eighteenth Century

By the early eighteenth century, the English colonies nominally dominated the Atlantic coastline of North America. But the colonies' formal boundary lines are deceiving because the western reaches of each colony were still largely unfamiliar to Europeans and because much of the land was still inhabited by Native Americans.

with its tax revenues. Much to the dismay of English residents, the Duke's Laws made no provision for a representative assembly. Like other Stuarts, James distrusted legislative bodies, and not until 1683 did he agree to the colonists' requests for an elected legislature. Before then, an autocratic governor ruled New York.

The English takeover thus had little immediate effect on the colony. The duke did not promote migration, so its population grew slowly, barely reaching eighteen thousand by the time of the first English census in 1698. Until the second decade of

the eighteenth century, Manhattan remained a commercial backwater within the orbit of Boston.

### New Jersey

The English conquest brought so little change to New York primarily because the duke of York in 1664 regranted the land between the Hudson and Delaware Rivers—East and West Jersey—to his friends Sir George Carteret and John Lord Berkeley. That grant left the duke’s own colony hemmed in between Connecticut to the east and the Jerseys to the west and south, depriving it of much fertile land and hindering its economic growth. Meanwhile, the Jersey proprietors acted rapidly to attract settlers, promising generous land grants, limited freedom of religion, and—without authorization from the Crown—a representative assembly. In response, large numbers of Puritan New Englanders migrated southward to the Jerseys, along with some Barbadians, Dutch New Yorkers, and eventually Scots. New Jersey grew quickly; in 1726, at the time of its first census as a united colony, it had 32,500 inhabitants, only eight thousand fewer than New York.

Within twenty years, Berkeley and Carteret sold their interests in the Jerseys to separate groups of investors. The purchasers of all of Carteret’s share (West Jersey) and portions of Berkeley’s (East Jersey) were members of the Society of Friends, also called Quakers. That small radical sect rejected earthly and religious hierarchies. Quakers believed anyone could directly receive God’s “inner light” and all people were equal in God’s sight. With no formally trained clergy, Quakers allowed both men and women to speak in meetings and become “public Friends” who traveled to spread God’s word. Quakers proselytized throughout the Atlantic world in the 1650s, recruiting followers in all of England’s colonies from a base in Barbados. The authorities did not welcome the Quakers’ radical egalitarianism, and they encountered persecution everywhere. Mary Dyer—previously a follower of Anne Hutchinson—became a Quaker, returned to Boston as a missionary, and was hanged in 1660 (along with several men) for preaching Quaker doctrines.

### Pennsylvania

The Quakers obtained their own colony in 1681, when Charles II granted the region between Maryland and New York to his close friend William Penn, a prominent member of the sect. Penn was then thirty-seven years old; he held the colony as a personal proprietorship, one that earned profits for his descendants until the American Revolution. Even so, Penn, like the Roman Catholic Calverts of Maryland before him, saw his province not merely as a source of revenue but also as a haven for persecuted coreligionists. Penn offered land to all comers on liberal terms, promising toleration of all religions, although only Christian men could vote; guaranteeing English liberties, such as the right to bail and trial by jury; and pledging to establish a representative assembly. He also publicized the ready availability of land in Pennsylvania through widely distributed promotional tracts printed in German, French, and Dutch.

Penn’s activities and the Quakers’ attraction to his lands gave rise to a migration whose magnitude equaled the Puritan exodus to New England in the 1630s. By mid-1683, more than three thousand people—among them Welsh, Irish, Dutch, and

Germans—had already moved to Pennsylvania, and within five years the population reached twelve thousand. (By contrast, it had taken Virginia more than thirty years to achieve a comparable population.) Philadelphia, carefully sited on the easily navigable Delaware River and planned to be the major city in the province, drew merchants and artisans from throughout the English-speaking world. From mainland and Caribbean colonies alike came Quakers who brought with them years of experience on American soil and well-established trading connections. Pennsylvania's plentiful and fertile lands soon enabled its residents to begin exporting surplus flour and other foodstuffs to the West Indies. Practically overnight Philadelphia acquired more than two thousand citizens and started to challenge Boston's commercial dominance.

A pacifist with egalitarian principles, Penn attempted to treat native peoples fairly. He learned to speak the language of the Delawares (or Lenapes), from whom he purchased tracts of land to sell to European settlers. Penn also established strict regulations for trade and forbade the sale of alcohol to Indians. His policies attracted native peoples who moved to Pennsylvania near the end of the seventeenth century to escape repeated clashes with English colonists in Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina. Most important were the Tuscaroras, whose experiences are described later in this chapter. Likewise, Shawnees and Miamis moved eastward from the Ohio valley. Ironically, however, the same toleration that attracted Native Americans also brought non-Quaker Europeans who showed little respect for Indian claims to the soil. In effect, Penn's policy was so successful that it caused its own downfall. The Scots-Irish, Germans, and Swiss who settled in Pennsylvania in the first half of the eighteenth century clashed repeatedly over land with Indians who had also recently migrated to the colony.

## Carolina

The southernmost proprietary colony, granted by Charles II in 1663, encompassed a huge tract stretching from the southern boundary of Virginia to Spanish Florida. The area had great strategic importance: a successful English settlement there would prevent Spaniards from pushing farther north. The fertile, semitropical land also held forth the promise of producing such exotic and valuable commodities as figs, olives, wines, and silk. The proprietors named their new province Carolina in honor of Charles, whose Latin name was Carolus. The "Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina," which they asked the political philosopher John Locke to draft for them, set forth an elaborate plan for a colony governed by a hierarchy of landholding aristocrats and characterized by a carefully structured distribution of political and economic power.

But Carolina failed to follow the course the proprietors had laid out. Instead, it quickly developed two distinct population centers, which in 1729 split into separate colonies under direct royal rule. Virginia planters settled the Albemarle region that became North Carolina. They established a society much like their own, with an economy based on cultivating tobacco and exporting such forest products as pitch, tar, and timber. Because North Carolina lacked a satisfactory harbor, its planters relied on Virginia's ports and merchants to conduct their trade. The other population center, which eventually formed the core of South Carolina, developed at

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Charles Town, founded in 1670 near the juncture of the Ashley and Cooper Rivers. Many of its early residents migrated from overcrowded Barbados. These sugar planters expected to reestablish plantation agriculture and hoped to escape hurricanes. They were disappointed in both respects: they soon learned that sugar would not grow successfully in Carolina, and they experienced a “wonderfully horrid and destructive” hurricane in 1686.

The settlers began to raise corn and herds of cattle, which they sold to Caribbean planters. Like other colonists before them, they also depended on trade with nearby Indians to supply commodities they could sell elsewhere. In Carolina, those items were deerskins, sent to Europe, and enslaved Indians, who were shipped to Caribbean islands and northern colonies. Nearby Indian nations hunted deer with increasing intensity and readily sold captured enemies to the English settlers. During the first decade of the eighteenth century, South Carolina exported an average of 54,000 skins annually, and overseas shipments later peaked at 160,000 a year. Before 1715, Carolinians additionally exported an estimated thirty thousand to fifty thousand Indian slaves.

**Chesapeake** The English Civil War retarded the development of the earlier English settlements. In the Chesapeake, struggles between supporters of the king and Parliament caused military clashes in Maryland and political upheavals in Virginia. But once the war ended and immigration resumed, the colonies expanded once again. Some settlers, especially those on Virginia’s eastern shore and along that colony’s southern border, raised grain, livestock, and flax, which they sold to English and Dutch merchants. Tobacco growers began importing increasing numbers of English indentured servants to work on their farms, which had by then begun to develop into plantations. Freed from concerns about Indian attacks by the final defeat of the Powhatan Confederacy in 1646, they—especially recent immigrants—eagerly sought to enlarge their landholdings.

Although they still depended primarily on English laborers, Chesapeake tobacco planters also started to acquire small numbers of enslaved workers. Almost all came from a population that historian Ira Berlin has termed “Atlantic creoles”—that is, people (perhaps of mixed race) who came from other European settlements in the Atlantic world, primarily from Iberian outposts. Not all the Atlantic creoles who came to the Chesapeake were bondpeople; some were free or indentured. With their arrival, the Chesapeake became what Berlin calls a “society with slaves,” or one in which slavery does not dominate the economy but is one of a number of coexisting labor systems.

**New England** In New England, migration essentially ceased after the Civil War began in 1642. While Puritans were first challenging the king and then governing England as a commonwealth, they had little incentive to leave their homeland, and few migrated after the Restoration. Yet the Puritan colonies’ population continued to grow dramatically because of natural increase. By the 1670s, New England’s population had more than tripled to reach approximately seventy thousand. Such a rapid expansion placed great pressure on available land. Colonial settlement spread far into the interior of Massachusetts and Connecticut, and many

members of the third and fourth generations migrated—north to New Hampshire or Maine, southwest to New York or New Jersey—to find sufficient farmland for themselves and their children. Others abandoned agriculture and learned such skills as blacksmithing or carpentry to support themselves in the growing towns.

The people who remained behind in the small, yet densely populated older New England communities experienced a new phenomenon after approximately 1650: witchcraft accusations and trials. Other regions largely escaped such incidents, even though most seventeenth-century people believed witches existed. These allies of the Devil were thought to harness invisible spirits for good or evil purposes. For example, a witch might engage in fortunetelling, prepare healing potions or charms, or harm others by causing the death of a child or valuable animals. Yet only New England witnessed many trials of accused witches (about one hundred in all before 1690). Most, though not all, of the accused were middle-aged women who had angered their neighbors. Historians have accordingly concluded that the dynamics of daily interactions in the close-knit communities, where the same families lived nearby for decades, fostered longstanding quarrels that led some colonists to believe others had diabolically caused certain misfortunes. Even so, only a few of the accused were convicted, and fewer still were executed, because judges and juries remained skeptical of such charges.

### Colonial Political Structures

That New England courts halted questionable prosecutions suggests the maturity of colonial institutions. By the last quarter of the seventeenth century, almost all the Anglo-American colonies had well-established political and judicial structures. In New England, property-holding men or the legislature elected the governors; in other regions, the king or the proprietor appointed such leaders. A council, either elected or appointed, advised the governor on matters of policy and served as the upper house of the legislature. Each colony had a judiciary with local justices of the peace, county courts, and, usually, an appeals court composed of the councilors.

Local political institutions also developed. In New England, elected selectmen initially governed the towns, but by the end of the seventeenth century, town meetings—held at least annually and attended by most free adult male residents—handled matters of local concern. In the Chesapeake colonies and in both of the Carolinas, appointed magistrates ran local governments. At first, the same was true in Pennsylvania, but by the early eighteenth century, elected county officials began to take over some government functions. And in New York, local elections were the rule even before the establishment of the colonial assembly in 1683.

## A DECADE OF IMPERIAL CRISES: THE 1670S

As the Restoration colonies were extending the range of English settlement, the first English colonies and French and Spanish settlements in North America faced crises caused primarily by their changing relationships with America's indigenous peoples. Between 1670 and 1680, New France, New Mexico, New England, and Virginia experienced bitter conflicts as their interests collided with those of America's original inhabitants. All the early colonies changed irrevocably as a result.

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### New France and the Iroquois

In the mid-1670s Louis de Buade de Frontenac, the governor-general of Canada, decided to expand New France's reach into the south and west, hoping to establish a trade route to Mexico and to gain direct control of the valuable fur trade on which the prosperity of the colony rested. Accordingly, he encouraged the explorations of Father Jacques Marquette, Louis Jolliet, and René-Robert Cavelier de La Salle in the Great Lakes and Mississippi valley regions. His goal, however, brought him into conflict with the powerful Iroquois Confederacy, composed of five Indian nations—the Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas, and Senecas. (In 1722, the Tuscaroras became the sixth.)

Under the terms of a unique defensive alliance forged in the sixteenth century, a representative council made decisions of war and peace for the entire Iroquois Confederacy, although each nation still retained some autonomy and could not be forced to comply with a council directive against its will. Before the arrival of Europeans, the Iroquois waged wars primarily to acquire captives to replenish their population. Contact with foreign traders brought ravaging disease as early as 1633, intensifying the need for captives. Simultaneously, the Europeans' presence created an economic motive for warfare: the desire to dominate the fur trade and to gain unimpeded access to European goods. The war with the Hurons in the 1640s initiated a series of conflicts with other Indians known as the Beaver Wars, in which the Iroquois fought to achieve control of the lucrative peltry trade. Iroquois warriors did not themselves trap beaver; instead, they raided other villages in search of caches of pelts or attacked Indians from the interior as they carried furs to European outposts. Then the Iroquois traded that booty for European-made blankets, knives, guns, alcohol, and other desirable items.

In the mid-1670s, as Iroquois dominance grew, the French intervened, for an Iroquois triumph would have destroyed France's plans to trade directly with western Indians. Over the next twenty years, the French launched repeated attacks on Iroquois villages. Although in 1677 New Yorkers and the Iroquois established a formal alliance known as the Covenant Chain, the English offered little assistance other than weapons to their trading partners. Without much aid, the confederacy held its own and even expanded its reach, enabling it in 1701 to negotiate neutrality treaties with France and other Indians. For the next half-century, the Iroquois nations maintained their power through trade and skillful diplomacy rather than warfare, forming or abandoning alliances with Indian or European nations to best achieve their goals.

### Pueblo Peoples and Spaniards

In New Mexico, too, events of the 1670s led to a crisis with long-term consequences. Over the years under Spanish domination, the Pueblo peoples had added Christianity to their religious beliefs while still retaining traditional rituals, engaging in syncretic practices as had Mesoamericans. But as decades passed, Franciscans adopted increasingly brutal and violent tactics in order to erase all traces of the native religion. Priests and secular colonists who held *encomiendas* placed heavy labor demands on the people who were also suffering from Apache raids and food shortages caused by a serious drought. In 1680, the Pueblos revolted under the leadership of Popé, a

respected shaman, successfully driving the Spaniards out of New Mexico. Even though Spain managed to restore its authority by 1700, imperial officials had learned their lesson. Afterward, Spanish governors stressed cooperation with the Pueblos, relying on their labor but no longer attempting to violate their cultural integrity. The Pueblo revolt constituted the most successful and longest-sustained Indian resistance movement in colonial North America.

Other native peoples, including those with homelands many miles away from New Mexico, felt the Spanish presence as well. Spanish military outposts (presidios) and Franciscan missions offered some protection to Pueblos, but other Indians' desire to obtain horses and guns led to endemic violence throughout the region. Navajos, Apaches, and Utes attacked each other and the Pueblos in order to obtain captives and hides to trade to the Spanish. Captured Indian men might be sent to Mexican silver mines, whereas Spaniards often retained women and children as domestic laborers. When Comanches migrated west from the Great Plains in the late seventeenth century, Utes allied with them, and after the Pueblo revolt that alliance dominated New Mexico's northern borderlands for several decades.

In the more densely settled English colonies, hostilities developed in the decade of the 1670s, not over religion (as in New Mexico) or trade (as in New France), but over land. Put simply, the rapidly expanding Anglo-American population wanted more of it. In both New England and Virginia—though for different reasons—settlers began to encroach on territories that until then had remained in the hands of Native Americans.

### **King Philip's War**

By the early 1670s, the growing settlements in southern New England surrounded Wampanoag ancestral lands on Narragansett Bay. The local chief, Metacom, or King Philip, was troubled by the loss of territory and concerned about the impact of European culture and Christianity on his people. Philip led his warriors in attacks on nearby communities in June 1675. Other Algonquian peoples, among them Nipmucks and Narragansetts, soon joined King Philip's forces. In the fall, the Indian nations jointly attacked settlements in the northern Connecticut River valley, and the war spread to Maine, too, when the Abenakis entered the conflict. In early 1676, the Indian allies devastated villages like Lancaster, where they captured some settlers and even attacked Plymouth and Providence; later that year, Abenaki assaults forced the abandonment of most settlements in Maine. Altogether, the alliance wholly or partially destroyed twenty-seven of ninety-two towns and attacked forty others, pushing the line of English settlement back toward the east and south.

The tide turned in the south in the summer of 1676. The Indian coalition ran short of food and ammunition, and colonists began to use Christian Indians as guides and scouts. On June 12, the Mohawks—ancient Iroquois enemies of New England Algonquians—devastated a major Wampanoag encampment while most of the warriors were away attacking an English town. After King Philip was killed that August, the southern alliance crumbled. Fighting, though, continued on the Maine frontier for another two years. There the English colonists never defeated the Abenakis; both sides, their resources depleted, simply agreed to end the conflict in 1678.

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In addition to the Wampanoags, Nipmucks, Narragansetts, and Abenakis who were captured and sold into slavery, still more died of starvation and disease. New Englanders had broken the power of the southern coastal tribes. Thereafter the southern Indians lived in small clusters, subordinated to the colonists and often working as servants or sailors. Only on the island of Martha's Vineyard did Christian Wampanoags (who had not participated in the war) preserve their cultural identity intact.

The settlers paid a terrible price for their victory: an estimated one-tenth of the able-bodied adult male population was killed or wounded. Proportional to population, it was the most costly conflict in American history. The heavy losses in the war also caused many Puritan colonists to question their earlier confidence that God supported their endeavors; they now wondered if God had turned against them. New Englanders did not fully rebuild abandoned interior towns for another three decades, and not until the American Revolution did the region's per capita income again reach pre-1675 levels.

### Bacon's Rebellion

Not coincidentally, conflict simultaneously wracked Virginia. In the early 1670s, ex-servants unable to acquire land greedily eyed the territory reserved by treaty for Virginia's Indians. Governor William Berkeley, the leader of an entrenched coterie of large



Courtesy of Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities

*This Virginia mansion, one of only three surviving Jacobean-style great houses in North America or the Caribbean, is known as "Bacon's Castle." Built in 1665, it was captured and fortified by Nathaniel Bacon's men during the rebellion, but Bacon is not known to have visited it. In early 1677, it was one of the last rebel outposts to fall to Sir William Berkeley's forces.*

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landowners, resisted starting a war to further the aims of settlers who were challenging his authority. Dissatisfied colonists then rallied behind the leadership of a recent immigrant, the gentleman Nathaniel Bacon, who like other new arrivals had found that all the desirable land in settled areas had already been claimed. Using as a pretext the July 1675 killing of an indentured servant by some Doeg Indians, settlers attacked not only the Doegs but also the Susquehannocks, a more powerful nation. In retaliation, Susquehannock bands raided outlying farms early in 1676.

Berkeley and Bacon soon clashed. The governor outlawed Bacon and his men; the rebels then held Berkeley hostage, forcing him to authorize them to attack the Indians. During the chaotic summer of 1676, Bacon alternately pursued Indians and battled the governor. In September, Bacon's forces attacked Jamestown, burning the capital to the ground. But when Bacon died of dysentery the following month, the rebellion began to collapse. Even so, the rebels had made their point. Berkeley was recalled to England, and a new treaty signed in 1677 opened much of the disputed territory to settlement. The end of Bacon's Rebellion thus pushed most of Virginia's Indians farther west, beyond the Appalachians.

## THE ATLANTIC TRADING SYSTEM

In the 1670s and 1680s, the prosperity of the Chesapeake rested on tobacco, and successful tobacco cultivation depended, as it always had, on an ample labor supply. But fewer and fewer English men and women proved willing to indenture themselves for long terms of service in Maryland and Virginia. Population pressures had eased in England, and the founding of the Restoration colonies meant that migrants could choose other American destinations. Furthermore, fluctuating tobacco prices in Europe and the growing scarcity of land made the Chesapeake less appealing to potential settlers. That posed a problem for wealthy Chesapeake tobacco growers. Where could they obtain the workers they needed? They found the answer in the Caribbean sugar islands where Dutch, French, English, and Spanish planters were accustomed to purchasing African slaves.

### Why African Slavery?

Slavery had been practiced in Europe and Islamic lands for centuries. European Christians—both Catholics and Protestants—believed enslaving heathen peoples, especially those of exotic origin, was justifiable in religious terms. Muslims, too, thought infidels could be enslaved, and they imported tens of thousands of black African bondpeople into North Africa and the Middle East. Some Christians argued that holding heathens in bondage would lead to their conversion. Others believed any heathen taken prisoner in wartime could be enslaved. Consequently, when Portuguese mariners reached the sub-Saharan coast and encountered African societies holding slaves, they purchased bondpeople along with gold and other items. Indeed, they initially bought enslaved people in one African nation and sold them in another. From the 1440s on, Portugal imported large numbers of slaves into the Iberian Peninsula; by 1500, enslaved Africans composed about one-tenth of the population of Lisbon and Seville, the chief cities of Portugal and Spain. In 1555, a

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few of them were taken to England, where—when others followed—residents of London and Bristol in particular became accustomed to seeing black slaves on the streets.

Iberians exported African slavery to their American possessions, New Spain and Brazil. Because the Catholic Church prevented the formal enslavement of Indians in those domains and free laborers saw no reason to work voluntarily in mines or on sugar plantations when they could earn better wages under easier conditions elsewhere, African bondspeople (who had no choice) became mainstays of the Caribbean and Brazilian economies. European planters on all the sugar islands began purchasing slaves—often from the Iberians—soon after they settled in the Caribbean. Accordingly, the first enslaved Africans in the Americas were imported from Angola, Portugal’s major early trading partner, and the Portuguese word *Negro* came into use as a common descriptor.

English people had few moral qualms about enslaving other humans. Slavery, after all, was sanctioned in the Bible, and it was widely practiced by their contemporaries. Few at the time questioned the decision to hold Africans and their descendants—or captive Indians from New England or Carolina—in perpetual bondage. Yet their convoluted early attempts to define slave status nevertheless indicate that seventeenth-century English colonists initially lacked clear conceptual categories defining both “race” and “slave.” For example, the 1670 Virginia law that first tried to define which people were enslavable notably failed to employ the racial terminology that would later become commonplace. Instead, awkwardly seeking to single out imported Africans, it declared that “all servants not being christians imported into this colony by shipping shalbe slaves for their lives.” Such nonracial phrasing reveals that Anglo-American settlers had not yet fully developed the meaning of *race* and *slave* and that they did so in tandem over time through their experience with the institution of slavery itself.

### Atlantic Slave Trade

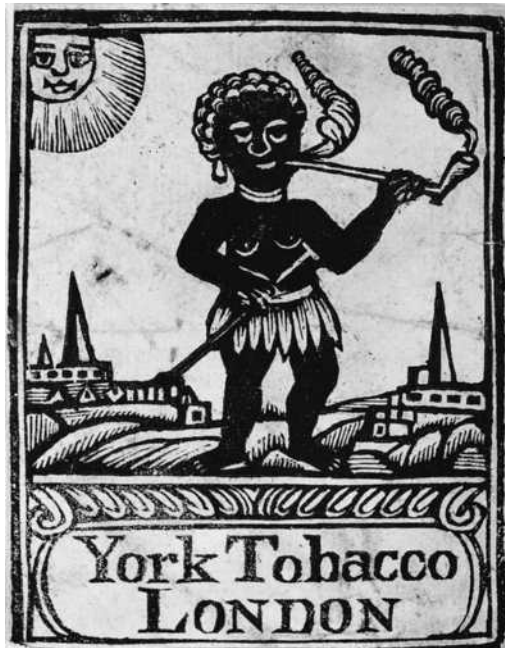
The planters of the North American mainland could not have obtained the bondspeople they wanted had it not been for the rapid development of an Atlantic trading system, the linchpin of which was the traffic in enslaved human beings. Although this elaborate Atlantic economic system has been called the triangular trade, people and products did not move across the ocean in easily diagrammed patterns. Instead, their movements created a complicated web of exchange that inextricably tied the peoples of the Atlantic world together.

The oceanic slave trade was entirely new, though enslavement was not. The expanding network of commerce between Europe and its colonies was fueled by the sale and transport of slaves, the exchange of commodities produced by slave labor, and the need to feed and clothe so many bound laborers. The European economy, previously oriented toward the Mediterranean and Asia, shifted its emphasis to the Atlantic. By the late seventeenth century, commerce in slaves and the products of slave labor constituted the basis of the European economic system. The irony of Columbus’s discoveries thus became complete: seeking the wealth of Asia, Columbus instead found the lands that—along with Africa—ultimately replaced Asia as the source of European prosperity.

The various elements of the trade had different relationships to one another and to the wider web of exchange. Chesapeake tobacco and Caribbean and Brazilian sugar were in great demand in Europe, so planters shipped those products directly to their home countries. The profits paid for both the African laborers who grew their crops and European manufactured goods. The African coastal rulers who ran the entrepôts where European slavers acquired their human cargoes received their payment in European manufactures and East Indian textiles; they had little need for most American products. Europeans purchased slaves from Africa for resale in their colonies and acquired sugar and tobacco from America, in exchange dispatching their manufactures everywhere.

European nations fought bitterly to control the lucrative trade. The Portuguese, who at first dominated the trade, were supplanted by the Dutch in the 1630s. In the Anglo-Dutch wars, the Dutch lost out to the English, who controlled the trade through the Royal African Company, a joint-stock company chartered by Charles II in 1672. Holding a monopoly on all English trade with sub-Saharan Africa, the company built and maintained seventeen forts and trading posts, dispatched to West Africa hundreds of ships carrying English manufactured goods, and transported about 100,000 slaves to England's Caribbean colonies. It paid regular dividends averaging 10 percent yearly, and some of its agents made fortunes. Yet even before the company's monopoly expired in 1712, many individual English and North American traders had illegally entered the market for slaves. By the early eighteenth century, such independent traders carried most of the Africans imported into the colonies, earning huge profits from successful voyages.

*By the middle of the eighteenth century, American tobacco had become closely associated with African slavery. An English woodcut advertising tobacco from the York River in Virginia accordingly depicted not a Chesapeake planter but rather an African, shown with a hoe in one hand and a pipe in the other. Usually, of course, slaves would not have smoked the high-quality tobacco produced for export, although they were allowed to cultivate small crops for their own use.*



Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

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### West Africa and the Slave Trade

Most of the enslaved people carried to North America originated in West Africa. Some came from the Rice and Grain Coasts, especially the former, but even more had resided in the Gold and Slave Coasts and the Bight of Biafra (modern Nigeria) and Angola. Certain coastal rulers—for instance, the Adja kings of the Slave Coast—served as intermediaries, allowing the establishment of permanent slave-trading posts in their territories and supplying resident Europeans with slaves to fill ships that stopped regularly at coastal forts. Such rulers controlled Europeans' access to bound laborers and simultaneously controlled inland peoples' access to desirable trade goods, such as textiles, iron bars, alcohol, tobacco, guns, and cowry shells from the Maldive Islands (in the Indian Ocean), which were widely used as currency. Through Whydah, Dahomey's major slave-trading port, passed at least 10 percent of all slaves exported to the Americas, and Whydah's merchants earned substantial annual profits from the trade. Portugal, England, and France established forts there; Europeans had to pay fees to Whydah's rulers before they could begin to acquire cargoes.

The slave trade had varying consequences for the nations of West Africa. The trade's centralizing tendencies helped to create such powerful eighteenth-century kingdoms as Dahomey and Asante (formed from the Akan States). Traffic in slaves destroyed smaller polities and disrupted traditional economic patterns, as goods once sent north toward the Mediterranean were redirected to the Atlantic and as local manufactures declined in the face of European competition. Agricultural production intensified, especially in rice-growing areas, because of the need to supply hundreds of slave ships with foodstuffs for transatlantic voyages. Because prisoners of war constituted the bulk of the exported slaves, the most active traders were also the most successful in battle. Some nations even initiated conflicts specifically to acquire valuable captives. For example, the state of Benin sold captive enemies to the Portuguese in the late fifteenth century, did not do so at the height of its power in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and renewed the sale of prisoners in the eighteenth century when its waning power led to conflicts with neighboring states.

The trade therefore affected African regions unevenly. Rulers in parts of Upper Guinea, especially modern Gambia and Senegal, largely resisted involvement with the trade; the few slave vessels that departed from that area were much more likely than others to experience onboard rebellions. Despite planters' preference for male slaves, women predominated in cargoes originating in the Bight of Biafra. In such regions as the Gold Coast, the trade had a significant impact on the sex ratio of the remaining population. There a relative shortage of men increased work demands on women, encouraged polygyny, and opened new opportunities to women and their children.

### New England and the Caribbean

New England had the most complex relationship to the trading system. The region produced only one item England wanted: tall trees to serve as masts for sailing vessels. To buy English manufactures, New Englanders therefore needed profits earned elsewhere, especially in the Caribbean. Those islands lacked precisely the items that New England could produce in abundance: cheap food (primarily

## LINKS TO THE WORLD

*Exotic Beverages*

The seventeenth-century colonists developed a taste not only for tea (from China) but also for coffee (from Arabia), chocolate (from Mesoamerica), and rum (distilled from sugar, which also sweetened the bitter taste of the other three). The American and European demand for these once-exotic beverages helped reshape the world economy after the mid-seventeenth century. Indeed, one historian has estimated that approximately two-thirds of the people who migrated across the Atlantic before 1776 were involved in one way or another, primarily as slaves, in the production of tobacco, calico, and these four drinks for the world market. The exotic beverages had a profound impact, too, on custom and culture as they moved swiftly from luxury to necessity.

Each beverage had its own pattern of consumption. Chocolate, brought to Spain from Mexico and enjoyed there for a century before spreading more widely throughout Europe, became the preferred drink of aristocrats, consumed hot at intimate gatherings in palaces and mansions. Coffee, by contrast, became the preeminent morning beverage of English and colonial businessmen, who praised its caffeine for keeping drinkers sober and focused. Coffee was served in new public coffeehouses, patronized only by men, where politics and business were the topics of conversation. The first coffeehouse opened in London in the late 1660s; Boston had several by the 1690s. By the mid-eighteenth century, though, tea had supplanted coffee as the preferred hot, caffeinated beverage in England and

America. It was consumed in the afternoon in private homes at tea tables presided over by women. Tea embodied genteel status and polite conversation. In contrast, rum was the drink of the masses. This inexpensive, potent distilled spirit, made possible by new technology and the increasing production of sugar, was enthusiastically imbibed by free working people everywhere in the Atlantic world.

The American colonies played a vital role in the production, distribution, and consumption of each of these beverages. Chocolate, most obviously, originated in America, and cacao plantations in the South American tropics multiplied in size and number to meet the rising demand. Coffee and tea (particularly the latter) were as avidly consumed in the colonies as in England. And rum involved Americans in every phase of its production and consumption. The sugar grown on French and English Caribbean plantations was transported to the mainland in barrels and ships made from North American wood. There the syrup was turned into rum at 140 distilleries. The Americans themselves drank a substantial share of the distilleries' output—an estimated four gallons per person annually—but exported much of it to Africa. There the rum purchased more slaves to produce more sugar to make still more rum, and the cycle began again.

Thus, new tastes and customs connected to four different beverages linked the colonies to the rest of the world and altered their economic and social development.

corn and salt fish) to feed the burgeoning slave population and wood for barrels to hold sugar and molasses. By the late 1640s, decades before the Chesapeake economy became dependent on *production* by slaves, New England's already rested on *consumption* by slaves and their owners. The sale of foodstuffs and wood products

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to Caribbean sugar planters provided New England farmers and merchants with a major source of income. After the founding of Pennsylvania, New York, and New Jersey, those colonies, too, participated in the lucrative West Indian trade.

Shopkeepers in the interior of New England and the middle colonies bartered with local farmers for grains, livestock, and barrel staves, then traded those items to merchants located in port towns. Such merchants dispatched ships to the Caribbean, where they sailed from island to island, exchanging their cargoes for molasses, sugar, fruit, dyestuffs, and slaves. The system's sole constant was uncertainty, due to the weather, rapid shifts in supply and demand in the small island markets, and the delicate system of credit on which the entire structure depended. Once they had a full load, the ships returned to Boston, Newport, New York, or Philadelphia to dispose of their cargoes (often including enslaved people). Americans began to distill molasses into rum, a crucial aspect of the only part of the trade that could accurately be termed triangular. Rhode Islanders took rum to Africa and traded it for slaves, whom they carried to Caribbean islands to exchange for more molasses to produce still more rum.

**Slaving Voyages** Tying the system together was the voyage (commonly called the middle passage) that brought Africans to the Americas, where they cultivated the profitable crops and—on Caribbean islands—consumed foods produced in North America. On shipboard, men were shackled in pairs in the hold except for periods of exercise on deck, whereas during the day women and children were usually free to move around, and to work at such assigned tasks as food preparation and cleaning. At night, men and women were confined to separate quarters. The best evidence of the captives' reaction to their plight comes from accounts of their behavior, since few ever had the chance to record their experiences. Many resisted enslavement by refusing to eat, jumping overboard, or joining in revolts, which rarely succeeded. Their communal singing and drumming, reported by numerous observers, must have simultaneously lifted their spirits and forged a sense of solidarity. But conditions on board were hellish, as captains often packed as many people as possible into holds that were hot, crowded, and reeking with smells from vomit and the “necessary tubs.”

The traumatic voyage unsurprisingly brought heavy fatalities to captives and crew alike. An average of 10 to 20 percent of the newly enslaved died en route; on long or disease-ridden voyages, mortality rates could be much higher. In addition, another 20 percent or so died either before the ships left Africa or shortly after their arrival in the Americas. Sailors also died at high rates, chiefly through exposure to such diseases as yellow fever and malaria, which were endemic to Africa. One in every four or five died on voyages, and just 10 percent of the men sent to run the Royal African Company's forts in Lower Guinea lived to return home to England. Sailors signed on to slaving voyages reluctantly; indeed, many had to be coerced or tricked, because conditions on shipboard were difficult for the crew as well as the human cargo. Slave merchants were notoriously greedy and captains notoriously brutal—to sailors as well as to the captives in the hold. Some crew members were themselves slaves or freedmen. Unfortunately, the sailors, often the subject of abuse, in turn frequently abused the bondpeople in their charge. Yet at

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the same time, through intimate contact with the enslaved, they learned the value of freedom, and sailors became well known throughout the Atlantic world for their fierce attachment to personal independence.

## SLAVERY IN NORTH AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Barbados, America's first "slave society" (an economy wholly dependent on enslavement, as opposed to a "society with slaves"), spawned many others. As the island's population expanded and large planters consolidated their landholdings, about 40 percent of the early English residents dispersed to other colonies. The migrants carried their laws, commercial contacts, and slaveholding practices with them; the Barbados slave code of 1661, for example, served as the model for later codes in Jamaica, Antigua, Virginia, and South Carolina. Moreover, a large proportion of the first Africans imported into North America came via Barbados. In addition to the many Barbadians who settled in Carolina, others moved to the southern regions of Virginia (where they specialized in selling foodstuffs and livestock to their former island home), New Jersey, and New England, where they already had slave-trading partners.

### African Enslavement in the Chesapeake

Newly arrived Africans in the Chesapeake tended to be assigned to outlying parts of plantations (called quarters), at least until they learned some English and the routines of American tobacco cultivation. The crop that originated in the Americas was also grown in various locations in West Africa, so Chesapeake planters, who in the late seventeenth century were still experimenting with curing and processing techniques, could well have drawn on their laborers' expertise. Such Africans—the vast majority of them men—lived in quarters composed of ten to fifteen workers housed together in one or two buildings and supervised by an Anglo-American overseer. Each man was expected to cultivate about two acres of tobacco a year. Their lives must have been filled with toil and loneliness, for few spoke the same language, and all were expected to work for their owners six days a week. On Sundays, planters allowed them a day off. Many used that time to cultivate their own gardens or to hunt or fish to supplement their meager diet. Only rarely could they form families because of the scarcity of women.

Slaves usually cost about two and a half times as much as indentured servants, but they could repay the greater investment with a lifetime of service, assuming they survived—which large numbers did not, having been weakened by the voyage and sickened by exposure to new diseases. Those with enough money could take the chance and acquire slaves, accumulate greater wealth, and establish large plantations worked by tens, if not hundreds, of bondpeople, whereas the less affluent could not even afford to purchase indentured servants, whose price rose because of scarcity. As time passed, Anglo-American society in the Chesapeake thus became increasingly stratified—that is, the gap between rich and poor planters steadily widened. The introduction of large numbers of Africans into the Chesapeake accordingly had a significant impact on the shape of Anglo-American society, in addition to reshaping the population as a whole.

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So many Africans were imported into Virginia and Maryland so rapidly that, as early as 1690, those colonies contained more slaves than English indentured servants. By 1710, people of African descent composed one-fifth of the region's population. Even so, and despite sizable continuing imports, a decade later American-born slaves already outnumbered their African-born counterparts in the Chesapeake, and the native-born proportion of the slave population continued to increase thereafter.

### **African Enslavement in South Carolina**

Africans who had lived in the Caribbean came with their masters to South Carolina from Barbados in 1670, composing one-quarter to one-third of the early population. The Barbadian slaveowners quickly discovered that African-born slaves had a variety of skills well suited to the semitropical environment of South Carolina. African-style dugout canoes became the chief means of transportation in the colony, which was crossed by rivers and included large islands just off shore. Fishing nets copied from African models proved more efficient than those of English origin. Baskets that enslaved laborers wove and gourds they hollowed out came into general use as containers for food and drink. Africans' skill at killing crocodiles equipped them to handle alligators. And, finally, Africans adapted their traditional techniques of cattle herding for use in America. Because meat and hides numbered among the colony's chief exports in its earliest years, Africans contributed significantly to South Carolina's prosperity.

In 1693, as slavery was taking firm root in South Carolina, officials in Spanish Florida began offering freedom to runaways who would convert to Catholicism. Over the years, hundreds of South Carolina fugitives took advantage of the offer, although not all won their liberty. Many settled in a town founded for them near St. Augustine, Gracia Real de Santa Teresa de Mose, headed by a former slave, Francisco Menendez.

After 1700, South Carolinians started to import slaves directly from Africa. From about 1710 until midcentury, the African-born constituted a majority of the enslaved population in the colony, and, bondspeople by 1750 composed a majority of its residents. The similarity of the South Carolinian and West African environments, coupled with the substantial African-born population, ensured the survival of more aspects of West African culture than elsewhere on the North American mainland. Only in South Carolina did enslaved parents continue to give their children African names; only there did a dialect develop that combined English words with African terms. (Known as Gullah, it has survived to the present day in isolated areas.) African skills remained useful, so techniques lost in other regions when the migrant generation died were instead passed down to the migrants' children. And in South Carolina, African women became the primary petty traders, dominating the markets of Charles Town as they did those of Guinea.

**Rice and Indigo** The importation of Africans coincided with the successful introduction of rice in South Carolina. English people knew nothing about the techniques of growing and processing rice, but people from Africa's Rice Coast had spent their lives working with the crop. Although the

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evidence is circumstantial, the Africans' expertise may well have assisted their English masters in cultivating rice profitably. Productive rice-growing techniques known in West Africa, especially cultivation in inland swamps and tidal rivers, both of which involved substantial water-control projects, were widely adopted and combined with European technologies. In West Africa, women played a crucial role in cultivating and processing rice, and they did so in South Carolina as well. Enslaved men dug the ditches and prepared the fields for planting, but women were responsible for sowing and weeding the crop as well as for pounding harvested rice with a mortar and pestle to remove the hulls and bran, then winnowing to separate the grains from the chaff. Because English grindstones damaged rice kernels (not until the late eighteenth century were new processes developed), South Carolinians continued to utilize the West African system of pounding rice by hand; planters assigned men as well as women to that task.

Every field worker on rice plantations, which were far larger than Chesapeake tobacco quarters, was expected to cultivate three to four acres of rice a year. Most of those field workers were female because many enslaved men were assigned to jobs like blacksmithing or carpentry, which were not given to women. To cut expenses, planters also expected slaves to grow part of their own food. A universally adopted "task" system of predefined work assignments provided that, after bondspople had finished their set tasks for the day, they could then rest or work in their own garden plots or on other projects. Experienced laborers could often complete their tasks by early afternoon; after that, as on Sundays, their masters had no legitimate claim on their time. One scholar has suggested that the unique task system, which gave bondspople more freedom than gang labor, and which was used in South Carolina by the early eighteenth century, resulted from negotiations between slaves familiar with rice cultivation and masters who needed their expertise.

*Although this rice basket dates from nineteenth-century South Carolina, it is woven in traditional West African style. Enslaved women winnowed rice in such baskets, tossing the grains into the air after they had been pounded, so that the lighter pieces of hull would be blown away by the wind.*



Courtesy of The Rice Museum, Georgetown, South Carolina

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Developers of South Carolina's second cash crop also used the task system and drew on slaves' specialized skills. Indigo, the only source of blue dye for the growing English textile industry, was much prized. Eliza Lucas, a young woman managing her father's plantations, began to experiment with indigo cultivation during the early 1740s. Drawing on the knowledge of slaves and overseers from the Caribbean, she developed the planting and processing techniques later adopted throughout the colony. Indigo grew on high ground, and rice was planted in low-lying regions; rice and indigo also had different growing seasons. Thus, the two crops complemented each other. South Carolina indigo never matched the quality of that from the Caribbean, but indigo plantations flourished because the crop was so valuable that Parliament offered Carolinians a bounty on every pound exported to Great Britain.

### Indian Enslavement in North and South Carolina

Among the enslaved people in both Carolinas were Indian captives who had been retained rather than exported. In 1708, such Indians composed as much as 14 percent of the South Carolina population. The widespread and lucrative traffic in Indian slaves significantly affected South Carolina's relationship with its indigenous neighbors. Native Americans knew they could always find a ready market for captive enemies in Charles Town, so they took that means of ridding themselves of real or potential rivals. Yet Indian nations soon learned that Carolinians could not be trusted. As settlers and traders shifted their priorities, first one set of former allies, then another, found themselves the enslaved rather than the enslavers.

The trade in Indian slaves began when the Westos (originally known as the Eries), migrated south from the Great Lakes region in the mid-1650s, fleeing their Iroquois enemies after the Beaver Wars. Expert in the use of European firearms, the Westos began raiding Spain's lightly defended Florida missions and selling the resulting Indian captives to Virginians. With the establishment of Carolina, the proprietors took for themselves a monopoly of trade with the Westos, which infuriated local settlers shut out of the profitable commerce in slaves and deerskins. The planters secretly financed attacks on the Westos, essentially wiping them out by 1682. Southeastern Indians reacted to such slave raids—continued by other native peoples after the defeat of the Westos—by trying to protect themselves either through subordination to the English or Spanish, or by coalescing into new, larger political units, such as those known later as Creeks, Chickasaws, or Cherokees.

At first, the Carolinians did not engage directly in conflicts with neighboring Indians. But in 1711 the Tuscaroras, an Iroquoian people, attacked a Swiss-German settlement at New Bern, North Carolina, which had expropriated their lands. South Carolinians and their Indian allies then combined to defeat the Tuscaroras in a bloody war. Afterward, more than a thousand Tuscaroras were enslaved, and the remainder drifted northward, where they joined the Iroquois Confederacy but were not allotted a seat on the council, instead being represented by the Oneidas.

Four years later, the Yamasees, who had helped to overcome the Tuscaroras, turned on their onetime English allies. In what seems to have been long-planned

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retaliation for multiple abuses by traders as well as threats to their own lands, the Yamasees enlisted the Creeks and other Muskogean peoples in coordinated attacks on outlying English settlements. In the spring and summer of 1715, English and African refugees by the hundreds streamed into Charles Town. The Yamasee-Creek offensive was eventually thwarted when reinforcements arrived from the north, colonists hastily armed their African slaves, and Cherokees joined the fight against the Creeks. After the war, Carolinian involvement in the Indian slave trade ceased, because all their native neighbors moved away for self-protection: Creeks migrated west, Yamasees went south, and other groups moved north. The abuses of the Carolina slave trade thus in effect caused its own destruction. And in the war's aftermath, the native peoples of the Carolinas were able to regroup and rebuild their strength, for they were no longer subjected to slavers' raids.

### **Enslavement in the North**

Atlantic creoles from the Caribbean and native peoples from the Carolinas and Florida, along with local Indians sentenced to slavery for crime or debt, composed the diverse group of bound laborers in the northern mainland colonies. The intricate involvement of northerners in the web of commerce surrounding the slave trade ensured that many people of African descent lived in America north of Virginia and that "Spanish Indians" became an identifiable component of the New England population. Some bondspersons resided in urban areas, especially New York, which in 1700 had a larger black population than any other mainland city. Women tended to work as domestic servants, men as unskilled laborers on the docks. At the end of the seventeenth century, three-quarters of wealthy Philadelphia households included one or two slaves.

Yet even in the North most bondspersons worked in the countryside, the majority at agricultural tasks. Dutch farmers in the Hudson valley and northern New Jersey were especially likely to rely on enslaved Africans, as were the owners of large landholdings in the Narragansett region of Rhode Island. Some bondsmen toiled in new rural enterprises, such as ironworks, working alongside hired laborers and indentured servants at forges and foundries. Although relatively few northern colonists owned slaves, those who did relied heavily on their labor. Therefore, even though slavery overall did not make a substantial contribution to the northern economy, certain individual slaveholders benefited greatly from the institution and had good reason to want to preserve it.

### **Slave Resistance**

As slavery became an integral part of the North American and Caribbean landscapes, so too did slaves' resistance to their masters. Most commonly, that resistance took the form of malingering or running away, but occasionally bondspersons planned rebellions. Seven times before 1713, the English Caribbean experienced major revolts involving at least fifty slaves and causing the deaths of both whites and blacks. Twice, in 1675 and 1692, Barbados authorities thwarted plots shortly before they were to be implemented, afterward executing more than sixty convicted conspirators.

The first slave revolt in the mainland colonies took place in New York in 1712, at a time when enslaved people constituted about 15 percent of the population. The

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rebels, primarily recent arrivals from the Akan States of the Gold Coast, set a fire and then ambushed those who tried to put it out, killing eight and wounding another twelve. Some rebels committed suicide to avoid capture; of those caught and tried, eighteen were executed. Their decapitated bodies were left to rot outdoors as a warning to others.

## IMPERIAL REORGANIZATION AND THE WITCHCRAFT CRISIS

English officials seeking new sources of revenue decided to tap into the profits of the expanding Atlantic trading system in slaves and the products of slave labor. Chesapeake tobacco and Caribbean sugar had obvious value, but other colonial products also had considerable potential. Parliament and the Stuart monarchs accordingly drafted laws designed to harness the proceeds of the trade for the primary benefit of the mother country.

**Colonial Autonomy Challenged** Like other European nations, England based its commercial policy on a series of assumptions about the operations of the world’s economic system, collectively called *mercantilism*.

The theory viewed the economic world as a collection of national states whose governments competed for shares of a finite amount of wealth. What one nation gained, another nation lost. Each nation sought to become as economically self-sufficient as possible while maintaining a favorable balance of trade with other countries by exporting more than it imported. Colonies played an important role, supplying the mother country with valuable raw materials to be consumed at home or sent abroad and serving as a market for the mother country’s manufactured goods.

Parliament’s Navigation Acts—passed between 1651 and 1673—established three main principles that accorded with mercantilist theory. First, only English or colonial merchants and ships could legally trade in the colonies. Second, certain valuable American products could be sold only in the mother country or in other English colonies. At first, these “enumerated” goods included wool, sugar, tobacco, indigo, ginger, and dyes; later acts added rice, naval stores (masts, spars, pitch, tar, and turpentine), copper, and furs to the list. Third, all foreign goods destined for sale in the colonies had to be shipped through England, paying English import duties. Some years later, new laws established a fourth principle: the colonies could not export items (such as wool clothing, hats, or iron) that competed with English products.

These laws adversely affected some colonies, like those in the Chesapeake, because planters there could not seek foreign markets for their staple crops. The statutes initially helped the sugar producers of the English Caribbean by driving Brazilian sugar out of the home market, but later prevented those English planters from selling their sugar elsewhere. In some places, the impact was minimal or even positive. Builders and owners of ships benefited from the monopoly on American trade given to English and colonial merchants; the laws stimulated the creation of a lucrative colonial shipbuilding industry, especially in New England. And the northern and middle colonies produced many unenumerated goods—for example,

fish, flour, meat and livestock, and barrel staves. Such products could be traded directly to the French, Spanish, or Dutch Caribbean islands as long as they were carried in English or American ships.

### **Mercantilism and Navigation Acts**

The English authorities soon learned that writing mercantilist legislation was far easier than enforcing it. The many harbors of the American coast provided ready havens for smugglers, and colonial officials often looked the other way when illegally imported goods were offered for sale. In Dutch Caribbean ports like St. Eustatius, American merchants could easily dispose of enumerated goods and purchase foreign items on which duty had not been paid. Because American juries tended to favor local smugglers over customs officers (a colonial customs service was instituted in 1671), Parliament in 1696 established several American vice-admiralty courts, which operated without juries and adjudicated violations of the Navigation Acts.

The Navigation Acts imposed regulations on Americans' international trade, but by the early 1680s mainland governments and their residents had become accustomed to a considerable degree of political autonomy. The tradition of local rule was especially firmly established in New England, where Massachusetts, Plymouth, Connecticut, and Rhode Island operated essentially as independent entities, subject neither to the direct authority of the king nor to a proprietor. Whereas Virginia was a royal colony and New Hampshire (1679) and New York (1685) gained that status, all other mainland settlements were proprietorships, over which the nation exercised little control. Everywhere in the English colonies, free adult men who owned more than a minimum amount of property expected to have an influential voice in their governments, especially in decisions concerning taxation.

After James II became king in 1685, such expectations clashed with those of the monarch. The new king and his successors sought to bring order to the apparently chaotic state of colonial administration by tightening the reins of government and by reducing the colonies' political autonomy. Most significantly, colonial administrators targeted New England. Reports from America convinced English officials that New England was a hotbed of smuggling. Moreover, Puritans refused to allow freedom of religion to non-Congregationalists and insisted on maintaining laws incompatible with English practice. New England thus seemed an appropriate place to exert English authority with greater vigor. The charters of all the colonies from New Jersey to Maine were revoked, and a Dominion of New England was established in 1686. (For the boundaries of the Dominion, see Map 3.1.) Sir Edmund Andros, the governor, had immense power: Parliament dissolved all the assemblies, and Andros needed only the consent of an appointed council to make laws and levy taxes.

### **Glorious Revolution in America**

New Englanders endured Andros's autocratic rule for more than two years. Then they learned that James II's hold on power was crumbling. James had angered his subjects by levying taxes without parliamentary approval and by announcing his conversion to Catholicism. In April 1689, Boston's leaders jailed Andros and his associates. The following month, they received definite news of the bloodless coup known as the Glorious Revolution, in which James was replaced on

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the throne in late 1688 by his daughter Mary and her husband, the Dutch prince William of Orange. When Parliament offered the throne to the Protestants William and Mary, the Glorious Revolution affirmed the supremacy of both Parliament and Protestantism.

In other colonies, too, the Glorious Revolution emboldened people for revolt. In Maryland, the Protestant Association overturned the government of the Catholic proprietor, and in New York a militia officer of German origin, Jacob Leisler, assumed control of the government. Bostonians, Marylanders, and New Yorkers alike allied themselves with the supporters of William and Mary. They saw themselves as carrying out the colonial phase of the English revolt against Stuart absolutism.

But like James II, William and Mary believed England should exercise tighter control over its unruly American possessions. Consequently, only the Maryland rebellion received royal sanction, primarily because of its anti-Catholic thrust. In New York, Leisler was hanged for treason, and Massachusetts (incorporating the formerly independent Plymouth) became a royal colony with an appointed governor. The province retained its town meeting system of local government and continued to elect its council, but the new 1691 charter eliminated the traditional religious test for voting and office holding. A parish of the Church of England appeared in the heart of Boston. The “city upon a hill,” as John Winthrop had envisioned it, had ended.

### King William’s War

A war with the French and their Algonquian allies compounded New England’s difficulties. King Louis XIV of France allied himself with the deposed James II, and England declared war on France in 1689. (This war is today known as the Nine Years’ War, but the colonists called it King William’s War.) Even before war broke out in Europe, Anglo-Americans and Abenakis clashed over the English settlements in Maine that had been reoccupied after the 1678 truce and were once again expanding. Attacks wholly or partially destroyed a number of towns, including Schenectady, New York, and such Maine communities as Falmouth (now Portland) and York. Expeditions organized by the colonies against Montreal and Quebec in 1690 failed miserably, and throughout the rest of the conflict New England found itself on the defensive. Even the Peace of Ryswick (1697), which formally ended the war in Europe, failed to bring much respite from warfare to the northern frontiers. Maine could not be resettled for several decades because of the continuing conflict.

### The 1692 Witchcraft Crisis

During the hostilities, New Englanders understandably feared a repetition of the devastation of King Philip’s War. For eight months in 1692, witchcraft accusations spread like wildfire through the rural communities of Essex County, Massachusetts—a heavily populated area directly threatened by the Indian attacks in neighboring southern Maine and New Hampshire. Earlier incidents in which personal disputes occasionally led to isolated witchcraft charges bore little relationship to the witch fears that convulsed the region in 1692 while the war raged just to the north. Before the crisis ended, fourteen women and five men were hanged, one man was pressed to death with heavy stones, fifty-four people confessed to being witches, and more than 140 people were jailed, some for many months.

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The crisis began in late February when several children and young women in Salem Village (an outlying precinct of the bustling port of Salem) formally charged some older female neighbors with having tortured them in spectral form. Soon, other accusers and confessors chimed in, some of them female domestic servants who had been orphaned in the Maine war. One had lost her grandparents in King Philip's War and other relatives in King William's War. These young women, perhaps the most powerless people in a region apparently powerless to affect its fate, offered their fellow New Englanders a compelling explanation for the seemingly endless chain of troubles afflicting them: their province was under direct assault not only by the Indians and their French allies but also by the Devil and his allied witches.

The so-called afflicted girls accused not just the older women commonly suspected of such offenses but also prominent men from the Maine frontier who had traded with or failed to defeat the Indians. The leader of the witch conspiracy, accusers and confessors alike declared, was the Reverend George Burroughs, a Harvard graduate who had ministered in both Maine and Salem Village and was charged with bewitching the soldiers sent to combat the Abenakis. The colony's magistrates, who were also its political and military leaders, were all too willing to believe such accusations, because, if the Devil had caused New England's current troubles, they personally bore no responsibility for the terrible losses on the frontier.

In October, the worst phase of the crisis ended when the governor dissolved the special court established to try the suspects. He and several prominent clergymen began to regard the descriptions of spectral torturers as "the Devil's testimony"—and everyone knew the Devil could not be trusted. Most critics of the trials did not think the afflicted were faking, nor did they conclude that witches did not exist or that confessions were false. Rather, they questioned whether the guilt of the accused could be legally established by the evidence presented in court. Accordingly, during the final trials (ending in May 1693) in regular courts, almost all the defendants were acquitted, and the governor quickly reprieved the few found guilty.

### **New Imperial Measures**

In 1696, England took a major step in colonial administration by creating the fifteen-member Board of Trade and Plantations, which thereafter served as the chief organ of government concerned with the American colonies. The board gathered information, reviewed Crown appointments in America, scrutinized legislation passed by colonial assemblies, supervised trade policies, and advised successive ministries on colonial issues. Still, the Board of Trade did not have any direct powers of enforcement. It also shared jurisdiction over American affairs not only with the customs service and the navy but also with a member of the ministry. Although this reform improved the quality of colonial administration, supervision of the American provinces remained decentralized and haphazard.

That surely made it easier for Massachusetts and the rest of the English colonies in America to accommodate themselves to the new imperial order. Most colonists resented alien officials who arrived in America determined to implement the policies of

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king and Parliament, but they adjusted to their demands and to the trade restrictions imposed by the Navigation Acts. They fought another of Europe's wars—the War of the Spanish Succession, called Queen Anne's War in the colonies—from 1702 to 1713, without enduring the stresses of the first war, despite the heavy economic burdens the conflict imposed. Colonists who allied themselves with the royal government received patronage in the form of offices and land grants, and composed “court parties” that supported English officials. Others, who were either less fortunate in their friends or more principled in defense of colonial autonomy, made up the opposition, or “country” interest. By the end of the first quarter of the eighteenth century, most men in both groups had been born in America. They were members of elite families whose wealth derived in the South from staple-crop production and in the North from commerce.

### SUMMARY

The seventy years from 1650 to 1720 established the basic economic and political patterns that were to structure subsequent changes in mainland colonial society. In 1650, just two isolated centers of English population, New England and the Chesapeake, existed along the seaboard, along with the tiny Dutch colony of New Netherland. In 1720, nearly the entire East Coast of North America was in English hands, and Indian control east of the Appalachian Mountains had largely been broken by the outcomes of King Philip's War, Bacon's Rebellion, the Yamasee and Tuscarora wars, and Queen Anne's War. To the west of the mountains, though, Iroquois power reigned supreme. What had been an immigrant population was now mostly American-born, except for the many African-born people in South Carolina and the Chesapeake; economies originally based on trade in fur and skins had become far more complex and more closely linked with the mother country; and a wide variety of political structures had been reshaped into a more uniform pattern. Yet at the same time the adoption of large-scale slavery in the Chesapeake and the Carolinas differentiated their societies from those of the colonies to the north. The production of tobacco, rice, and indigo for international markets distinguished the southern regional economies. They had become true slave societies, heavily reliant on a system of perpetual servitude, not societies with slaves, in which a few bondspeople mingled with indentured servants and free wage laborers.

Even the economies of the northern colonies, though, rested on profits derived from the Atlantic trading system, the key element of which was traffic in enslaved humans, primarily Africans but also including Indians. New England sold corn, salt fish, and wood products to the West Indies, where slaves consumed the foodstuffs and whence planters shipped sugar and molasses in barrels made from staves crafted by northern farmers. Pennsylvania and New York, too, found in the Caribbean islands a ready market for their livestock, grains, and wheat flour. The rapid growth of enslavement drove all the English colonial economies in these years.

Meanwhile, in America north of Mexico Spanish settlements remained largely centered on Florida missions and on New Mexican presidios and missions. The French had explored the Mississippi valley from their base on the St. Lawrence between Montreal and Quebec, but had not yet planted many settlements in the Great



Lakes or the west. Both nations' colonists depended on indigenous people's labor and goodwill. The Spanish could not fully control their Indian allies, and the French did not even try. Yet the extensive Spanish and French presence to the south and west of the English settlements meant that future conflicts among the European powers in North America were nearly inevitable.

By 1720, the essential elements of the imperial administrative structure that would govern the English colonies until 1775 had been put firmly in place. The regional economic systems originating in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries also continued to dominate North American life for another century—until after independence had been won. And Anglo-Americans had developed the commitment to autonomous local government that later would lead them into conflict with Parliament and the king.

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