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Europeans Colonize North America

1600–1650

Captain William Rudyerd seemed like the sort of man Puritan colonists in the Americas would prize, so when his older brother urged the planners of the new settlement to appoint him muster master general, they agreed. Rudyerd followed the dissenting English faith, and as a soldier, he vigorously trained the settlers to defend themselves from attack. He also vigorously defended his status, wreaking havoc in the fragile community. He beat to death a servant suffering from scurvy (whom he mistook as lazy) and quarreled with settlers, whom he believed failed to show him the respect due to a gentleman of noble birth.

One of Rudyerd's antagonists was the Reverend Lewis Morgan, with whom the captain argued about religious books and church services. The disagreements escalated into insults. "Your foul mouthed answer deserves rather sharp retribution than any equal respect from a gentleman," the captain once haughtily told the clergyman.

Similar conflicts occurred throughout the Anglo-American settlements, as gentlemen accustomed to unquestioning deference learned that in the colonies, their social standing could be challenged. But Rudyerd and Morgan's disputes were especially dangerous because they lived on Providence Island, an isolated Puritan outpost off the coast of modern Nicaragua.

Providence Island, founded by Puritans in 1630—the same year as Massachusetts Bay—sought to establish an English beachhead in the tropics as an entrée to colonizing Central America. Yet its perilous location amid Spanish settlements, its failure to establish a local economy, and, ultimately, its desperate attempts to stay afloat financially by serving as a base for English privateers caused its downfall. That decision angered the Spaniards, who attacked in 1635 and 1640. In May 1641, a Spanish fleet of seven ships carrying two thousand soldiers and sailors captured the island. The survivors scattered to other Caribbean settlements, to English mainland colonies, or back to England.

Spain no longer predominated in the Americas. By the 1640s, France, the Netherlands, and England had colonies in

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SUMMARY

North America. Like Spanish outposts, French and Dutch colonies were settled largely by European men who interacted with indigenous peoples, using their labor or seeking to convert them to Christianity. As with conquistadors, French and Dutch merchants (on the mainland) and planters (in the Caribbean) hoped to make a quick profit and return home. The English were also interested in profiting from North America, but along different lines.

Unlike other Europeans, most English settlers came to stay. In the area that became New England, they arrived in family groups and re-created the European agricultural economy and family life to an extent impossible in colonies where single men predominated. English colonies in the Chesapeake and Caribbean islands were based on large-scale agricultural production, relying on servants and slaves for labor.

Settlers prospered only after adapting to the environment, something the Providence Islanders never achieved. The first permanent English colonies survived because Indians helped them learn to grow such unfamiliar American crops as maize and squash. They also developed trading relationships with native peoples and other European colonies. Needing field laborers, they first used English indentured servants, then African slaves. Thus, the early history of what became the United States and the English Caribbean is best understood as a series of complex interactions among European, African, and American peoples and environments.

As you read this chapter, keep the following questions in mind:

- * **Why did different groups of Europeans choose to migrate to the Americas?**
- * **How did different native peoples react to their presence?**
- * **In what ways did the English colonies in the Chesapeake and New England differ, and in what ways were they alike?**

Chronology

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

How did the Jesuits' treatment of Native Americans differ from that of explorers and other settlers?

Spanish, French, and Dutch North America

Spaniards established the first permanent European settlement within the modern United States, but others had tried previously. Twice in the 1560s, Huguenots (French Protestants) escaping persecution planted colonies on the south Atlantic coast. A passing ship rescued the starving survivors of the first, located in present-day South Carolina. The second, near modern Jacksonville, Florida, was destroyed in 1565 by a Spanish expedition commanded by Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, who sought Spanish domination of the strategically important region. Menéndez set up a small fortified outpost named St. Augustine—now the oldest continuously inhabited European settlement in the United States.

The local Gule and Timucua nations initially allied themselves with the powerful newcomers and welcomed Franciscan friars. The relationship ruptured quickly as natives resisted Spanish authority. Still, the Franciscans offered the Indians spiritual solace for the diseases and troubles besetting them after the Europeans' invasion. Eventually, they gained numerous converts across Florida and the islands along the Atlantic coast.

New Mexico

In 1598, roughly thirty years after the founding of St. Augustine, Juan de Oñate, a Mexican-born adventurer whose wife descended from Cortés and Moctezuma, led about five hundred soldiers and settlers to New Mexico seeking riches. The Pueblo peoples greeted them cordially. But when the Spaniards used torture, murder, and rape to extort food and clothing from the villagers, the residents of Acoma killed several soldiers, including Oñate's nephew. The invaders responded ferociously, killing more than eight hundred people and capturing the remainder. All the captives above age twelve were enslaved for twenty years, and men older than twenty-five had one foot amputated. Horrified, other Pueblo villages surrendered.

Oñate's bloody victory proved illusory. New Mexico held little wealth and was too far from the Pacific coast to help protect Spanish sea-lanes. Many Spaniards returned to Mexico, and officials considered abandoning the isolated colony, which lay 800 miles north of the nearest Spanish settlement. Instead, they maintained a small military outpost and a few Christian missions, with the capital at Santa Fe (founded 1610) (see Map 4.1). As in southern regions, Spanish leaders were granted *encomiendas* guaranteeing them control over Pueblo villagers' labor. But in the absence of mines or fertile agricultural lands, such grants yielded small profit.

Quebec and Montreal

On the Atlantic coast, the French focused on the area that Jacques Cartier had explored in the 1530s. They tried to establish permanent bases along the Canadian coast but failed until 1605, when they founded Port Royal. In 1608, Samuel de Champlain set up a trading post at an interior site that he renamed Quebec (the Iroquois called it Stadacona). It was the most defensible spot in the St. Lawrence River valley and controlled access to the continent's heartland. In 1642, the French established a second post, Montreal, at the falls of the St. Lawrence.

Prior to these settlements, fishermen were the major transporters of North American beaver pelts to France, but the new posts quickly took over (see Table 2.1). Only a few Europeans resided in New France; most were men; some married Indian women. The colony's leaders gave land grants along the river to wealthy seigneurs (nobles), who imported tenants to work their farms. A few Frenchmen brought their

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 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?



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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.



Field Museum of Natural History FMNH Neg # A109998c

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

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 Co.	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

wives and took up agriculture; still, twenty-five years after Quebec's founding, there were just sixty-four resident families, along with traders and soldiers. Northern New France never grew much beyond the river valley between Quebec and Montreal (see Map 2.1). Thus, it differed 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, first arrived in Quebec in 1625. The Jesuits,

whom the Indians called Black Robes, tried to persuade indigenous peoples to live near French settlements and adopt European agricultural methods. Failing that, they tried to introduce Catholicism without insisting that Indians fundamentally alter their traditions. The Black Robes learned Indian languages and traveled to remote regions, where they lived among hundreds of potential converts.

Jesuits sought to gain the confidence of influential men and to undermine the authority of village shamans, the traditional religious leaders. Immune to smallpox (having survived it already), they explained epidemics as God's punishment for sin. It helped that shamans' traditional remedies proved ineffective against the new pestilence. Jesuits predicted eclipses and amazed the villagers by communicating with each other over long distances through marks on paper (letters). The Indians' desire to harness the power of literacy made them receptive to the missionaries' spiritual message.

Over time, the Jesuits gained thousands of converts. Catholicism offered women the inspiring role model of the Virgin Mary, personified in Montreal and Quebec by communities of nuns who taught and ministered to Indian women and children. Many converts altered native customs allowing premarital sexual relationships



Link to excerpts about Indian and Jesuit relations.

and easy divorce because Catholic doctrine prohibited both. Yet they resisted strict European child-rearing methods. Jesuits recognized that aspects of native culture could be compatible with Christianity. Their conversion efforts were further aided by their lack of interest in labor tribute or land.

New Netherland: Dutch colony in America.

New Amsterdam: Dutch colony that would become New York.

New Netherland

Jesuit missionaries faced little competition from other Europeans, but not so for French fur traders. In 1614, 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) at present-day Albany, New York. The Dutch sought beaver pelts, and their presence so close to Quebec threatened French regional domination. The Netherlands, at the time the world's dominant commercial power, sought trade rather than colonization. Thus, **New Netherland** remained small. The colony's southern anchor was **New Amsterdam**, founded in 1624 on Manhattan Island.

New Netherland was a small outpost of the Dutch West India Company's vast commercial empire extending to Africa, Brazil, the Caribbean, and modern-day Indonesia. Autocratic directors-general ruled the colony. Few migrants arrived despite an offer in 1629 of large land grants, or patroonships, to anyone bringing fifty settlers to the province. (Only one such tract—Rensselaerswyck, near Albany—was ever developed.) As late as the mid-1660s, New Netherland had only about five thousand inhabitants. Some were Swedes and Finns in the former colony of New Sweden (founded in 1638 on the Delaware River; see Map 2.1), which the Dutch seized in 1655.

Indian allies of New France and New Netherland clashed partly because of fur-trade rivalries. In the 1640s, the Iroquois, who traded chiefly with the Dutch and lived in modern upstate New York, warred with the Hurons, who traded primarily with the French and lived in present-day Ontario. The Iroquois wanted to become the major peltry supplier to Europeans and protect their hunting territories. With guns from the Dutch, they virtually exterminated the Hurons, whose population was already decimated by a smallpox epidemic. The Iroquois thus established themselves as a major force in the region.

The Caribbean

What made the Caribbean islands initially desirable for colonization?

In the first half of the seventeenth century, the Spanish concentrated on colonizing the Greater Antilles—Cuba, Hispaniola, Jamaica, and Puerto Rico. They ignored smaller islands, partly because of resistance by their Carib inhabitants, partly because the mainland offered greater wealth for less effort. But the tiny islands attracted other European powers as bases from which to attack Spanish vessels loaded with American gold and silver and 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 other islands, such as Barbados (1627) and Providence (1630). France colonized Guadeloupe and Martinique by defeating the Caribs, whereas the Dutch easily gained control of St. Eustatius (strategically located near St. Christopher). Along with indigenous inhabitants, Europeans worried about

conflicts with Spaniards and each other. 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 assumed half of Hispaniola, creating St. Domingue (modern Haiti).

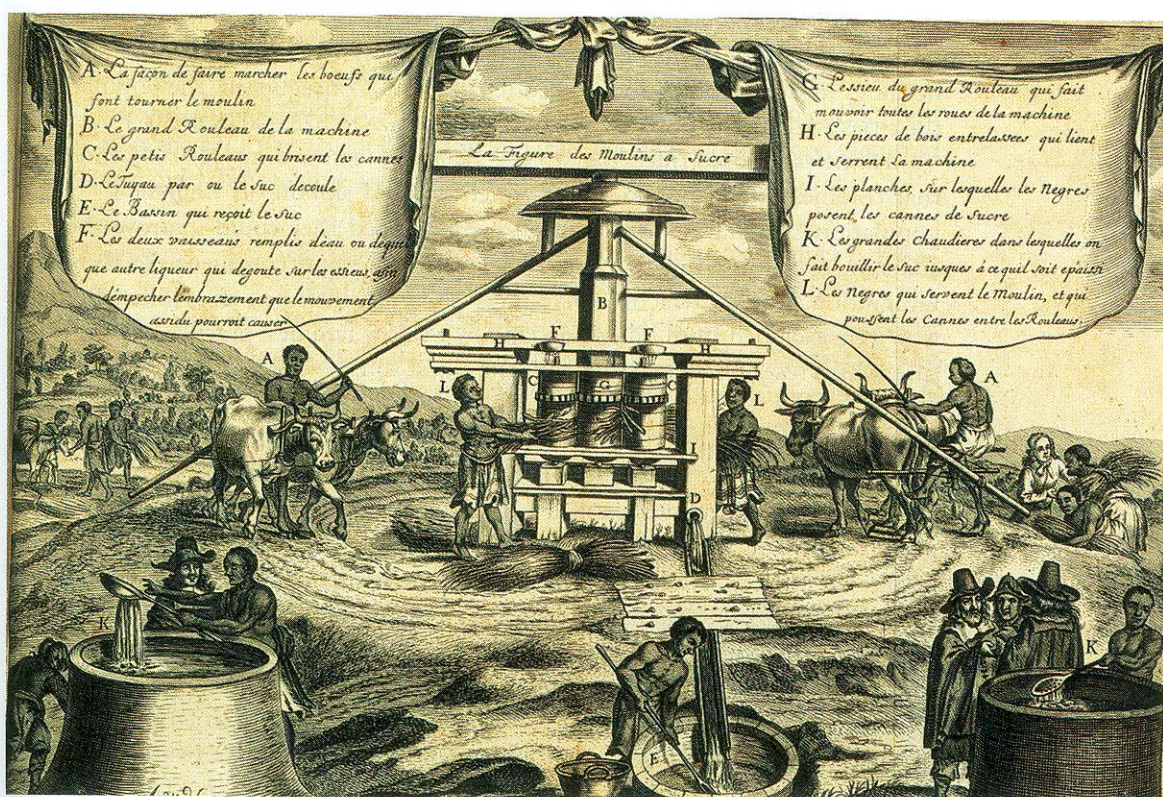
Great windstorms called *huracán* by the Taíno (hurricanes in English) also posed a threat. Almost annually in late summer, one or two islands suffered significant hurricane damage. Survivors expressed awe at the destructive storms, which repeatedly forced them to rebuild and replant.

Sugar Cultivation

Sugar was the primary reason Europeans wanted these imperiled islands. Europeans loved sugar with its sweet taste and quick energy boost. Sugar entered Europe at approximately the same time as coffee and tea—the stimulating, addictive, and bitter Asian drinks improved by sweetening.

After experimenting with tobacco, cotton, and indigo, English residents of Barbados discovered in the 1640s that the island's soil and climate were ideal for sugar cane. At the time, sugar came primarily from the Madeiras, the Canaries, São Tomé, and Brazil. Barbadians initially copied the Brazilians' machinery and small-scale production methods, which used servants and slaves. By the mid-1650s, substantial planters increased the size of their landholdings, built sugar mills, and purchased more laborers—first English and Irish servants, then African slaves.

Link to an excerpt from Richard Ligon's book about slavery in Barbados.



In the 1660s, a French book illustrated the various phases of sugar processing for curious European readers. Teams of oxen (A) turned the mill, the rollers of which crushed the canes (C), producing the sap (D), which was collected in a vat (E), then boiled down into molasses (K). African slaves, with minimal supervision by a few Europeans (foreground), managed all phases of the process.

Sugar remained the most valuable American commodity for more than a century. In the 1700s, sugar grown by slaves in British Jamaica and French St. Domingue dominated the world market. Yet the future economic importance of the Europeans' American colonies lay on the mainland.

English Interest in Colonization

What two developments prompted England to consider North American colonization in the early seventeenth century?

After Raleigh's Roanoke colony failed, two decades passed before the English attempted to settle North America again. When they tried in 1606, they were successful using a model unlike those of other European powers. England sent large numbers of men and women to establish agriculturally based colonies on the mainland. Two major developments prompted approximately 200,000 English people to move to North America in the seventeenth century.

Social and Economic Change

The first was dramatic social and economic change. In the 150 years after 1530, largely due to importation of nutritious American crops, England's population doubled. More people competed for food, clothing, and other goods; this led to inflation. Wages also fell as the number of workers increased. Some English people—especially those with sizable landholdings that could produce food and clothing fibers for the growing population—substantially profited. Others, particularly landless laborers and those with small landholdings, fell into poverty. When landowners raised rents, seized lands that peasants had long used in common (enclosure), or combined small holdings into large units, they forced tenants out. Consequently, the population of the cities swelled. London more than tripled in size to 375,000 by 1650.

Homeless people filled the streets. Fearing overcrowding, officials concluded that colonies established in North America could siphon off England's "surplus population." Similarly, many English people hoped they could improve their circumstances by migrating to a land-rich, apparently empty continent and its islands. Emigration proved attractive to younger sons of gentlemen as William Rudyard, who were excluded from inheriting land by wealthy families' practice of primogeniture, which reserved all real estate for the eldest son.

English Reformation

The sixteenth century also witnessed a religious transformation that eventually led many English dissenters to leave. In 1533, Henry VIII, wanting a male heir and infatuated with Anne Boleyn, asked the pope to annul his twenty-year marriage to Spanish-born queen Catherine of Aragón, despite the birth of a daughter. When the pope refused, Henry founded the Church of England and—with Parliament's concurrence—proclaimed himself its head. Initially, the reformed Church of England differed little from Catholicism. Under Henry's daughter Elizabeth I (child of his later marriage to Anne Boleyn), though, new currents of religious belief dramatically affected the established church, so termed because it had the official imprimatur of the government and was supported by tax revenues.

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. Both rejected Catholic rituals and the elaborate church hierarchy. They also asserted that the key to

Protestant Reformation: Split of reformers from Roman Catholic church; triggered by Martin Luther.

John Calvin: Early Protestant theologian who believed in "predestination."

salvation was faith in God, rather than the Catholic combination of faith and good works. Calvin went further, stressing the need for total submission to God's will.

Puritans, Separatists, and Presbyterians

Elizabeth I tolerated diverse forms of Christianity as long as she was acknowledged 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, which eliminated bishops and placed religious authority in 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—believed that English and Scottish reformers had not gone far enough. Henry had simplified the church hierarchy and the Scots had altered it; they wanted to abolish it. Henry and the Scots had subordinated the church to the state; they wanted a church free from political interference. The established churches of England and Scotland, like similar entities throughout Europe, continued to nominally encompass all residents of the realm. Calvinists in England and Scotland wanted to confine church membership to the “saved”—those they believed God had selected for salvation before birth.

Paradoxically, a key article of their faith insisted that people could not know if they were “saved” because mortals could not comprehend or affect their predestination to heaven or hell. Thus, pious Calvinists daily confronted serious dilemmas: If one was predestined and could not alter one's fate, why attend church or do good works? Calvinists admitted that their judgments as to eligibility for church membership only approximated God's unknowable decisions. And they reasoned that God gave the elect the ability to accept salvation and lead a good life. Therefore, piety and good works could indicate one as 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 representative government that developed in England under the Tudors and (see Table 2.2). The wealthy landowners in Parliament had grown accustomed to having considerable influence on government policies. But James I publicly declared the divine right of kings, the notion that a monarch's power came from God and that his subjects had a duty to obey him.

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

Both James I and Charles I wanted to enforce religious conformity. Because Calvinists—and remaining Catholics in England and Scotland—challenged many important precepts of the established churches, the Stuart monarchs authorized the removal of dissenting clergymen. In the 1620s and 1630s, some Puritans, Separatists, Presbyterians, and Catholics decided to move to America, where they hoped to practice their beliefs freely. Some fled to avoid arrest and imprisonment.

The Founding of Virginia

How did English cultural traditions clash with those of Native Americans in Virginia?

joint-stock companies: Business corporations that amassed capital through sales of stock to investors.

Jamestown: First successful English colony, established in 1607.

John Smith: Colonial leader of Jamestown who established order, good relations with Indians.



Link to John Rolfe's letter explaining why he wants to marry Pocahontas.

The impetus for England's first permanent colony in the Western Hemisphere was religious and economic. The newly militant English Protestants wanted to combat "popery" at home and in the Americas. 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 as a **joint-stock company**. Such forerunners of modern corporations pooled the resources of many small investors through stock sales. Yet colonies required ongoing capital investments. The lack of immediate returns thus generated tension between stockholders and colonists. Although Virginia Company investors anticipated great profits, neither the Maine nor **Jamestown** settlement earned much.

Jamestown and Tsenacommacah

In 1607, the Virginia Company dispatched 104 men and boys to a region near Chesapeake Bay called Tsenacommacah by its native inhabitants. In May, they established a settlement called Jamestown on a swampy peninsula in a river. Ill-equipped for survival, the colonists fell victim to dissension and disease. The gentlemen and soldiers at Jamestown expected to rely on local Indians for food and tribute, but they refused. Moreover, the settlers arrived in the midst of a severe drought (now known to be the worst for 1,700 years), which persisted until 1612.

The weroance (chief) of Tsenacommacah, Powhatan, had inherited rule over six Algonquian villages and later controlled twenty-five others (see Map 2.1). In late 1607 negotiations with colonial leader Captain **John Smith**, the weroance tentatively agreed to an alliance with the Englishmen. In exchange for foodstuffs, Powhatan wanted guns, hatchets, and swords, which would give him a technological advantage over his people's enemies.

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). Many died and at least one colonist resorted to cannibalism. In spring 1610, the survivors left on a newly arrived ship but en route encountered a new governor, more settlers, and supplies, so they returned to Jamestown. To gain the upper hand with Indians, settlers in 1613 kidnapped Powhatan's daughter, Pocahontas. In captivity, she converted to Christianity and married colonist John Rolfe. He had fallen in love, but she probably married him for diplomatic reasons; their union initiated peace between the English and Powhatans. Funded by the Virginia Company, she and Rolfe sailed to England to promote the colony. She died at Gravesend in 1616, leaving an infant son who returned to Virginia as a young adult.

Algonquian and English Cultural Differences

In Tsenacommacah and elsewhere on the North American coast, English settlers and local Algonquians focused on their cultural differences, although both groups held deep religious beliefs, subsisted primarily through agriculture, accepted social and political hierarchy, and observed well-defined gender roles. English men regarded Indian men as lazy because they did not cultivate crops and spent 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.

Among Algonquians like the Powhatans, political power and social status did not necessarily pass through the male line, instead flowing through sisters’ sons. English gentlemen inherited their position from their father. English political and military leaders ruled autocratically, whereas Algonquian leaders (even Powhatan) had limited authority over their people. Accustomed to the powerful kings, the English overestimated the chief’s ability 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, English villagers, too, had used land in common, but in the previous century had become accustomed to individual farms. The English also refused to accept Indians’ claims to traditional hunting territories, insisting that only cultivated land could be owned or occupied. Ownership of such “unclaimed” property, the English believed, lay with the English monarchy, in whose name **John Cabot** had claimed North America in 1497.

The English believed in the superiority of their civilization. Although they often anticipated living peacefully alongside indigenous peoples, they expected native peoples to adopt English customs and convert to Christianity. They showed little respect for the Indians when English interests were at stake, as was demonstrated in Virginia once the settlers found a salable commodity.

John Cabot: Italian explorer who established English claims to North America.

Tobacco Cultivation

That commodity was tobacco. In 1611, John Rolfe planted seeds of a variety from the Spanish Caribbean, which was superior to the strain Indians grew. Nine years later, Virginians exported 40,000 pounds of cured leaves, and by the late 1620s shipments jumped to 1.5 million pounds. The great tobacco boom had begun, fueled by high prices and profits. The price later fell sharply and fluctuated annually depending on supply and international competition.

Tobacco cultivation made Virginia prosper and altered life for everyone. It required abundant land, because a field could produce only three satisfactory crops before it had to lie fallow for several years to regain its fertility. Thus, applicants asked the Virginia Company for land grants on both sides of the James River. Virginians established farms far from apart along the riverbanks—which was convenient for tobacco cultivation but dangerous for defense.

Indian Assaults

Opechancanough, Powhatan’s brother and successor, watched the English colonists’ expansion and attempts to convert natives to Christianity. Recognizing the danger, he attacked along the James River on March 22, 1622. By day’s end, 347 colonists (about one-quarter) lay dead. Only a warning from two Christian converts saved Jamestown from destruction.

Reinforced by 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; then, in 1646, survivors formally subordinated themselves to England.

End of Virginia Company

The 1622 assault killed the Virginia Company, which remained unprofitable due to internal corruption and the heavy cost of settlement. Before its demise, the company developed two precedent-setting policies. First, to attract settlers, in 1617 it established the "headright" system, giving each arrival who paid his or her own way a land grant of 50 acres; those who financed the passage of others received similar headrights. To English farmers who owned little or no land, the headright system offered a powerful incentive to move to Virginia. To wealthy gentry, it promised the possibility of vast agricultural enterprises. Two years later, the company authorized landowning men of major Virginia settlements to elect representatives to an assembly called the **House of Burgesses**. Just as they had at home, English landholders expected to elect members of Parliament and control local governments.

House of Burgesses: First elected representative legislature in North America that first met in 1619.

When James I revoked the charter in 1624, transforming Virginia into a royal colony, he continued the company's headright policy but abolished the assembly. Virginians protested, and by 1629 the House of Burgesses was functioning again. Two decades after the first permanent English settlement in North America, the colonists successfully insisted on governing themselves. Thus, England's American possessions differed from the autocratic rule in the Spanish, Dutch, and French colonies.

Life in the Chesapeake

What were the myths and realities of indentured servitude in the Chesapeake?

By the 1630s, tobacco was the chief source of revenue in Virginia and in the second English Chesapeake colony: Maryland. Given by Charles I to George Calvert, first Lord Baltimore, as a personal possession (propriatorship), it was settled in 1634. (Virginia and Maryland border Chesapeake Bay—see Map 2.1—and are referred to collectively as "the Chesapeake.")

The Calvert family intended the colony as a haven for persecuted fellow Catholics. Cecilius Calvert, second Lord Baltimore, became the first colonizer to offer freedom of religion to all Christian settlers codified in Maryland's Act of Religious Toleration (1649).

Except for religion, the two Chesapeake colonies were similar. Tobacco planters spread out along riverbanks because rivers offered dependable transportation and established isolated farms instead of towns. Each farm or group of farms had its own wharf, where oceangoing vessels could load or discharge cargo.

Demand for Laborers

Planting, cultivation, harvesting, and curing tobacco were repetitious, time-consuming, and labor-intensive tasks. Successful Chesapeake farms required workers, but with their populations reduced by war and disease, Indians could not supply such needs. Nor were enslaved Africans available: traders could more easily and profitably sell slaves to Caribbean sugar planters. By 1650, only three hundred blacks lived in Virginia.

Chesapeake tobacco farmers thus looked primarily to England for labor. Because of the headright system, a tobacco farmer could obtain land and labor by

importing English workers. He could use his profits to pay for the passage of more workers and thereby gain more land. Success could even bring him into the region's new planter gentry.

Male laborers and a few women immigrated to America as **indentured servants**—that is, in return for their passage they contracted to work 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 were young couples with one or two children.

Roughly three-quarters of servants were males ages fifteen to twenty-four; only one in five or six was female. Most young men came from farming or laboring families, often from regions experiencing severe social disruption. Some had moved several times within England before relocating to America. Typically, they came from the middling ranks—what contemporaries called the “common sort.”

indentured servants: Young men and women, usually unemployed and poor, who were given free passage to America, plus basic needs such as food, shelter, and clothing, in exchange for labor, usually for four to seven years.

Conditions of Servitude Servants who fulfilled their indenture earned “freedom dues” of clothes, tools, livestock, corn, tobacco, and sometimes land. From a distance at least, America seemed to offer chances for advancement unavailable in England. Yet servants typically worked six days a week, ten to fourteen hours a day, in sweltering climates. Masters could discipline or sell them, and they faced severe penalties for running away. Laws required masters to supply servants with sufficient food, clothing, and shelter and prohibited beating them excessively. Cruelly treated servants could seek court assistance, sometimes winning verdicts directing their transfer to more humane masters or release from indenture.

All Chesapeake residents first had to survive “seasoning,” a bout with disease (probably malaria) that usually occurred during their first Chesapeake summer. They often endured recurrences of malaria, along with dysentery, typhoid fever, and other illnesses. About 40 percent of male servants did not survive to become freedmen. Even men of twenty-two who weathered seasoning could expect to live only another twenty years.

For those who survived, though, opportunities were real. Until the late seventeenth century, former servants often became independent farmers (“freeholders”). But in the 1670s, tobacco prices entered a fifty-year period of stagnation and decline, while land grew scarce and expensive. In 1681, Maryland dropped its requirement that servants receive land with their freedom dues, forcing many freed servants to live as wage laborers or tenant farmers. By 1700, the Chesapeake was no longer a land of opportunity.

Standard of Living Life in the early Chesapeake was hard. Farmers (and sometimes their wives) toiled in the fields alongside servants. Because hogs needed little tending, Chesapeake households subsisted mainly on pork and corn, a filling diet but not sufficiently nutritious. Families supplemented with fish, shellfish, wildfowl, and vegetables they grew such as lettuce and peas. The difficulty of preserving food for winter consumption magnified the health problems caused by epidemic disease.

Few households had more than farm implements, bedding, and basic cooking and eating utensils. Chairs, tables, candles, and knives and forks were luxury items. The ramshackle houses commonly had just one or two rooms. Colonists devoted their income to their farms, purchasing livestock and laborers instead of improving

their standard of living. Rather than making clothing or tools, families imported them from England.

Chesapeake Families

The predominance of males (see Figure 2.1), the incidence of servitude, and the high mortality rates produced unusual patterns of family life. Female servants could not marry while indentured because masters feared pregnancies would deprive them of workers. Many male ex-servants could not marry at all because of the scarcity of women. In contrast, nearly every free Chesapeake woman married, and widows usually remarried within months of a husband's death. Because of high infant mortality and marriages delayed by servitude or broken by death, Chesapeake women commonly reared only one to three healthy children, where English women had at least five.

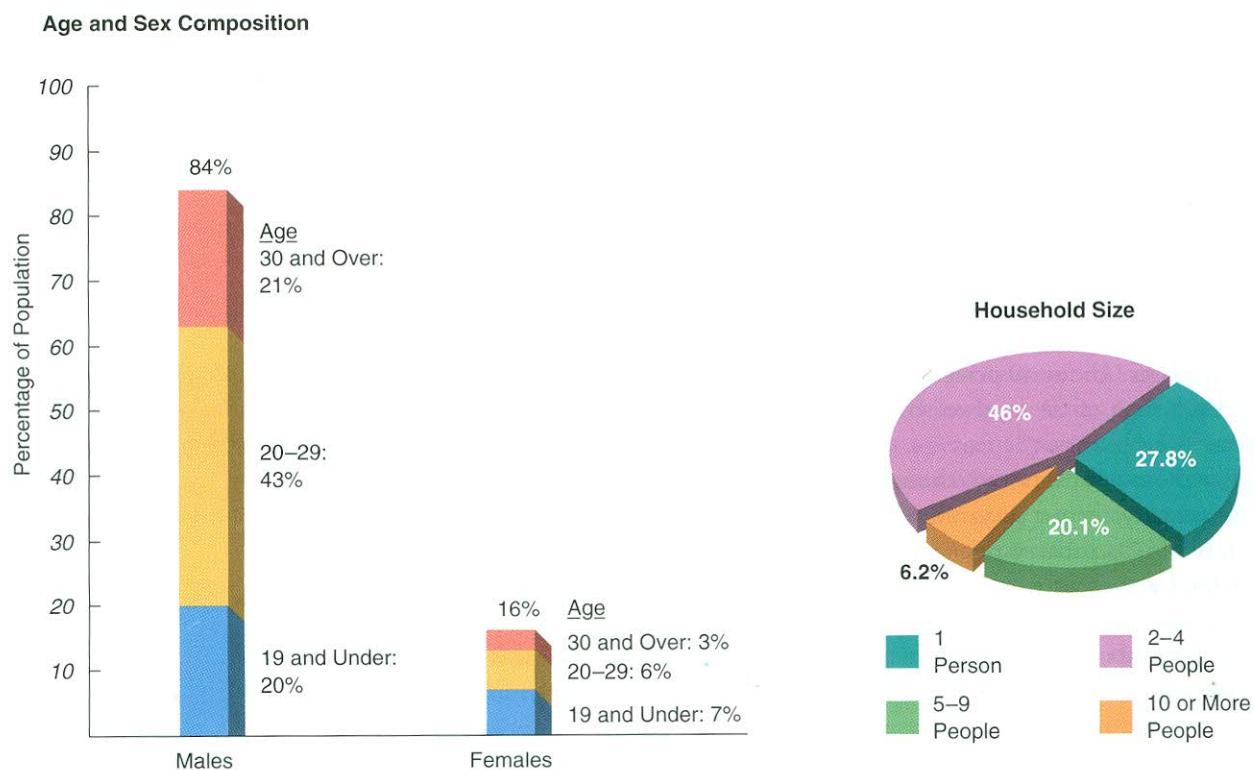


FIGURE 2.1
Population of Virginia, 1625

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.

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

Thus, Chesapeake families were few, small, and short-lived. In one Virginia county, more than three-quarters of the children had lost at least one parent by age twenty-one. 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 on whether their parents were literate and taught them.

Chesapeake Politics

Throughout the seventeenth century, immigrants composed a majority of the Chesapeake population. Most 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 the 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.

In seventeenth-century Chesapeake, most property-owning white males could vote and chose as their legislators (burgesses) local elites who seemed to be the natural leaders. But because most such men were immigrants lacking strong ties to one another or to the colonies, the assemblies did not create political stability and were contentious.

The Founding of New England

Economic and religious motives drew people to New England. Environmental factors and the Puritans' organization of the New England colonies meant that northern settlements developed very differently from their southern counterparts.

What were John Winthrop's expectations for the Massachusetts Bay Company colony?

Contrasting Regional Demographic Patterns

Royal bureaucrats in late 1634 ordered port officials in London to collect information on travelers departing for the colonies. The records for 1635 document the departure of 53 vessels—20 to Virginia, 17 to New England, 8 to Barbados, 5 to St. Christopher, 2 to Bermuda, and 1 to Providence Island. Almost 5,000 people set sail, 2,000 for Virginia, about 1,200 for New England, and the rest for island destinations. Nearly three-fifths were between the ages of 15 and 24.

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 14 percent of those going to Virginia, they composed almost 40 percent of New England-bound passengers. New England migrants often traveled in family groups, brought more goods and livestock, and traveled with people from the same region. Their lives in North America must have been less lonely than their southern counterparts.

Contrasting Regional Religious Patterns

Puritan congregations became key institutions in colonial New England, whereas no church had much impact on the early development of the Chesapeake colonies. Spread-out Chesapeake settlement patterns made it difficult to organize a church. Catholic and Anglican bishops in England ignored their coreligionists in America, and Chesapeake congregations languished. Not until the 1690s did the Church of England take firmer

root in Virginia; by then, it also replaced Catholicism as the Maryland's established church, and Calvinists were in the minority in both colonies.

In 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 prayed together daily. Yet because even the most pious could never be certain that they were among the elect, anxiety troubled them. It lent an intensity to Calvinists' beliefs and concern with proper behavior—theirs and others'.

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 religious freedom—and tolerance for religions and behaviors they abhorred. Hoping to isolate their children from corrupting influences, these people, known today as Pilgrims, received permission from the Virginia Company to colonize its northern territory.

In September 1620, more than one hundred people, only thirty of them Separatists, sailed from England on the crowded *Mayflower*. In November, they landed on Cape Cod, farther north than intended. They moved across Massachusetts Bay to a fine harbor (named **Plymouth** by John Smith in 1614) and into the empty dwellings of a Pautuxet village whose inhabitants had died in the epidemic of 1616–1618.

Plymouth: Colony established by Pilgrims in Massachusetts.



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.

Pilgrims and Pokanokets

Because they landed outside the jurisdiction of the Virginia Company, some non-Separatists questioned the authority of the colony's leaders. In response, the **Mayflower Compact**, signed shipboard in November 1620, established a temporary "Civil Body Politic." Male settlers elected a governor and made decisions at town meetings. Later, Plymouth created an assembly to which landowning male settlers elected representatives.

The residents of Plymouth were poorly prepared to subsist in the new environment. Only half of the *Mayflower's* passengers lived until spring. Survivors owed much to the Pokanokets (a branch of the Wampanoags), who controlled the area. Pokanoket villages had suffered terrible losses in the recent epidemic, so to protect themselves from the powerful Narragansetts of the southern New England coast, the Pokanokets allied themselves with the newcomers. In spring 1621, their leader, Massasoit, agreed to a treaty, and during the colony's first difficult years the Pokanokets supplied the settlers with foodstuffs. The colonists also relied on Squanto, a Pautuxet who served as a conduit between native peoples and Europeans. Captured by fishermen in the early 1610s and taken to Europe, Squanto learned to speak English. After returning, he became the settlers' interpreter and taught them 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 dominate New England. Charles I, who became king in 1625, attempted to suppress Puritan practices. Some Congregationalist merchants, concerned about their prospects in England, sent 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 Puritans who feared they would lose the ability to practice their religion freely in their homeland. Committed to reforming the Church of England, they decided to do so from New England. Congregationalist merchants transferred the Massachusetts Bay Company's headquarters there, so they could handle their affairs, secular and religious, as they pleased. Like the Plymouth settlers, they expected to profit from the codfishery and timber exports.

Governor John Winthrop

In October 1629, the Massachusetts Bay Company elected **John Winthrop**, a member of the lesser English gentry, as its governor. Until his death twenty years later, he served continuously in various leadership positions. Winthrop organized the initial segment of the great Puritan migration. In 1630, more than one thousand English men and women moved to Massachusetts—most 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," outlining his expectations for the colony. He stressed the communal nature of the endeavor, where differences in status or wealth—though retained—would not imply worth. Instead, he explained that, 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 America, Winthrop asserted, "we shall be as a city upon a hill, the eyes of all people are upon us."

[Link to Mayflower Compact.](#)



Mayflower Compact: Agreement signed by *Mayflower* passengers to establish order in their new settlement.

John Winthrop: Governor of Massachusetts Bay colony who wrote "A Model of Christian Charity."

[Link to John Winthrop's "A Model of Christian Charity" speech.](#)





Links to the World

Turkeys

Near the end of their first year in North America, Plymouth colonists held a traditional English feast celebrating the harvest. Famously, they invited Massasoit's Pokanokets, and they probably consumed turkey. But why was this bird, originally from America and enjoyed at Thanksgiving today, named for a region of the then-Ottoman Empire? The native peoples of the Americas had their own words for the fowl; Aztecs, for example, called a male bird *huexoloti* and a female *totolin*.

When Columbus carried the birds back to Spain after his first voyage, the Iberian peninsula was a major focal point for Mediterranean commerce, and Spanish mariners sailed frequently to the Middle East. One Spanish vessel took some *huexoloti* and *totolin* to the Ottoman Empire. There, farmers familiar with distant Asian relatives of the bird improved the breed, ultimately producing a plumper, tamer version. By the end of the 1500s, "turkeys" were widely consumed throughout the British Isles.

When Thomas Harriot in his 1588 *Briefe and True Report* mentioned the wild North American version of the birds, he termed them "Turkie cockes and Turkie hennes." He did not use the names native people used because these birds were not new to his audience.

Jamestown and Plymouth settlers also recognized the birds in the colonies as relatives of the fowls they enjoyed in England. But they regarded the North American birds as inferior since they seemingly could not be tamed and ravaged crops. Instead, settlers imported English turkeys to raise for meat.

Were the "turkeys" consumed at the so-called First Thanksgiving the wild American birds, or the tame Ottoman-English variety? It remains a mystery. But that they were termed "turkeys" linked them to the Mediterranean, Europe, and the Middle East as animals in the Columbian Exchange.



Victoria & Albert Museum, London, UK/The Bridgeman Art Library

Turkeys from the Americas quickly traveled around the world, as is illustrated by this Mughal painting from the Islamic empire in India. The local artist Ustad Mansur painted a "turkey-cock" brought to the emperor Jahangir in 1612 from Goa—a Portuguese enclave on the west coast of the Indian subcontinent. Presumably the turkey had been transported from the Iberian peninsula to that European outpost, whence the fowl made its way to Jahangir's court—where it was immortalized by an artist to whom it was an unusual sight.

Winthrop foresaw in Puritan America a true commonwealth in which each person put the good of the whole ahead of him- or herself. Although that society would be characterized by hierarchies of status and power, Winthrop hoped its members would live by the precepts of Christian love. Early Massachusetts and its Caribbean counterpart, Providence Island, had some bitter quarrels and un-Christian behavior, though remarkably, in New England Winthrop's ideal persisted for generations.

Covenant Ideal

Puritans' communal ideal was embodied in the doctrine of the covenant, the notion that God made a contract with them when they were chosen for their special mission to America. They also covenanted with one another to work together. Founders of churches, towns, and colonies in Anglo-America often drafted documents outlining the principles on which their institutions would be based. The Pilgrims' Mayflower Compact was a covenant as was the Fundamental Orders of Connecticut (1639), which defined the basic law for the settlements along the Connecticut River valley beginning in 1636.

The leaders of Massachusetts Bay likewise transformed their 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, to property-owning adult male church members. Less than two decades after the Puritans arrived in Massachusetts Bay, the colony had a functioning system of self-government composed of a governor and a two-house legislature as well as a judicial system modeled on England's.

New England Towns

The colony's land distribution system furthered the communal ideal. In Massachusetts, groups of men—often from the same English village—applied together for land grants on which to establish towns (novel governance units that did not exist in England). Receiving a grant, these men then determined how the land would be distributed. Understandably, they copied their home villages, first laying out house and church lots. Then they gave each family parcels of land around the town center and reserved the best and largest plots for the most distinguished residents, including the minister. People with low status in England received smaller, less desirable allotments. Still, every man and even a few single women obtained land.

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 community based on diversified family farms. A second group, the coastal towns like Boston and Salem, became bustling seaports, focal points for trade and places of entry for immigrants. The third category, commercialized agricultural towns, grew up in the Connecticut River valley, where easy water transportation enabled farmers to sell surplus goods.

Pequot War and Its Aftermath

Migration into the Connecticut valley ended the Puritans' relative freedom from clashes with nearby Indians. Relocating under the direction of their minister, Thomas Hooker, their new settlements were remote from other English towns, although the river promised access to the ocean. The site, however, fell within the territory of the powerful Pequots.

Pequot War: Clash in 1637 that resulted as English colonists moved to settle in the Connecticut Valley on land inhabited by the Pequot Indians. The colonists were victorious and took over the Indians' land.

The Pequots' dominance stemmed from their role as primary intermediaries in the trade between New England Algonquians and the Dutch in New Netherland. With the arrival of English settlers, previously subordinate bands could now trade directly with Europeans. Clashes between Pequots and English colonists began earlier, but the establishment of settlements in the Connecticut valley moved them toward war. After two English traders were killed (not by Pequots), the English raided a Pequot village. Pequots then attacked Wethersfield, Connecticut, in April 1637, killing nine and capturing two. To retaliate, an expedition 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 newcomers and sometimes worked for them, but they resisted incorporation into English society. Native Americans persisted in using traditional farming methods, which did not employ plows or fences, and women continued as chief cultivators. When Indian men learned "European" trades, they chose those—like broom making and basket weaving—that most resembled their customary occupations and ensured independence. The one European practice they adopted was keeping livestock, for domesticated animals provided sources of meat once hunting territories became English farms and wild game vanished.

Missionary Activities

Most colonists showed little interest in converting the Algonquians to Christianity. Only a few Massachusetts clerics, 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 their own customs. He met with little success. Only eleven hundred Indians (out of many thousands) lived in the fourteen "Praying Towns" Eliot established, and just 10 percent were baptized.

The missions in New France, however, were more successful. Puritan services lacked Catholicism's beautiful ceremonies and special appeal for women, and the Calvinist Puritans could not offer assurances of a heavenly afterlife. Yet, on the island of Martha's Vineyard, Thomas Mayhew converted many Indians to Calvinist Christianity partly by allowing Wampanoag Christians to lead traditional lives and by training their men as ministers.

While conversion often alienated new Christians from their relatives and traditions, many Indians hoped to use the Europeans' religion to cope 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. Shamans had little success in restoring tradition. Many Indians must have concluded that the Europeans' ideas could help them survive.

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. "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," he noted in his diary in 1633. But by July, Winthrop observed that most Indians within a 300-mile radius of Boston had died of smallpox. He concluded, "the Lord hath cleared our title to what we possess."

Life in New England

New England's colonizers lived differently than their Algonquian neighbors and Chesapeake counterparts. Algonquian bands usually moved four or five times yearly to maximize their environment. In spring, women planted the fields, but once crops were established, they gathered wild foods while men hunted and fished. Villagers returned for harvest, separated again for fall hunting, and wintered together in a sheltered spot. Women probably determined the timing of these moves, because their activities used the environment more intensively than did men's.

English people lived year-round in the same location. Household furnishings and house sizes resembled those in the Chesapeake, but New Englanders' diets were somewhat more varied. They replowed fields, finding it less arduous to fertilize with manure than to clear new fields every few years. They fenced croplands to keep out cattle, sheep, and hogs that were their chief meat sources. Animal crowding more than human crowding caused New Englanders to spread out across the countryside.

New England Families Because Puritans commonly moved to America as families, 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 reproduce itself. Lacking tropical diseases, New England was, after the initial difficult years, healthier than the Chesapeake and Britain. 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 had few, mostly small families, New England families were numerous, large, and long-lived. Most New England men married; immigrant women married young (at age twenty, on the average); and marriages lasted longer and produced more children likely to live to maturity. Seventeenth-century Chesapeake women raised one to three healthy children; New England women reared five to seven.

The presence of many children combined with Puritans' stress on reading the Bible led to concern for education. Living in towns, colonists could establish small schools; girls and boys were taught basic reading by their parents or a school "dame," and boys could learn writing, arithmetic, and Latin. Whereas early Chesapeake parents commonly died before their children married, New England parents exercised much control over their adult offspring.

What was the impact of religion on colonial life in New England?



In 1664, an eight-year-old girl, Elizabeth Eggington, became the subject of the earliest known dated New England painting. Her mother died shortly after her birth, perhaps because of childbirth complications; the girl's rich clothing, elaborate jewelry, and feather fan not only reveal her family's wealth but also suggest that she was much loved by her father, a merchant and ship captain. Unfortunately, Elizabeth died about the time this portrait was painted; perhaps it—like some other colonial portraits of young children—was actually painted after her death to memorialize her.

Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, CT. Gift of Mrs. Walter H. Clark. Endowed by her daughter, Mrs. Thomas L. Archibald/Art Resource, NY

Young men could not marry without acreage and depended on their fathers for that land. Daughters, too, needed a dowry of household goods from parents. Parents relied on children's labor and often seemed reluctant to see them marry. These needs sometimes led to generational conflicts, but generally, children obeyed their parents' wishes.

Impact of Religion

Puritans controlled the governments of Massachusetts Bay, Plymouth, Connecticut, and other early northern colonies. Congregationalism was the only officially recognized religion; except in Rhode Island, other sects had no freedom of worship. In Massachusetts Bay and New Haven, church membership was a prerequisite for voting. Early colonies taxed residents to build churches and pay ministers' salaries, but only New England based criminal codes on the Old Testament. New Englanders were required to attend religious services, and people who expressed contempt for ministers could be punished with fines or whippings.

Strict codes of conduct meant colonists could be tried for drunkenness, card playing, dancing, or idleness—although frequent prosecutions suggest that New Englanders often 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 sinful, and some were executed.

In New England, church and state were thus intertwined. Puritans objected to secular interference in religious affairs yet expected the church to influence politics and society. They also believed that the state was obliged to support and protect the one true church—theirs. Although they came to America seeking religious freedom, they saw no contradiction in refusing that freedom to those with different beliefs.

Roger Williams: A minister who advocated complete separation of church and state and religious toleration.

Roger Williams

Roger Williams, a Separatist who migrated to Massachusetts Bay in 1631, quickly ran afoul of Puritan orthodoxy. He told fellow settlers that the king of England had no right to grant them land already occupied by Indians, that church and state should be separate, and that Puritans should not impose their ideas on others. 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 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. Providence and other towns in what became Rhode Island tolerated all religions, including Judaism. Along with Maryland, Williams's colony founded presaged the religious freedom that eventually became a hallmark of the United States.

Anne Hutchinson: Dissenter feared not only for her theology but also because she challenged gender roles; banished from Massachusetts.

Anne Hutchinson

Anne Hutchinson presented a more sustained challenge to Massachusetts' leaders. A skilled medical practitioner popular with Boston women, she admired John Cotton, a minister who stressed the covenant of grace, or God's free gift of salvation. Most Massachusetts clerics emphasized the need for good works, study, and reflection for receiving God's grace. (In its extreme form, this doctrine could verge on the covenant of works, meaning that



Legacy for a People and a Nation

Blue Laws

Seventeenth-century New England colonies enacted statutes, now called *blue laws*, preventing residents from working or engaging in recreation on Sundays, when they were supposed to attend church. Colonists were fined for plowing fields, pursuing wandering livestock, drinking in taverns, or playing games on the Sabbath. Harsher punishments met thieves who took advantage of church attendance to break into homes.

The term appears to have been coined by the Reverend Samuel Peters, a loyalist, in his *General History of Connecticut*, published in London in 1781. Peters used *blue laws* to refer to Connecticut's early legal code in general, defining it as "bloody Laws; for they were all sanctified with whippings, cutting off the ears, burning the tongue, and death." Eventually, *blue laws* acquired its current meaning of legislation regulating

behavior on Sundays. States continued to enact such statutes through the nineteenth century, but as in the colonial period, enforcement varied.

Still, they remained on the books. A 1961 Supreme Court decision, *McGowan v. Maryland*, upheld that state's law restricting what could be sold on Sundays. Whereas colonial legislators were attempting to prevent Sunday work, modern Americans seem more concerned about halting Sunday shopping. Not until 1991 did the last state (North Dakota) repeal a law requiring all stores to be closed on Sundays, and only in 2003 did New York State remove its ban on Sunday liquor sales. During the recession beginning in 2008, remaining blue laws have been challenged by people hoping to stimulate local commercial activity, and the internet campaign—"Keep Sunday Special"—collapsed. Still, persistent pleas to "restore the observance of the Lord's Day in our nation" show the continuing legacy of the seventeenth century.

people could earn their salvation.) Hutchinson began holding women's meetings in her home. Stressing the covenant of grace, she asserted that the elect could be assured of salvation and communicate directly with God, which lessened the importance of the institutional church.

Thus, Hutchinson threatened Puritan orthodoxy. In November 1637, officials charged her with maligning the colony's ministers by accusing them of preaching the covenant of works. For two days, she defended herself, matching scriptural references with John Winthrop. But then Hutchinson boldly declared that God had spoken to her and would curse the Puritans if they harmed her. Excommunicated, she was exiled to Rhode Island in 1638, along with her family and some followers. Years later, after moving to New Netherland, she and most of her children were killed by Indians.

Authorities in Massachusetts perceived Anne Hutchinson as a threat to religious orthodoxy and traditional gender roles. Puritans believed in equality before God, but they considered actual women inferior to men. The magistrates' comments during her trial reveal that they were almost as outraged by her "masculine" behavior as by her religious beliefs. A clergyman told her, "You have stepped out of your place, you have rather been a Husband than a Wife and a preacher than a Hearer."

To New England authorities, an orderly society required the obedience of wives to husbands, subjects to rulers, and ordinary folk to gentry. English people intended to make many changes 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 mid-seventeenth century, Europeans had come to North America and the Caribbean to stay, indelibly altering their lives and those of native peoples. Europeans killed Indians with weapons and diseases and had varying success converting them to Christianity. Contacts with indigenous peoples taught Europeans to eat new foods and recognize—however reluctantly—other cultures. The prosperity and survival of many 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.

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 for crops and livestock, inevitably produced conflict with Indian neighbors. New England and the Chesapeake differed in the sex ratio and age range of their immigrant populations, their diverse economies, their settlement patterns, and the impact of religion. Yet their expansions engendered similar internal and external tension. Both regions would become embroiled in increasingly fierce rivalries besetting the European powers that would affect Americans of all races until after the mid-eighteenth century, when the Anglo-American colonies won their independence.

Chapter Review

Spanish, French, and Dutch North America

How did the Jesuits' treatment of Native Americans differ from that of explorers and other settlers?

Spanish and other settlers typically sought to dominate the native populations, controlling their labor and often enslaving them, sometimes through the use of violence. The French Jesuits who settled New France (Montreal and Quebec) initially tried to convert Indians to Christianity and convince them to farm in the European style. When that failed, missionaries introduced Catholicism without insisting that Indians abandon their traditions. Missionaries learned Indian languages and lived among potential converts, and while they tried to undermine the authority of shamans, Jesuits also recognized the compatibility of some aspects of native culture with Christianity. This somewhat flexible approach, combined with their lack of interest in land or tribute, made at least some Indians receptive to conversion.

The Caribbean

What made the Caribbean Islands initially desirable for colonization?

European colonizers had different reasons for being drawn to the Caribbean Islands. Spain, which focused on larger islands, saw them as offering the potential for greater wealth with less effort than smaller islands might. Other countries saw the smaller islands as a base to attack Spanish vessels transporting gold, silver, and other valuable commodities from the Americas. The second reason for settling on the smaller islands was sugar cultivation. Sugar was in high demand in Europe, particularly since the sweetener improved the taste of coffee and tea and provided a sweet, yet quick, energy boost.

English Interest in Colonization

What two developments prompted England to consider North American colonization in the early seventeenth century?

First, dramatic population growth in England, partly as a result of more nutritious foods of American origin, increased competition for food, clothing, shelter,

and jobs. That, in turn, spurred inflation; wages also fell. Some profited, but those at the lower end of the socioeconomic spectrum—those with little or no land—lapsed into poverty and homelessness. Cities became overcrowded, leading officials to see colonizing North America as a way to reduce England's "surplus" population and related woes. Others hoped to improve their lot in the land-rich colonies. Second, the Protestant Reformation sparked new forms of Christianity that diverged from the Church of England, and while Elizabeth I tolerated such dissent, her successors, the Stuart monarchs, did not. Ultimately, seeking to practice freely their religious beliefs (and avoid imprisonment), some English Puritans, Separatists, and Catholics fled to America.

The Founding of Virginia

How did English cultural traditions clash with those of Native Americans in Virginia?

While both were religious, Englishmen considered Indian men lazy because they let women cultivate crops while they hunted, which the British regarded as a sport and not work. Native Americans thought Englishmen were effeminate because they farmed, which Indians considered women's work. Political power in Algonquian culture passed through sisters' sons rather through the father, as was the custom in England. Because the British were used to powerful kings, they assumed Indian chiefs held the same autocratic control and ability to make treaties, when in reality, they had limited authority. Most importantly, where the English believed in individual farms and private land ownership, the Algonquians held land communally as a village.

Life in the Chesapeake

What were the myths and realities of indentured servitude in the Chesapeake?

Chesapeake tobacco farmers filled their extensive demand for labor with indentured servants from England—typically young men who worked for four to seven years in exchange for their passage. Indentured servitude for these young men represented a chance at upward mobility. Most gained "freedom dues" at the completion of their contract, including clothes, tools, livestock, casks of corn and tobacco, and sometimes land. But they worked long hours, six or seven days a week, doing

intense physical labor in hot climates. Masters could discipline or sell them, and if indentured servants fled, they faced extreme penalties, although some did win verdicts against cruel masters calling for their transfer or release from indenture. Exposure to disease combined with intense labor so that only 60 percent of indentured men lived to become freedmen, and many who did, lived only another twenty years.

The Founding of New England

What were John Winthrop's expectations for the Massachusetts Bay Company colony?

First elected governor in 1629, John Winthrop was instrumental in organizing the first Puritan migration from England to the colony. While in transit, he delivered his famous sermon, calling for the new colony to serve as a moral and spiritual example for the rest of the world, a "city upon a hill." He urged colonists of varying ranks to work together, to mediate status differences and to unite around their communal interests. He envisioned a true commonwealth, where people put the common good ahead of their own and were governed by Christian brotherhood.

Life in New England

What was the impact of religion on colonial life in New England?

Although Puritans fled England to practice their faith freely in New England, they offered no such freedom of worship to those who dissented from their beliefs. Puritans controlled the government in many early northern colonies and made Congregationalism the only recognized religion, with church membership and voting rights linked. Colonists were punished with fines or whippings for missing religious services. In addition, strict behavioral codes meant colonists were tried for drunkenness, card playing, dancing, or idleness. Couples who had sex during their engagement were fined and publicly humiliated. People who behaved in ways that today would be called homosexual were sometimes executed. Dissenters such as Roger Williams or Anne Hutchinson, who challenged Puritan orthodoxy, were tried and banished—Williams founded Providence, Rhode Island, based on religious tolerance and was subsequently joined by Hutchinson. Beyond challenging church authority, Hutchinson violated gender norms by preaching.

Suggestions for Further Reading

Virginia DeJohn Anderson, *Creatures of Empire: How Domestic Animals Transformed Early America* (2004)

Richard S. Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves: The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624–1713* (1972)

David Hackett Fischer, *Champlain's Dream: The European Founding of North America* (2008)

Alison Games, *Migration and the Origins of the English Atlantic World* (1999)

David D. Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment: Popular Religious Belief in Early New England* (1989)

Karen O. Kupperman, *The Jamestown Project* (2007)

Mary Beth Norton, *Founding Mothers & Fathers: Gendered Power and the Forming of American Society* (1996)

Carla Gardina Pestana, *Protestant Empire: Religion and the Making of the British Atlantic World* (2009)

Helen C. Rountree, *Pocahontas, Powhatan, Opechancanough: Three Indian Lives Changed by Jamestown* (2005)

David J. Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (1992)



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