

The Bonds of Empire, 1660–1750

Alexander Garden, the Church of England's commissary (representative) in the southern colonies, was furious. George Whitefield, a young Anglican minister just over from England, was preaching that Garden's ministers were unsaved and were endangering their parishioners' souls. Asserting his authority, Garden summoned Whitefield to Charles Town and demanded a retraction. But Whitefield brushed off the demand, claiming that Garden "was as ignorant as the rest" of the local clergy for failing to teach the central Calvinist doctrine of salvation by predestination (see Chapter 2). Whitefield threatened to widen his attacks if Garden refused to condemn dancing and other "sinful" entertainments. Garden shot back that Whitefield would be suspended if he preached in any church in the province, to which Whitefield retorted that he would treat such an action as he would an order from the pope. The meeting ended with Garden shouting, "Get out of my house!"

Garden got Whitefield out of his house but not out of his hair. The two men continued their dispute in public. Garden accused Whitefield of jeopardizing the stability of colonial society, while Whitefield charged the Anglican clergy with abandoning piety in favor of the cold heresy of reason. An extraordinary orator, Whitefield was the first intercolonial celebrity, traveling thousands of miles to spread his critique of the established religious

CHAPTER OUTLINE

Rebellion and War, 1660–1713

Colonial Economies and Societies ,
1660–1750

Competing for a Continent, 1713–1750

Public Life in British America,
1689–1750

order. Everywhere he went, people from all walks of life poured out by the thousands to individually experience the overwhelming power of a direct connection with God.

Whitefield represented one of two European cultural currents that crossed the Atlantic, primarily from or through Britain, during the middle decades of the eighteenth century. He was the greatest English-speaking prophet of a powerful revival of religious piety sweeping the Protestant world. The second current was the Enlightenment—a faith in reason rooted in natural science—which found its earliest and foremost American exponent in Benjamin Franklin. Franklin’s emphasis on reason might seem at odds with Whitefield’s conscious efforts to tap his audience’s deepest emotions. But both men repudiated the self-contained hierarchical communities of the past in favor of a more dynamic society that was intercolonial and transatlantic in its orientation.

Whitefield, an Englishman in America, and Franklin, a colonist who traveled frequently to England, also signaled the close ties that increasingly bound Britain and America. Beginning with a series of Navigation Acts in the late seventeenth century, England tightened the economic bonds linking the colonies’ economic fortunes with its own. Coupled with the astonishing growth of its population, slave as well as free, these policies enabled British North America to achieve a level of growth and collective prosperity unknown elsewhere in the Americas. The accelerating movement of goods and people was accompanied by the movement of news and ideas that, by 1750, made the British Empire a leading world power and distinguished its colonies sharply from their French and Spanish neighbors.

This chapter will focus on four major questions:

- How did the Glorious Revolution and its outcome shape relations between England and its North American colonies?
- What were the most important consequences of British mercantilism for the mainland colonies?
- What factors best explain the relative strengths of the British, French, and Spanish colonial empires in North America?
- What were the most significant consequences of the Enlightenment and the Great Awakening for life in the British colonies?

REBELLION AND WAR, 1660–1713

Before the Restoration (1660), England made little serious effort to weld its colonies into a coherent empire. Thereafter, English authorities undertook a concerted effort to expand overseas trade at the expense of the nation’s rivals and to subordinate its colonies to English commercial interests and political authority. These efforts were modified but continued after the fall of the Stuarts in 1689 and by a succession of international wars that followed.

Royal Centralization, 1660–1688

As the sons of a king (Charles I) executed by Parliament, the Restoration monarchs disliked representative government. Charles II rarely called Parliament into session after 1674, and not at all after 1681. James II (ruled 1685–1688) hoped to reign as an “absolute” monarch like France’s Louis XIV, who never faced an elected legislature. Not surprisingly, the two English kings had little sympathy for American colonial assemblies.

Royal intentions of extending direct political control to North America first became evident in New York. The proprietor, Charles II’s brother James, the Duke of York, considered elected assemblies “of dangerous consequence” and forbade them to meet, except briefly between 1682 and 1686. Meanwhile, Charles appointed former army officers to about 90 percent of all gubernatorial positions, thereby compromising the time-honored English tradition of holding the military strictly accountable to civilian authority. By 1680 such “governors general” ruled 60 percent of all American colonists. James II continued this policy.

Ever resentful of outside meddling, New Englanders proved most stubborn in defending self-government and resisting crown policies. As early as 1661, the Massachusetts assembly declared its citizens exempt from all laws and royal decrees from England except for a declaration of war. The colony ignored the Navigation Acts and continued to welcome Dutch traders. Charles II responded by targeting Massachusetts for special punishment. In 1679 he carved a new royal colony, New Hampshire, out of its territory. Then in 1684 he declared Massachusetts itself a royal colony and revoked its charter, the very foundation of the Puritan city upon a hill. Puritan minister Increase Mather repudiated the King’s actions, calling on colonists to resist even to the point of martyrdom.

Despite such resistance, royal centralization accelerated after James II ascended to the throne. In 1686 the new king consolidated Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Plymouth into a single administrative unit, the Dominion of New England, with a capital at Boston. He added New York and the Jerseys to the Dominion in 1688. With this bold stroke, all legislatures in these colonies ceased to exist, and still another former army officer, Sir Edmund Andros, became governor of the new supercolony.

Massachusetts burned with hatred for the dominion and its governor. By “Exercise of an arbitrary Government,” preached Salem’s minister, “ye wicked walked on Every Side & ye Vilest of men ware [sic] exalted.” Andros was indeed arbitrary. He suppressed the legislature, limited towns to a single annual meeting, and strictly enforced toleration of Anglicans and the Navigation Acts. “You have no more privileges left you,” Andros reportedly told a group of outraged colonists, “than not to be sold for slaves.” Andros’ success in gaining some local support, including his appointing some Massachusetts elites to high office, further enraged most other colonists.

Tensions also ran high in New York, where Catholics held prominent political and military posts under the Duke of York’s rule. By 1688 colonists feared that these Catholic officials would betray New York to France, now England’s chief imperial rival. When Andros’s local deputy, Captain Francis Nicholson, allowed the harbor’s forts to deteriorate and reacted skeptically to rumors that Native Americans would attack, New Yorkers suspected the worst.

The Glorious Revolution in England and America, 1688–1689

Not only colonists but also English people were alarmed by the religious, political, and diplomatic directions in which the monarchy was taking their nation. The Duke of York became a Catholic in 1676, and Charles II converted on his deathbed. Both rulers ignored Parliament and violated its laws, issuing decrees allowing Catholics to hold high office and worship openly. English Protestants’ fears that they would have to accept Catholicism intensified after both kings expressed their preference for allying with France just as Louis XIV was launching new persecutions of that country’s Protestant Huguenots in 1685.

The English tolerated James II’s Catholicism only because the potential heirs to the throne, his daughters Mary and Anne, remained Anglican. But in 1688 James’s

wife bore a son who would be raised—and would eventually reign—as a Catholic. Aghast at the thought of a Catholic succeeding to the throne, some of England’s political and religious leaders asked Mary and her husband, William of Orange (head of the Dutch Republic), to intervene. When William and Mary led a small Dutch Protestant army to England in November 1688, most royal troops defected to them, and James II fled to France.

This bloodless revolution of 1688, called the Glorious Revolution, created a “limited monarchy” as defined by England’s Bill of Rights of 1689. The crown promised to summon Parliament annually, sign all its bills, and respect traditional civil liberties. This vindication of limited representative government burned deeply into the English political consciousness, and Anglo-Americans never forgot it. Colonists struck their own blows for liberty when Massachusetts, New York, and Maryland rose up against local representatives of the Stuart regime.

News that England’s Protestant leaders had rebelled against James II electrified New Englanders. On April 18, 1689, well before confirmation of the English revolt’s success, Boston’s militia arrested Andros and his councilors. (The governor tried to flee in women’s clothing but was caught after an alert guard spotted a “lady” in army boots.) The Massachusetts political leaders acted in the name of William and Mary, risking their necks should James return to power in England.

Although William and Mary dismantled the Dominion of New England and restored the power to elect their own governors to Connecticut and Rhode Island, they acted to retain royal authority in Massachusetts. While allowing the province to absorb Plymouth and Maine, they refused to let it regain New Hampshire. More seriously, Massachusetts’ new charter of 1691 stipulated that the crown, rather than the electorate, would choose the governor. In addition, property ownership, not church membership, became the criterion for voting. Finally, the colony had to tolerate other Protestants, especially proliferating numbers of Anglicans, Baptists, and Quakers (although non-Puritans’ taxes would continue to support the established Congregational church). For Puritans already demoralized by the demise of the “New England Way” (see Chapter 3), this was indeed bitter medicine.

New York’s counterpart of the anti-Stuart uprising was Leisler’s Rebellion. Emboldened by news of Boston’s coup, the city’s militia—consisting mainly of Dutch and other non-English artisans and shopkeepers—seized

the harbor's main fort on May 31, 1689. Captain Jacob Leisler of the militia took command of the colony, repaired its rundown defenses, and called elections for an assembly. When English troops arrived at New York in 1691, Leisler, fearing that their commander was loyal to James II, denied them entry to key forts. A skirmish resulted, and Leisler was arrested.

“Hott brain'd” Leisler unwittingly had set his own downfall in motion. He had jailed many elite New Yorkers for questioning his authority, only to find that his former enemies had gained the new governor's ear and persuaded him to charge Leisler with treason for firing on royal troops. In the face of popular outrage, a packed jury found Leisler and his son-in-law, Jacob Milborne, guilty. Both men went to the gallows insisting that they were dying “for the king and queen and the Protestant religion.”

News of England's Glorious Revolution heartened Maryland's Protestant majority, which had long chafed under Catholic rule. Hoping to prevent a repetition of religion-tinged uprisings that had flared in 1676 and

1681, Lord Baltimore sent a messenger from England in early 1689 to command Maryland's obedience to William and Mary. But the courier died en route, leaving the colony's unknowing Protestants in fear that their Catholic proprietor was a traitor who supported James II.

John Coode and three others organized the Protestant Association to secure Maryland for William and Mary. These conspirators may have been motivated more by their exclusion from high public office than by religious zeal, for three of the four had Catholic wives. Coode's group seized the capital in July 1689, removed all Catholics from office, and requested a royal governor. They got their wish in 1691 and made the Church of England the established religion in 1692. Catholics, who composed less than one-fourth of the population, lost the right to vote and thereafter could worship only in private. Maryland stayed in royal hands until 1715, when the fourth Lord Baltimore joined the Church of England and regained his proprietorship.

The revolutionary events of 1688–1689 decisively changed the colonies' political climate by reestablishing

legislative government and ensuring religious freedom for Protestants. Dismantling the Dominion of New England and directing governors to call annual assemblies, William and Mary allowed colonial elites to reassert control over local affairs. By encouraging the assemblies to work with royal and proprietary governors, the monarchs expected colonial elites to identify their interests with those of England. A foundation was thus laid for an empire based on voluntary allegiance rather than submission to raw power imposed from far-away London. The crowning of William and Mary opened a new era in which Americans drew rising confidence from their relationship to the English throne. “As long as they reign,” wrote a Bostonian who helped topple Andros, “New England is secure.”

A Generation of War, 1689–1713

Ironically, the bloodless revolution of 1688 ushered in a quarter-century of warfare, convulsing both Europe and North America. In 1689 England joined a general European coalition against France’s Louis XIV, who supported James II’s claim to the English crown. The resulting War of the League of Augsburg (which Anglo-Americans called King William’s War) was the first struggle to embroil colonists and Native Americans in European rivalries.

With the outbreak of King William’s War, New Yorkers and New Englanders launched a two-pronged invasion of New France in 1690, with one prong aimed at Montreal and the other at Quebec. After both invasions failed, the war took the form of cruel but inconclusive border raids against civilians carried out by both English and French troops and their respective Indian allies.

Already weary from a new wave of wars with pro-French Indians, the Five Nations Iroquois Confederacy bore the bloodiest fighting in King William’s War. Standing almost alone against their foes, the Iroquois faced overwhelming odds. Not only did their English allies fail to intercept most enemy war parties, but the French were allied with virtually all other Indians from Maine to the Great Lakes. In 1691 every Mohawk and Oneida war chief died in battle; by 1696 French armies had destroyed the villages of every Iroquois nation but the Cayugas and Oneidas.

Although King William’s War ended in 1697, the Five Nations staggered until 1700 under invasions by pro-French Indians (including Iroquois who had become Catholic and moved to Canada). By then one-quarter of the Confederacy’s two thousand warriors had been killed or taken prisoner or had fled to Canada. The total

Iroquois population declined 20 percent over twelve years, from eighty-six hundred to seven thousand. (By comparison, the war cost about thirteen hundred English, Dutch, and French lives.)

By 1700 the Confederacy was divided into pro-English, pro-French, and neutralist factions. Under the impact of war, the neutralists set a new direction for Iroquois diplomacy. In two separate treaties, together called the Grand Settlement of 1701, the Five Nations made peace with France and its Indian allies in exchange for access to western furs, while redefining their British alliance to exclude military cooperation. Skillful negotiations brought the exhausted Iroquois far more success than had war by allowing them to keep control of their lands, rebuild their decimated population, and gain recognition as a key to the balance of power in the Northeast.

In 1702 European war again erupted when England fought France and Spain in the War of the Spanish Succession, called Queen Anne’s War by England’s American colonists. This conflict reinforced Anglo-Americans’ awareness of their military weakness. French and Indian raiders from Canada destroyed several towns in Massachusetts and Maine that colonists had recently established on the Indians’ homelands. In the Southeast, the outbreak of Anglo-Spanish war broadened an older conflict involving the English in Carolina, the Spanish in Florida, and Native peoples in the region (see Chapter 3). The Spanish invaded Carolina and nearly took Charles Town in 1706. Enemy warships captured many English colonial vessels and landed looting parties along the Atlantic coast. Meanwhile, colonial sieges of Quebec and St. Augustine ended as expensive failures.

England’s own forces had more success than those of the colonies, seizing the Hudson Bay region as well as Newfoundland and Acadia (henceforth called Nova Scotia). Although Great Britain kept these gains in the Treaty of Utrecht (1713), the French and Indian hold on the continent’s interior remained unbroken.

The most important consequence of the imperial wars for Anglo-Americans was political, not military. The clashes with France reinforced their identity with post-1689 England as a bastion of Protestantism and political liberty. Recognizing their own military weakness and the extent to which the Royal Navy had protected their shipping, colonists acknowledged their dependence on the newly formed United Kingdom of Great Britain (created by the formal union of England and Scotland in 1707). As a new generation of English colonists matured, war buttressed their loyalty to the crown and reinforced their identity as Britons.

COLONIAL ECONOMIES AND SOCIETIES, 1660–1750

The achievement of peace in 1713 enabled Britain, France, and Spain to concentrate on competing economically rather than militarily. Each nation was already acting to subordinate its North American colonies to serve its larger imperial goals. Thereafter, the two principal powers, Britain and France, sought to integrate their American colonies into single imperial economies. Spain pursued a similar course but was limited in its ability to control developments north of Mexico and the Caribbean.

Mercantilist Empires in America

The imperial practices of Britain, France, and Spain were rooted in a set of political-economic assumptions known as mercantilism. The term refers to policies aimed at guaranteeing prosperity by making a nation as economically self-sufficient as possible by eliminating dependence on foreign suppliers, damaging foreign competitors' commercial interests, and increasing its net stock of gold and silver by selling more abroad than buying.

Britain's mercantilist policies were articulated above all in a series of Navigation Acts governing commerce between England and its colonies. Parliament enacted the first Navigation Act in 1651, requiring that colonial trade be carried on in English- or colonial-owned vessels in order to wrest control of that trade from Dutch mer-

chants. After the Restoration, Parliament enacted the Navigation Acts of 1660 and 1663, barring colonial merchants from exporting such commodities as sugar and tobacco anywhere except to England, and from importing goods in non-English ships. An act in 1672 provided administrative machinery to enforce these rules. Finally, the Molasses Act of 1733 taxed all foreign molasses (produced from sugar plants and imported primarily for distilling rum) entering the mainland colonies at sixpence per gallon. This act was intended less to raise revenue than to serve as a tariff that would protect British West Indian sugar producers at the expense of their French rivals.

The Navigation Acts affected the British colonial economy in four major ways. First, they limited all imperial trade to British-owned ships whose crews were at least three-quarters British. The acts classified all colonists, including slaves (many of whom served as seamen), as British. This restriction not only contributed to Britain's rise as Europe's foremost shipping nation but also laid the foundations of an American shipbuilding industry and merchant marine. By the 1750s one-third of all "British" vessels were American-owned, mostly by merchants in New England and the middle colonies. The swift growth of this merchant marine diversified the northern colonial economy and made it more commercial. The expansion of colonial shipping also hastened urbanization by creating a need for centralized docks, warehouses, and repair shops in the colonies. By mid-century Philadelphia, New York City, Boston, and Charles Town had emerged as major transatlantic ports.

The second major way in which the Navigation Acts affected the colonies lay in their barring the export of certain “enumerated goods” to foreign nations unless these items first passed through England or Scotland. The mainland colonies’ major “enumerated” exports were tobacco, rice, furs, indigo (a Carolina plant that produced a blue dye), and naval stores (masts, hemp, tar, and turpentine). Parliament never restricted grain, livestock, fish, lumber, or rum, which together made up 60 percent of colonial exports. Parliament further reduced the burdens on exporters of tobacco and rice—the chief commodities affected by enumeration—with two significant concessions. First, it gave tobacco growers a monopoly over the British market by excluding foreign tobacco, even though this hurt British consumers. (Rice planters enjoyed a natural monopoly because they had no competitors.) Second, it minimized the added cost of landing tobacco and rice in Britain by refunding customs duties when those products were later shipped to other countries. With about 85 percent of all American tobacco and rice eventually being sold outside the British Empire, planters’ profits were reduced by less than 3 percent.

The navigation system’s third effect on the colonies was to encourage economic diversification. Parliament used British tax revenues to pay modest bounties to Americans producing such items as silk, iron, dyes, hemp, and lumber, which Britain would otherwise have had to import from other countries, and it raised the price of commercial rivals’ imports by imposing protective tariffs on them. The trade laws did prohibit Anglo-Americans from competing with large-scale British manufacturing of certain products, most notably clothing. However, colonial tailors, hatters, and housewives could continue to make any item of dress in their households or small shops. Manufactured by low-paid labor, British clothing imports generally undersold whatever the colonists could have produced given their higher labor costs. The colonists were also free to produce iron, and by 1770 they had built 250 ironworks employing thirty thousand men, a work force larger than the entire population of Georgia or of any provincial city.

Finally, the Navigation Acts made the colonies a protected market for low-priced consumer goods and other exports from Britain. Steady overseas demand for colonial products spawned a prosperity that enabled white colonists to consume ever larger amounts not only of clothing but also of dishware, home furnishings, tea, and a range of other items both produced in Britain and imported by British and colonial merchants from elsewhere. Shops sprang up in cities and rural crossroads throughout the colonies, and itinerant peddlers

took imported wares into more remote areas of the countryside. One such peddler arrived in Berwick, Maine, in 1721 and sold several kinds of cloth, a “pair of garters,” and various “small trifles” before local authorities confiscated his goods because he had failed to purchase a license. Other traders traveled to Native American communities where they exchanged cloth and other commodities for furs. As a result of colonial consumption, the share of British exports bound for North America spurted from just 5 percent in 1700 to almost 40 percent by 1760. Mercantilism had given rise to a “consumer revolution” in British America.

Cheap imported goods enabled middle-class colonists to emulate the lifestyles of their British counterparts. One of the most popular imports was tea. Colonists desired tea not simply for its caffeine or its taste. As in Britain, “taking tea” was a social occasion that called for the fashionable (as well as heat-resistant) cups, saucers, pots, and sugar bowls produced in

Staffordshire, England. “Without too much exaggeration,” writes one historian, “Staffordshire pottery might be seen as the Coca-Cola of the eighteenth century.”

The economic development of the French and Spanish colonies paled beside that of British North America. Although France’s most forceful proponent of mercantilism, Colbert (see Chapter 3) and his successors had great difficulty implementing mercantilist policies. New France gradually developed agricultural self-sufficiency and, in good years, exported some of its wheat to France’s West Indian colonies. It also exported small amounts of fish and timber to the Caribbean and to France. The colony’s chief imports were wine and brandy, its chief export, furs. Although furs were no longer very profitable by the eighteenth century, the French government maintained and even expanded the fur trade because it would need Native American military support in another war with Britain. The government actually lost money by sending large amounts of cloth, firearms, and other manufactured commodities to Indian allies in exchange for furs. Moreover, France maintained a sizable army in its Canadian colony that, like the trade with Native Americans, was a drain on the royal treasury. Meanwhile, Canada attracted little private investment from France or from within the colony. French Canadians enjoyed a comfortable if modest standard of living but lacked the private investment, extensive commercial infrastructure, vast consumer market, and manufacturing capacity of their British neighbors.

France’s greatest American success was in the West Indies where French planters emulated the English by importing large numbers of enslaved Africans to produce sugar under appalling conditions. Ironically, this success was partly a result of French planters’ defying mercantilist policies. In St. Domingue, Martinique, and Guadeloupe, many planters built their own sugar refineries and made molasses instead of shipping their raw sugar to refineries in France, as mercantilism prescribed. They then sold much of their molasses to merchants in Britain’s mainland colonies, especially Massachusetts. France attempted to duplicate its Caribbean success in Louisiana but, like New France, Louisiana remained unprofitable.

Although Spain had squandered the wealth from gold and silver extracted by the conquistadors and early colonists (see Chapter 2), its economy and that of Latin America revived during the eighteenth century. That revival did not extend to North America, where colonists conducted little overseas commerce. Spanish traders in Texas offered horses to Louisianans in exchange for French goods. Spaniards in Florida traded with English, French, and the Indian allies of both—even for com-

modities as basic as food. Without the flourishing of contraband trade, Spain’s colonies in North America might not have survived.

At bottom, Britain’s colonies differed from those of France and Spain in their respective economies and societies. While all three nations were governed according to mercantilist principles, in France and Spain most wealth was controlled by the monarchy, the nobility, and the Catholic Church. Most private wealth was inherited and took the form of land rather than liquid assets. England, on the other hand, had become a mercantile-commercial economy, and a significant portion of the nation’s wealth was in the form of capital held by merchants who reinvested it in commercial and shipping enterprises. For its part, the British government used much of its considerable income from duties, tariffs, and other taxes to enhance commerce. For example, the government strengthened Britain’s powerful navy to protect the empire’s trade and created the Bank of England in 1694 to ensure a stable money supply and lay the foundation for a network of lending institutions. These benefits extended not only to Britain but also to colonial entrepreneurs and consumers. Although Parliament intended the laws to benefit only Britain, the colonies’ per capita income rose 0.6 percent annually from 1650 to 1770, a pace twice that of Britain.

Immigration, Population Growth, and Diversity

Britain’s economic advantage over its North American rivals was reinforced by its sharp demographic edge. In 1700 approximately 250,000 non-Indians resided in English America, compared to only 15,000 French colonists and 4,500 Spanish. During the first half of the eighteenth century, all three colonial populations at least quadrupled in size—the British to 1,170,000, the French to 60,000, and the Spanish to 19,000—but this only magnified Britain’s advantage.

Spanish emigrants could choose from among that nation’s many Latin American colonies, most of which offered more opportunities than remote, poorly developed Florida, Texas, and New Mexico. Reports of Canada’s harsh winters and Louisiana’s poor economy deterred most potential French colonists. France and Spain made few attempts to attract immigrants to North America from outside their own empires. And both limited nonslave immigration to Roman Catholics, a restriction that diverted French Huguenots to the English colonies instead. The English colonies, for their part, boasted good farmlands, healthy economies, and a willingness to absorb members of most European

nationalities and Protestant denominations. While anti-Catholicism remained strong, small Jewish communities also formed in several colonial cities.

Spain regarded its northernmost colonies less as centers of population than as buffers against French and English penetration of their more valued colonies to the south. While hoping to lure civilian settlers, the Spanish relied heavily on soldiers stationed in *presidios* (forts) for defense plus missionaries who would, they hoped, settle loyal Native Americans at strategically placed missions. Most immigrants came not from Spain itself but from Mexico and other Spanish colonies.

Although boasting more people than the Spanish colonies, New France and Louisiana were comparably limited. There too the military played a strong role, while missionaries and traders worked to enhance the colony's relations with Native Americans. New France's population growth in the eighteenth century resulted largely from natural increase rather than immigration. Some rural Canadians established new settlements along the Mississippi River in Upper Louisiana, in what are now the states of Illinois and Missouri. But on the lower Mississippi, Louisiana acquired a foul reputation, and few French went there willingly. To boost its population, the government sent paupers and criminals,

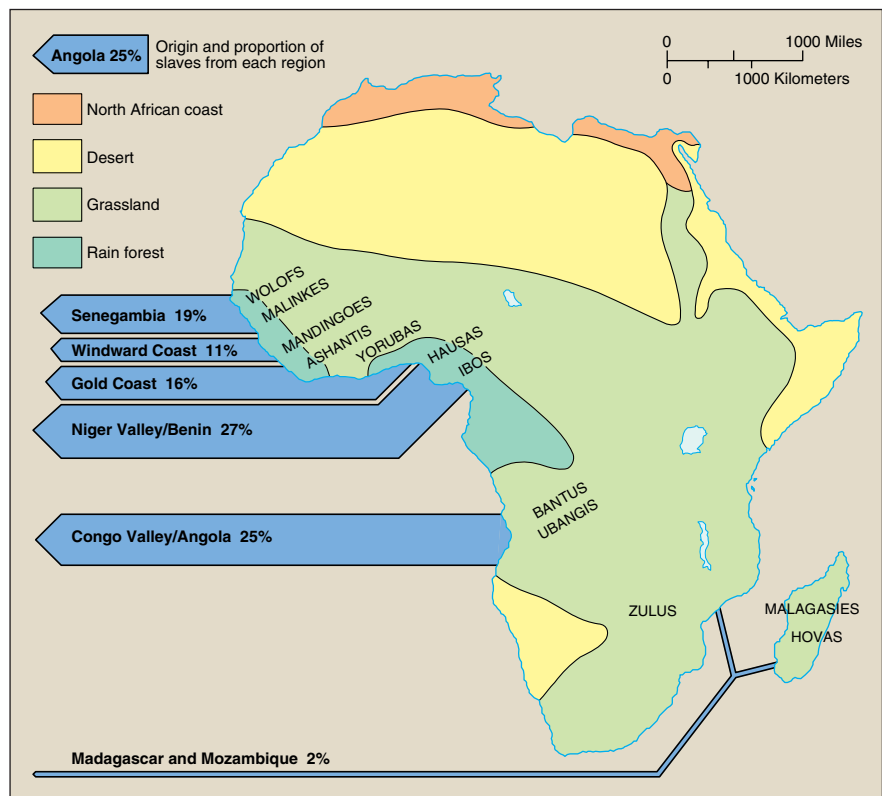
recruited some German refugees, and encouraged large-scale slave imports. By 1732 two-thirds of lower Louisiana's 5,800 people were black and enslaved.

The British colonies outpaced the population growth of not only their French and Spanish rivals but of Britain itself. White women in the colonies had an average of eight children and forty-two grandchildren, compared to five children and fifteen grandchildren for women in Britain. The ratio of England's population to that of the mainland colonies plummeted from 20 to 1 in 1700 to 3 to 1 in 1775.

Although immigration contributed less to eighteenth-century population growth than did natural increase, it remained important. In the forty years after Queen Anne's War, the colonies absorbed 350,000 newcomers, 40 percent of them (140,000) African-born slaves who had survived a sea crossing of sickening brutality. All but a few enslaved immigrants departed from West African ports from Senegambia to Angola (see Map 4.1). Most planters deliberately mixed slaves who came from various regions and spoke different languages, in order to minimize the potential for collective rebellion. But some in South Carolina and Georgia expressly sought slaves from Gambia and nearby regions for their rice-growing experience.

MAP 4.1
African Origins of North American Slaves, 1690-1807

Virtually all slaves brought to English North America came from West Africa, between Senegambia and Angola. Most were captured or bought inland and marched to the coast, where they were sold to African merchants who in turn sold them to European slave traders.



Conditions aboard slave ships were appalling by any standard. Africans were crammed into tight quarters with inadequate sanitary facilities, and many died from disease. Those who refused to eat or otherwise defied the slavers' authority were flogged. If they found the chance, a significant number of slaves hurled themselves overboard in a last, desperate act of defiance against those who would profit from their misery. A Guinea-born slave, later named Venture Smith, was one of 260 who were shipped from the Gold Coast port of Anomabu in 1735. But "smallpox . . . broke out on board," Smith recalled, and "when we reached [Barbados], there were found . . . not more than two hundred alive."

From 1713 to 1754, five times as many slaves poured onto mainland North America as in all the preceding years. The proportion of blacks in the colonies doubled, rising from 11 percent at the beginning of the century to 20 percent by midcentury. Slavery was primarily a southern institution, but 15 percent of its victims lived

north of Maryland, mostly in New York and New Jersey. By 1750 every seventh New Yorker was a slave.

Because West Indian and Brazilian slave buyers outbid the mainland colonists, a mere 5 percent of enslaved Africans were transported to the present-day United States. Unable to buy as many male field hands as they wanted, masters purchased enslaved women and protected their investments by maintaining the slaves' health. These factors promoted family formation and increased life expectancy far beyond the Caribbean's low levels (see Chapter 3). By 1750 the rate of natural increase for mainland blacks almost equaled that for whites.

As the numbers of creole (American-born) slaves grew, sharp differences emerged between them and African-born blacks in the southern colonies. Unlike African-born slaves, creoles spoke a single language, English, and were familiar from birth with their environment and with the ways of their masters. These advantages translated into more autonomy for some creoles.

Until the 1770s, planters continued to import African-born slaves to labor in their fields, especially on more remote lands recently gained from Native Americans. But as wealthier, more long-established planters diversified economically and developed more elaborate lifestyles (see below), they diverted favored creoles toward such services as shoeing horses, repairing and driving carriages, preparing and serving meals, sewing and mending clothing, and caring for planters' children.

The approximately 210,000 whites who immigrated to the British colonies during these years included a sharply reduced share from England compared to the seventeenth century (see Figure 4.1). Whereas between 1630 and 1700 about 2,000 English settlers landed annually (constituting 90 percent of all European immigrants), after 1713 the English contribution dropped to about 500 a year. Rising employment and higher wages in eighteenth-century England made voluntary immigration to America less attractive than before. But economic hardship elsewhere in the British Isles and northern Europe supplied a steady stream of immigrants, who contributed to greater ethnic diversity among white North Americans.

One of the largest contingents was made up of 100,000 newcomers from Ireland, two-thirds of them "Scots-Irish" descendants of sixteenth-century Scottish Presbyterians who had settled in northern Ireland. After 1718 Scots-Irish fled to America to escape rack renting (frequent sharp increases in farm rents), usually moving as complete families. In contrast, 90 percent of all Catholic Irish immigrants were unmarried males who arrived as indentured servants. Rarely able to find Catholic wives, they often abandoned their faith to marry Protestant women.

Meanwhile, from German-speaking regions in central Europe came 125,000 settlers, most of them fleeing terrible economic conditions in the Rhine Valley. Wartime devastation had compounded the misery of Rhenish peasants, many of whom were squeezed onto plots of land too small to feed a family. One-third of German immigrants financed their voyage by indenturing themselves or their children as servants. Most Germans were either Lutherans or Calvinists. But a significant minority belonged to small, pacifist religious sects that desired above all to be left alone.

Overwhelmingly, the eighteenth-century immigrants were poor. Those who became indentured servants worked from one to four years for an urban or rural master. Servants could be sold or rented out, beaten, granted minimal legal protection, kept from marrying, and sexually harassed. Attempted escape usually

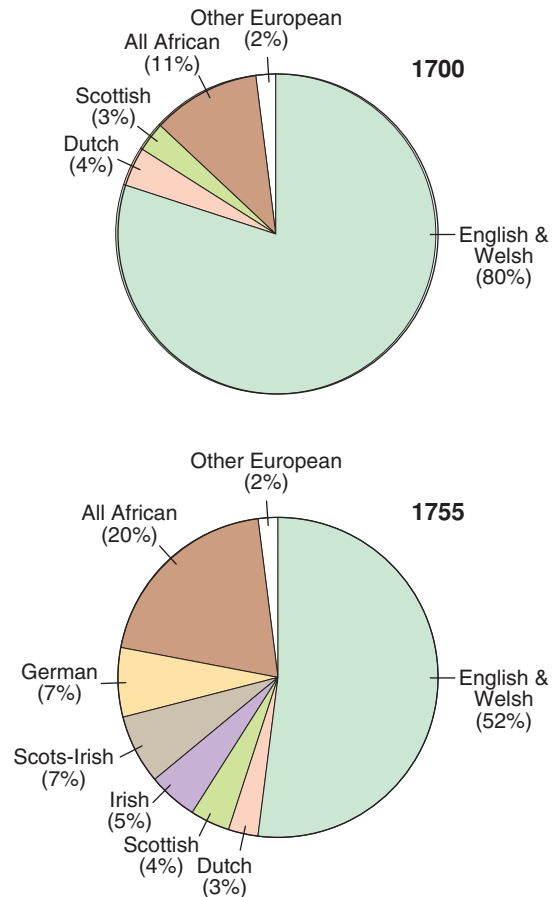


Figure 4.1 Distribution of Non-Indian Nationalities Within the British Mainland Colonies, 1700–1755

The impact of heavy immigration from 1720 to 1755 can be seen in the reduction of the English and Welsh from four-fifths of the colonial population to a slight majority; in the doubling of the African population; and in the sudden influx of Germans and Irish, who together comprised a fifth of white colonists by 1755. For a more detailed breakdown of African origins see Map 4.1.

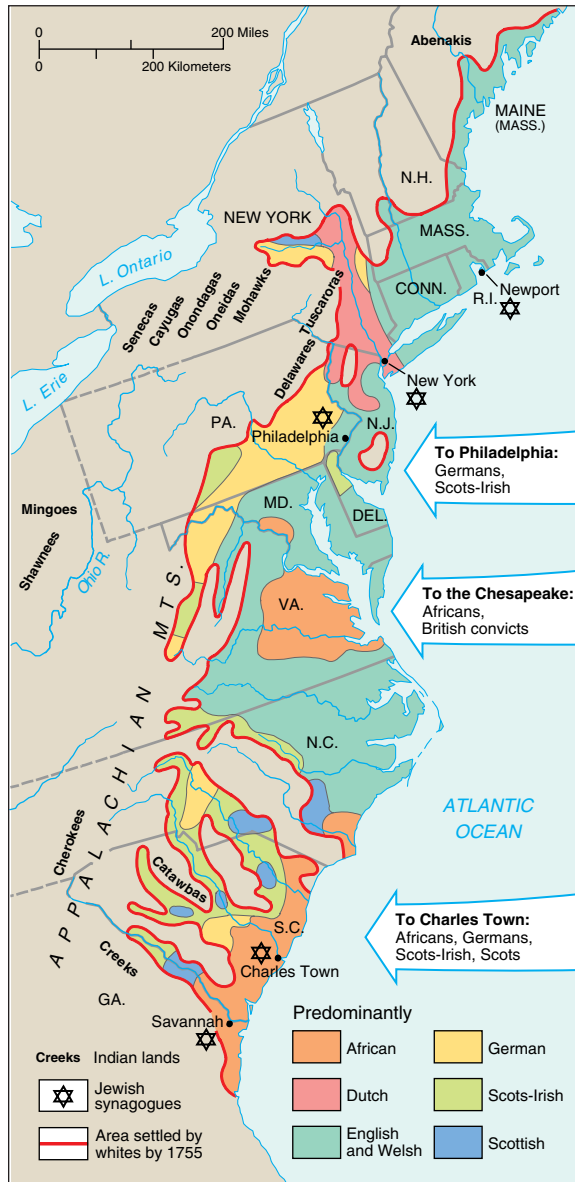
Source: Thomas L. Purvis, "The European Ancestry of the United States Population," *William & Mary Quarterly*, LXI (1984): 85–101.

meant an extension of their service. But at the end of their terms, most managed to collect "freedom dues," which could help them marry and acquire land.

Few immigrants settled in New England, New Jersey, lower New York, and the southern tidewater, where land was most scarce and expensive. Philadelphia became immigrants' primary port of entry. So many foreigners went to Pennsylvania that by 1755 the English accounted for only one-third of that colony's population; the rest came mostly from elsewhere in the British Isles and from Germany.

Rising numbers of immigrants also traveled to the Piedmont region, stretching along the eastern slope of the Appalachians. A significant German community developed in upper New York, and thousands of other Germans as well as Scots-Irish fanned southward from Pennsylvania into western Maryland. Many more from Germany and Ireland arrived in the second-most popu-

MAP 4.2
Immigration and British Colonial Expansion, to 1755
 Black majorities emerged in much of the Chesapeake tidewater and the Carolina-Georgia low country. Immigrants from Germany, Ireland, and Scotland predominated among the settlers in the piedmont. A significant Jewish population emerged in the seaports.



lar American gateway, Charles Town. Most moved on to the Carolina Piedmont, where they raised grain, livestock, and tobacco, generally without slaves. After 1750 both streams of immigration merged with an outpouring of Anglo-Americans from the Chesapeake in the rolling, fertile hills of western North Carolina. In 1713 few Anglo-Americans had lived more than fifty miles from the sea, but by 1750 one-third of all colonists resided in the Piedmont (see Map 4.2).

The least free of white immigrants were convict laborers. England had deported some lawbreakers to America in the seventeenth century, but between 1718 and 1783 about thirty thousand convicts arrived. A few were murderers; most were thieves; some were guilty of the most trivial offenses, like a young Londoner who “got intoxicated with liquor, and in that condition attempted to snatch a handkerchief from the body of a person in the street to him unknown.” Convicts were sold as servants on arrival. Relatively few committed crimes in America, and some eventually managed to establish themselves as backcountry farmers.

Affluent English-descended colonists did not relish the influx of so many people different from themselves. “These confounded Irish will eat us all up,” snorted one Bostonian. Benjamin Franklin spoke for many when he asked in a 1751 essay on population,

Why should Pennsylvania, founded by the English, become a colony of aliens, who will shortly be so numerous as to Germanize us instead of us Anglicizing them, and will never adopt our language or customs any more than they can acquire our complexion?

In the same ungenerous spirit, Franklin objected to the slave trade because it would increase America’s black population at the expense of industrious whites, and suggested that the colonists send rattlesnakes to Britain in return for its convict laborers.

Rural White Men and Women

Although the benefits of rising living standards in the British colonies were widespread, even the white population enjoyed these advantages unevenly. Except for Benjamin Franklin (who was born neither rich nor poor) and a few others, true affluence was reserved for those who inherited their wealth. For other whites, personal success was limited and came through hard work, if at all.

Because most farm families owned just enough acreage for a working farm, they could not provide all

their children with land of their own when they married. Moreover, since couples typically started having children in their mid-twenties, had their last babies sometime after forty, and lived past sixty, all but their youngest children would be approaching middle age before receiving any inheritance. Young adults rarely got more than a sixth or seventh of their parents' estate, because most families wrote wills that divided property more or less evenly among all daughters and sons. A young male had to build savings to buy farm equipment by working (from about age sixteen to twenty-three) as a field hand for his father or neighbors. Because mortgages usually required down payments of 33 percent, a young husband normally supported his growing family by renting a farm from a more prosperous landowner until his early or mid-thirties. In some areas, most notably the oldest colonized areas of New England, the continued high birthrates of rural families combined with a shortage of productive land to limit farming opportunities altogether. As a result, many young men turned elsewhere to make their livings—the frontier, the port cities, or the high seas.

Even after acquiring their own land, farmers often supplemented their incomes through seasonal or part-time work. Some learned crafts like carpentry that earned money year-round. Others trapped furs, gathered honey and beeswax, or made cider, shingles, or turpentine. Whenever possible, farmers found wintertime jobs draining meadows, clearing fields, or fencing land for wealthier neighbors.

Families worked off mortgages slowly because the long-term cash income from a farm (6 percent) about equaled the interest on borrowed money (5 to 8 percent). After making a down payment of one-third, a husband and wife generally satisfied the next third upon inheriting shares of their deceased parents' estates. They paid off the final third when their children reached their teens and the family could expand farm output with two or three full-time workers. Only by their late fifties, just as their youngest offspring got ready to leave home, did most colonial parents free themselves of debt.

In general, the more isolated a community or the less productive its farmland, the more self-sufficiency and bartering its people practiced, although only the remotest settlements were completely self-sufficient. Rural families depended heavily on wives' and daughters' making items that the family would otherwise have had to purchase. Besides cooking, cleaning, and washing, wives preserved food, boiled soap, made clothing, and tended the garden, dairy, orchard, poultry house, and pigsty. They also sold dairy products to neighbors or

merchants, spun yarn into cloth for tailors, knitted garments for sale, and even sold their own hair for wigs. A farm family's ability to feed itself and its animals was worth about half of its cash income (a luxury that few European peasants enjoyed), and women worked as much as men did in meeting this end.

Legally, however, white women in the British colonies were constrained (see Chapter 3). A woman's single most autonomous decision was her choice of a husband. Once married, she lost control of her dowry, unless she was a New Yorker subject to Dutch custom, which allowed her somewhat more authority. Women in the French and Spanish colonies retained ownership of, and often augmented, the property they brought to a marriage. Widows did control between 8 and 10 percent of all property in eighteenth-century Anglo-America, and a few—among them Eliza Pinckney of South Carolina, a prominent political figure—owned and managed large estates.

Colonial Farmers and the Environment

The rapid expansion of Britain's colonies hastened environmental change east of the Appalachians. Whereas the earliest colonists farmed land already cleared and cultivated by Native Americans, eighteenth-century settlers usually had to remove trees before beginning their plots. Despite the labor involved, farmers and planters, especially those using slave labor, preferred heavily forested areas where the soil was most fertile. New England farmers had to clear innumerable heavy rocks—debris from the last Ice Age—with which they built walls around their fields. Colonists everywhere used timber to construct their houses, barns, and fences and to provide fuel for heating and cooking. Farmers and planters also sold firewood to the inhabitants of cities and towns. Only six years after Georgia's founding, a colonist noted, there was “no more firewood in Savannah; . . . it must be bought from the plantations for which reason firewood is already right expensive.”

In removing the trees (deforestation), farmers drove away bears, panthers, wild turkeys, and other forest animals while attracting grass- and seed-eating rabbits, mice, and possums. By removing protection from winds and, in summer, from the sun, deforestation also brought warmer summers and colder winters, further increasing colonists' demand for firewood. By hastening the runoff of spring waters, it led both to heavier flooding and drier streambeds in most areas and, where water could not escape, to more extensive swamps. In turn, less stable temperatures and water levels, along with impediments created by mills and by the floating of timbers downstream, rapidly reduced the number of fish in colonial waters. Writing in 1766, naturalist John Bartram noted that fish “abounded formerly when the Indians lived much on them & was very numerous,” but that “now there is not the 100[th] or perhaps the 1000th [portion of] fish to be found.”

Deforestation dried and hardened the soil, but colonists' crops had even more drastic effects. Native Americans, recognizing the soil-depleting effects of intensive cultivation, rotated their crops regularly so that fields could lie fallow (unplanted) and thereby be replenished with vital nutrients (see Chapter 1). But many colonial farmers either did not have enough land to leave some unplanted or were unwilling to sacrifice short-term profits for potential long-term benefits.

As early as 1637, one New England farmer discovered that his soil “after five or six years [of planting corn] grows barren beyond belief and puts on the face of winter in

the time of summer.” Chesapeake planters' tobacco yields declined after only three or four years in the same plot. Like farmers elsewhere, they used animal manure to fertilize their food crops but not their tobacco, fearing that manure would spoil the taste for consumers. As Chesapeake tobacco growers moved inland to hillier areas, away from rivers and streams, they also contributed to increased soil erosion.

Confronting a more serious shortage of land and resources, Europe's well-to-do farmers were already turning their attention to conservation and “scientific” farming. But most colonists ignored such techniques, either because they could not afford to implement them or because they believed that American land, including that still held by Indians, would sustain them and future generations indefinitely.

The Urban Paradox

The cities were British North America's economic paradox. As major ports of entry and exit, they were keys to the colonies' rising prosperity; yet they held only 4 percent of the colonies' population, and a growing percentage of city-dwellers were caught in a downward spiral of declining opportunity.

As colonial prosperity reached new heights after 1740, economic success proved ever more elusive for residents of the three major seaports—Philadelphia, New York, and, especially, Boston. The cities' poor rolls bulged as poor white men, women (often widowed), and children arrived from both Europe and the colonial countryside. High population density and poor sanitation in urban locales allowed contagious diseases to run rampant, so that half of all city children died before age twenty-one and urban adults lived ten years less on average than country folk.

Even the able-bodied found cities increasingly treacherous. Early eighteenth-century urban artisans typically trained apprentices and employed them as journeymen for many years until they opened their own shops. By midcentury, however, more and more employers kept laborers only as long as business was brisk, releasing them when sales slowed. In 1751 a shrewd Benjamin Franklin recommended this practice to employers as a way to reduce labor costs. Recessions hit more frequently after 1720 and created longer spells of unemployment, making it increasingly difficult for many to afford rents, food, and firewood.

Insignificant before 1700, urban poverty became a major problem. By 1730 Boston could no longer shelter its destitute in the almshouse built in 1685. The proportion of residents considered too poor to pay taxes

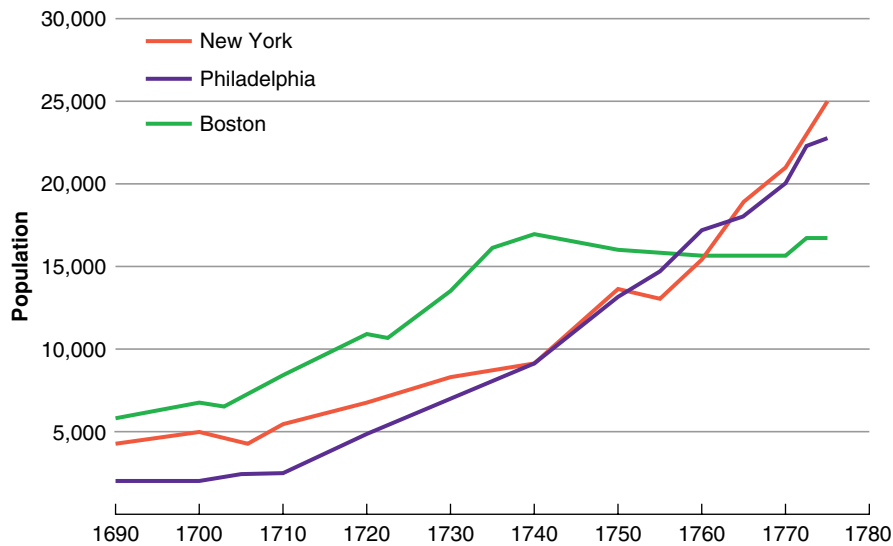


FIGURE 4.2
Populations of Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, 1690–1776

Transatlantic commerce contributed to the rapid growth of the three northern seaports. But Boston's growth leveled off in 1740 while New York and Philadelphia continued to flourish.

Source: Gary B. Nash, *The Urban Crucible: Social Change, Political Consciousness, and the Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979) p. 409.

climbed even as the total population leveled (see Figure 4.2). Not until 1736 did New York need a poorhouse (for just forty people), but by 1772, 4 percent of its residents (over eight hundred people) required public assistance to survive. The number of Philadelphia families listed as poor on tax rolls jumped from 3 percent in 1720 to 11 percent by 1760.

Wealth, on the other hand, remained highly concentrated. For example, New York's wealthiest 10 percent (mostly merchants) owned about 45 percent of the property throughout the eighteenth century. Similar patterns existed in Boston and Philadelphia. Set alongside the growth of a poor underclass in these cities, such statistics underscored the polarization of status and wealth in urban America.

Most southern cities were little more than large towns. Charles Town, however, became North America's fourth-largest city. South Carolina's capital offered gracious living to the wealthy planters who flocked from their plantations to townhouses during the months of the worst heat and insect infestation. Shanties on the city's outskirts sheltered a growing crowd of destitute whites. The colony encouraged whites to immigrate in hopes of reducing blacks' numerical preponderance, but most European newcomers could not establish farms or find any work except as ill-paid temporary laborers. Like their counterparts in northern ports, Charles Town's poor whites competed for work with urban slaves whose masters rented out their labor.

Although middle-class women in cities and large towns performed somewhat less manual drudgery than their country cousins, they nonetheless managed complex households that often included servants, slaves,

and apprentices. While raising poultry and vegetables as well as sewing and knitting, urban wives purchased their cloth and most of their food in daily trips to public markets. Many had one or more household servants, usually young single women or widows, to help with cooking, cleaning, and laundering—tasks that required more attention than in the country because of higher urban standards of cleanliness and appearance. Wives also worked in family businesses or their own shops, which were located in owners' homes.

Less affluent wives and widows had the fewest opportunities of all. They housed boarders rather than servants, and many spun and wove cloth in their homes for local merchants. Poor widows with children looked to the community for relief. Whereas John Winthrop and other Puritan forebears had deemed it a Christian's duty to care for poor dependents (see Chapter 3), affluent Bostonians in the eighteenth century looked more warily upon the needy. Preaching in 1752, the city's leading minister, Charles Chauncy, lamented "the swarms of children, of both sexes, that are continually strolling and playing about the streets of our metropolis, clothed in rags, and brought up in idleness and ignorance." Another clergyman warned that charity for widows and their children was money "worse than lost."

Slavery's Wages

For slaves, the economic progress achieved in colonial America meant only that most masters could afford to keep them healthy. Rarely, however, did masters choose to make their human property comfortable. A visitor to a Virginia plantation from Poland (where peasants lived in dire poverty) recorded this impression of slaves' quality of life:

We entered some Negroes huts—for their habitations cannot be called houses. They are far more miserable than the poorest of the cottages of our peasants. The husband and wife sleep on a miserable bed, the children on the floor . . . a little kitchen furniture amid this misery . . . a teakettle and cups . . . five or six hens, each with ten or fifteen chickens, walked there. That is the only pleasure allowed to the negroes.

To maintain slaves, masters normally spent just 40 percent of the amount paid for the upkeep of indentured servants. Whereas white servants ate two hundred pounds of meat yearly, black slaves consumed fifty pounds. The value of the beer and hard cider given to a typical servant alone equaled the expense of feeding and

clothing the average slave. Masters usually provided adult slaves with eight quarts of corn and a pound of pork each week but expected them to grow their own vegetables, forage for wild fruits, and perhaps raise poultry.

Blacks worked for a far longer portion of their lives than whites. Slave children entered the fields as part-time helpers soon after reaching seven and began working full-time between eleven and fourteen. Whereas most white women worked in their homes, barns, and gardens, black females routinely tended tobacco or rice crops, even when pregnant, and often worked outdoors in the winter. Most slaves toiled until they died, although those who survived to their sixties rarely performed hard labor.

Africans and creoles proved resourceful at maximizing opportunities within this harsh, confining system. House slaves aggressively demanded that guests tip them for shining shoes and stabling horses. They also sought presents on holidays, as a startled New Jersey visitor to a Virginia plantation discovered early one Christmas morning when slaves demanding gifts of cash roused him from bed.

In the South Carolina and Georgia rice country, slaves working under the task system gained control of about half their waking hours. Under tasking, each slave spent some hours caring for a quarter-acre, after which his or her duties ended for the day. This system permitted a few slaves to keep hogs and sell surplus vegetables on their own. In 1728 an exceptional slave, Sampson, earned enough money in his off-hours to buy another slave, whom he then sold to his master in exchange for his own freedom.

The gang system used on tobacco plantations afforded Chesapeake slaves less free time than those in Carolina. As one white observer noted, Chesapeake blacks labored "from daylight until the dusk of evening and some part of the night, by moon or candlelight, during the winter."

Despite Carolina slaves' greater autonomy, racial tensions ran high in the colony. As long as Europeans outnumbered Africans, race relations in Carolina remained relaxed. But as a black majority emerged, whites increasingly used force and fear to control "their" blacks. For example, a 1735 law, noting that many Africans wore "clothes much above the condition of slaves," imposed a dress code limiting slaves' apparel to fabrics worth less than ten shillings per yard and even prohibited their wearing their owners' cast-off clothes. Of even greater concern were large gatherings of blacks uncontrolled by whites. In 1721 Charles Town enacted a nine P.M. curfew for blacks, while Carolina's assembly

placed all local slave patrols under the colonial militia. Slaves responded to the colony's vigilance and harsher punishments with increased instances of arson, theft, flight, and violence.

Despite these measures, South Carolina (separated from North Carolina since 1729) was rocked in 1739 by a powerful slave uprising, the Stono Rebellion. It began when twenty blacks seized guns and ammunition from a store at the Stono River Bridge, outside Charles Town. Marching under a makeshift flag and crying "Liberty!" they collected eighty men and headed south toward Spanish Florida, a well-known refuge for escapees (see *A Place in Time: Mose, Florida, 1740*). Along the way they burned seven plantations and killed twenty whites, but they spared a Scottish innkeeper known for being "a good Man and kind to his slaves." Within a day, mounted militia surrounded the slaves near a riverbank, cut them down mercilessly, and spiked a rebel head on every milepost between that spot and Charles Town. Uprisings elsewhere in the colony required more than a month to suppress, with insurgents generally "put to the most cruel Death." Thereafter, whites enacted a new slave code, essentially in force until the Civil War, which kept South Carolina slaves under constant surveillance. Furthermore, it threatened masters with fines for not disciplining slaves and required legislative approval for manumission (freeing of individual slaves). The Stono Rebellion and its cruel aftermath thus reinforced South Carolina's emergence as a rigid, racist, and fear-ridden society.

Slavery and racial tensions were by no means confined to plantations. By midcentury slaves made up 20 percent of New York City's population and formed a majority in Charles Town and Savannah. Southern urban slave owners augmented their incomes by renting out the labor of their slaves, who were cheaper to employ than white workers. Slave artisans—usually creoles—worked as coopers, shipwrights, rope makers, and, in a few cases, goldsmiths and cabinetmakers. Some artisans supplemented their work as slaves by earning income of their own. Slaves in northern cities were more often unskilled. Urban slaves in both North and South typically lived apart from their masters in rented quarters alongside free blacks.

Although city life afforded slaves greater freedom of association than did plantations, urban blacks remained the property of others and chafed at racist restrictions. In 1712 rebellious slaves in New York City killed nine whites in a calculated attack. As a result, eighteen slaves were hanged or tortured to death, and six others committed suicide to avoid similar treatment. In 1741 a wave

of thefts and fires attributed to New York slaves led to similar executions of twenty-six slaves and four white accomplices, and the sale of seventy more blacks to the West Indies.

The Rise of Colonial Elites

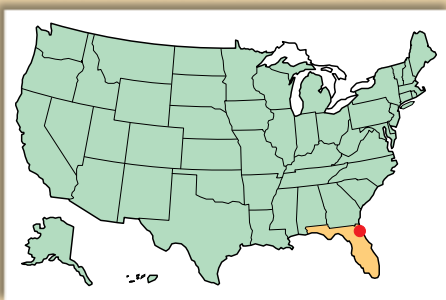
A few colonists benefited disproportionately from the growing wealth of Britain and its colonies. Most of these elite colonists inherited their advantages at birth and augmented them by producing plantation crops, buying and selling commodities across the Atlantic or carrying them in ships, or serving as attorneys for other elite colonists. They constituted British America's upper class, or gentry. (In Britain, the gentry constituted the lesser, untitled nobility.)

A gentleman was expected by his contemporaries to behave with an appropriate degree of responsibility, to display dignity and generosity, and to be a community leader. His wife, a "lady," was to be a skillful household manager and, in the presence of men, a refined yet deferring hostess.

Before 1700 the colonies' class structure was not readily apparent because elites spent their limited

A PLACE IN TIME

Mose, Florida, 1740



The Spanish presence in Florida was always tenuous and, after English colonists established Charles Town, Carolina, in 1670, vulnerable to outside attack. During the eighteenth century Spain

retained its hold in Florida by enlisting the support of Native Americans and Africans alienated by the English. In particular, by promising freedom to slaves who fled from Carolina to Florida and converted to Catholicism, the Spanish bolstered Florida's population and defenses. The black community of Mose, established near St. Augustine in 1738, vividly demonstrated the importance of these immigrants.

Blacks had lived in Florida since the founding of St. Augustine in 1565. In 1683, after Indians armed by

Carolina began attacking and capturing Florida mission Indians for sale into slavery, the Spanish colony formed a black militia unit. In 1686 fifty-three blacks and Indians conducted a counterraid into Carolina and returned with, among other prizes, thirteen of the governor's slaves. In subsequent negotiations between the two colonies, Florida's governor, Diego de Quiroga, refused English demands that he return the blacks, instead giving them paying jobs. Soon other Carolina slaves began making their way to Florida. Spain's King Charles II ruled in 1693 that all arriving slaves should be given their freedom, "so that by their example and my liberality others will do the same."

With Spain deliberately encouraging Carolina slaves to escape to Florida, the numbers continued to rise, especially during the Yamasee War (1715–1716), when the English were nearly crushed by a massive uprising of Indians. In 1726 a former South Carolina slave, Francisco Menéndez, was appointed to command a black militia unit to defend against an expected English invasion. The Spanish built a fortified village for Menéndez's men and their families in 1738 and called it Gracia Real de Santa Teresa de Mose, usually shortened to Mose, an Indian name for the location.

Mose was strategically placed just two miles north of St. Augustine, and its residents served as both sentries and a buffer for the capital. Spanish and English documents, along with recent archaeological excavations, reveal that it had sturdy earthen walls "lined round with prickly royal" (a thorny plant) and was surrounded by a moat. A stone fort was the most prominent structure inside the walls. Outside the fort the one hundred residents planted fields and gathered shellfish from the banks of a nearby saltwater stream. In a letter to the

Spanish king, Florida's governor, Manuel de Montiano, praised Menéndez for having "distinguished himself in the establishment and cultivation of Mose, . . . [and] doing all he could so that the rest of his subjects, following his example, would apply themselves and learn good customs."

To its residents Mose symbolized their new status as freed men and women. Most had been born in West Africa and enslaved and carried to Carolina. After escaping, they had lived among friendly Indians who helped them make their way to the Spanish colony. Mose was their own community, their first since being taken from Africa. In agreeing to live there, they understood the price they might have to pay. Writing to the king in 1738, they declared themselves "the most cruel enemies of the English" who were ready to shed their "last drop of blood in defense of the Great Crown of Spain and the Holy Faith."

The importance of Florida's free blacks and their town was demonstrated in 1740 when, with England and Spain at war, Georgia's governor, James Oglethorpe, led colonial troops, Indian allies, and seven warships in an invasion of Florida. The English captured Mose in May after its residents had been evacuated, but Menéndez's militia and other troops recaptured the town a month later in a fierce battle that helped Oglethorpe decide to withdraw. (The British called the battle Bloody Mose.) As a result of the English destruction of the town and the Spanish crown's refusal to fund its rebuilding, Mose's residents moved into St. Augustine. For twelve years they lived among the Spanish as laborers, seamen, and hunters and in other capacities. In 1752 a new governor had Mose rebuilt and ordered the blacks to return to their former town despite their express "desire to live in

complete liberty." To return to the town, which they once had cherished as a symbol of their freedom, after twelve years of assimilation in the capital city now seemed like relegation to second-class citizenship.

In 1763 Spain ceded Florida to Britain in the Treaty of Paris (see Chapter 5). Spanish authorities evacuated the people of Mose and allotted them homesteads in Matanzas, Cuba. But the meager provisions given the blacks proved inadequate, and many, including Francisco Menéndez, soon moved to Havana. In 1783 another Treaty of Paris returned Florida to Spain (see Chapter 6), and the following year, a new Florida governor resumed the policy of granting freedom to escaped slaves. Hearing the news and recalling Florida's earlier reputation, hundreds of slaves responded. But now Spain proceeded more cautiously with the slaveholders' government to Florida's north; and in 1790 U.S. Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson persuaded the Spanish to rescind the policy of granting freedom to escaped slaves. In 1819 the United States annexed Florida, and in 1845 Florida joined the Union as a slave state.

resources buying land, servants, and slaves instead of on luxuries. As late as 1715 a traveler noticed that one of Virginia's richest planters, Robert Beverley, owned "nothing in or about his house but just what is necessary, . . . [such as] good beds but no curtains and instead of cane chairs he hath stools made of wood."

As British mercantilist trade flourished, higher incomes enabled elite colonists to display their wealth more openly, particularly in their housing. The greater

gentry—the richest 2 percent, owning about 15 percent of all property—constructed residences such as the Cornelius Low House, New Jersey's most splendid home in 1741, and the Shirley mansion in Virginia. The lesser gentry, or second wealthiest 2 to 10 percent holding about 25 percent of all property, lived in more modest dwellings such as Pennsylvania's Lincoln homestead or the wood-frame house, Whitehall in Rhode Island. In contrast, middle-class farmers commonly inhabited one-story wooden buildings with four small rooms and a loft.

Colonial gentlemen and ladies also exhibited their status by imitating the "refinement" of upper-class Europeans. They wore costly English fashions, drove carriages instead of wagons, and bought expensive chinaware, books, furniture, and musical instruments. They pursued a gracious life by studying foreign languages, learning formal dances, and cultivating polite manners. In sports men's preference shifted to horse racing (on which they bet avidly) and away from cockfighting, a less elegant diversion. A few young gentlemen even traveled abroad to get an English education. Thus, elites led colonists' growing taste for British fashions and consumer goods (see above).

COMPETING FOR A CONTINENT, 1713–1750

After a generation of war, Europe's return to peace in 1713 only heightened British, French, and Spanish imperial ambitions in North America. Europeans competed in expanding their territorial claims, intensifying both trade and warfare with Native Americans, and carving out new settlements. Native Americans welcomed some of these developments and resisted others, depending on how they expected their sovereignty and livelihoods to be affected.

France and Native Americans

A principal focus of France's imperial efforts was its new colony of Louisiana (see Chapter 3). In 1718 Louisiana officials established New Orleans, which became the colony's capital and port. Louisiana's staunchest Indian allies were the Choctaws, through whom the French hoped to counter both the rapidly expanding influence of Carolina's traders and the weakening Spanish presence in Florida. But by the 1730s inroads by the persistent Carolinians led the Choctaws to become bitterly divided into pro-English and pro-French factions.

Life was dismal in Louisiana for whites as well as blacks. A thoroughly corrupt government ran the colony. With Louisiana's sluggish export economy failing to sustain them, settlers and slaves found other means of survival. Like the Indians, they hunted, fished, gathered wild plants, and cultivated gardens. In 1727 a priest described how some whites eventually prospered: "A man with his wife or partner clears a little ground, builds himself a house on four piles, covers it with sheets of bark, and plants corn and rice for his provisions; the next year he raises a little more for food, and has also a field of tobacco; if at last he succeeds in having three or four Negroes, then he is out of difficulties."

But many red, white, and black Louisianans depended on exchanges with one another in order to stay "out of difficulties." Indians provided corn, bear oil, tallow (for candles), and above all deerskins to French merchants in return for blankets, kettles, axes, chickens, hogs, guns, and alcohol. Indians from west of the Mississippi brought horses and cattle, usually stolen from Spanish ranches in Texas. Familiar with cattle from their homelands, enslaved Africans managed many of Louisiana's herds, and some became rustlers and illicit traders of beef.

French settlements in Upper Louisiana, usually referred to as "Illinois," were somewhat better off.

Although more than a third of the colony's twenty-six hundred inhabitants were nonwhite slaves in 1752, their principal export was wheat, a more reliably profitable crop than the plantation commodities grown farther south. In exporting wheat, Illinois resembled Pennsylvania to the east; but the colony's remote location limited such exports and attracted few whites, obliging it to depend on France's Native American allies to defend it from Indian enemies.

With Canada and the Mississippi Valley secure from European rivals, France sought to counter growing British influence in the Ohio Valley. The valley was at peace after the Iroquois declared their neutrality in 1701, encouraging Indian refugees to settle there. Nations such as the Kickapoos and Mascoutens returned from the upper Great Lakes, while Shawnees arrived from the east to reoccupy older homelands. Other arrivals were newcomers, such as Delawares escaping English encroachments and Seneca Iroquois seeking new hunting territories. Hoping to secure commercial and diplomatic ties with these Natives, the French expanded their trade activities. Detroit and several other French posts ballooned into sizable villages housing Indians, French, and mixed-ancestry *métis*. But English traders were arriving with better goods at lower prices, and most Indians steered a more independent course.

Although generally more effective in Indian diplomacy than the English, the French did not enjoy universal success. The Carolina-supported Chickasaws frequently attacked the French and their native allies on the Mississippi River. Although ultimately unsuccessful, the Mesquakie, or Fox, Indians led a prolonged effort to prevent French traders from making direct contact with Sioux Indians to the west. And the French in 1729–1730 brutally suppressed the Natchez Indians, the last practitioners of Mississippian culture, in order to gain additional plantation land. The French enslaved many Native Americans seized in these wars for labor in Louisiana, Illinois, Canada, and (in a few cases) the West Indies.

By 1744 French traders were traveling as far west as North Dakota and Colorado and were buying beaver pelts and Indian slaves on the Great Plains. At the instigation of these traders and their British competitors, trade goods, including guns, spread to Native Americans throughout central Canada and then to the Plains. Meanwhile, Indians in the Great Basin and southern Plains were acquiring horses, thousands of which had been left behind by the Spanish when they fled New Mexico during the Pueblo Revolt of 1680. Adopting the horse and gun, Indians such as the Lakota Sioux and Comanches moved to the Plains and built a new, highly mobile way of life based on the pursuit of buffalo. With this way of life, they met whites traveling westward to adopt their own new ways of life a century later (see Chapter 17). By 1750 France had an immense domain, but one that depended on often-precarious relations with Native Americans.

Native Americans and British Expansion

As in the seventeenth century, British colonial expansion was made possible by the depopulation and dislocation of Native Americans. Epidemic diseases, environmental changes, war, and political pressures on Indians to cede land and to emigrate all combined to make new lands available to white immigrants.

Conflict came early to Carolina, where a trade in Indian slaves (see Chapter 3) and imperial war had already produced violence. In 1711 Iroquoian-speaking Tuscarora Indians, provoked by whites encroaching on their land and kidnapping and enslaving some of their people, destroyed New Bern, a nearby settlement of seven hundred Swiss immigrants. To retaliate, northern Carolina enlisted the aid of southern Carolina and its well-armed Indian allies. By 1713, after about a thousand Tuscaroras (about one-fifth of the total population)

had been killed or enslaved, the nation surrendered. Most Tuscarora survivors migrated northward to what is now upstate New York and in 1722 became the sixth nation of the Iroquois Confederacy.

Having helped defeat the Tuscaroras, Carolina's Indian allies resented a growing number of abuses, including cheating, violence, and enslavement, by English traders and encroachments on their land by settlers. In 1715 the Yamasees, who were most seriously affected, led a coordinated series of attacks by Catawbans, Creeks, and other allies on English trading houses and settlements. Only by enlisting the aid of the Cherokee Indians, and allowing four hundred slaves to bear arms, did the colony crush the uprising. Yamasees not killed or captured fled to Florida or to Creek towns in the interior.

The defeat of the Yamasees left their Catawba supporters vulnerable to pressures from English on one side and Iroquois on the other. As Carolina settlers moved uncomfortably close to some Catawba villages, the inhabitants abandoned these villages and joined more remote Catawbans. Having escaped the settlers, however, the Catawbans faced rising conflict with the Iroquois. After making peace with the Indian allies of New France in 1701 (see above), the Iroquois looked south when launching raids for captives to adopt into their ranks. To counter the well-armed Iroquois, the Catawbans turned back to South Carolina. By ceding land and helping defend that colony against outside Indians, the Catawbans received guns, food, and clothing. Their relationship with the English allowed the Catawbans the security they needed to strengthen their traditional institutions. However, the growing gap in numbers between Natives and colonists, and their competition with the English for resources, limited the Catawbans' autonomy.

To the north, the Iroquois Confederacy accommodated English expansion while consolidating its own power among Native Americans. Late in the seventeenth century, the Iroquois and several colonies forged a series of treaties known as the Covenant Chain. Under these treaties the Confederacy helped the colonies subjugate Indians whose lands the English wanted. Under one such agreement, the Iroquois assisted Massachusetts in subjugating that colony's Natives following King Philip's War in New England. Under another, the Susquehannock Indians, after being crushed in Bacon's Rebellion, moved northward from Maryland to a new homeland adjacent to the Iroquois' own. By relocating non-Iroquois on their periphery as well as by inviting the Tuscaroras into their Confederacy, the Iroquois controlled a center of Native American power that was distinct from, but cooperative with, the British. At the same

time, the Confederacy established buffers against, and deflected, potential English expansion to their own lands.

The Covenant Chain grew more powerful with Pennsylvania's entry in 1737. With immigration and commercial success, William Penn's early idealism waned in Pennsylvania. Between 1729 and 1734 the colony coerced the Delaware Indians into selling more than fifty thousand acres. Then the colony's leaders (Penn's sons and his former secretary) produced a patently fraudulent treaty in which the Delawares allegedly had agreed in 1686 to sell their land as far westward as a man could walk in a day and a half. In 1737, Pennsylvania blazed a trail and hired three men to walk west as fast as they could. The men covered nearly sixty miles, meaning that the Delawares, in what became known as the Walking Purchase, had to hand over an additional twelve hundred square miles of land. Despite the protests of Delaware elders who had been alive in 1686 and remembered no such treaty, the Delawares were forced to move under Iroquois supervision. The proprietors then sold these lands to settlers and speculators at a large profit. Within a generation, the Delawares' former lands were among the most productive in the British Empire.

British Expansion in the South: Georgia

Britain's undertook a new expansionist thrust in 1732 when Parliament authorized a new colony, Georgia. Ignoring Spain's claims, Oglethorpe purchased the land for Georgia from Creek Indians. Although expecting Georgia to export expensive commodities like wine and

silk, the colony's sponsors intended that Georgia be a refuge for bankrupt but honest debtors. Parliament even allotted funds to ensure Georgia's success, making it the only North American province besides Nova Scotia to be directly subsidized by the British government.

A tough-minded idealist, James Oglethorpe, dominated the provincial board of trustees during Georgia's first decade. Oglethorpe founded the port of entry, Savannah, in 1733, and by 1740 a small contingent of twenty-eight hundred colonists had arrived. Almost half the immigrants came from Germany, Switzerland, and Scotland, and most had their overseas passage paid by the government. A small number of Jews were among the early colonists. Along with Pennsylvania, early Georgia was the most inclusive of all the British colonies.

Oglethorpe hated slavery. "They live like cattle," he wrote to the trustees after viewing Charles Town's slave market. "If we allow slaves, we act against the very principles by which we associated together, which was to relieve the distressed." Slavery, he thought, degraded blacks, made whites lazy, and presented a terrible risk. Oglethorpe worried that wherever whites relied on a slave labor force, they courted slave revolts, which the Spanish could then exploit. But most of all, he recognized that slavery undermined the economic position of poor whites like those he sought to settle in Georgia.

At Oglethorpe's insistence, Parliament made Georgia the only colony where slavery was outlawed. Oglethorpe also pushed through a requirement that landholdings be no larger than five hundred acres. These measures were aimed at keeping rural Georgia populated by white, independent farmer-soldiers who would defend the colony and would not speculate in real estate or build up slave-labor plantations.

But Oglethorpe's well-intentioned plans failed completely. Few debtors arrived because Parliament set impossibly stringent conditions for their release from prison. Limitations on settlers' rights to sell or enlarge their holdings, as well as the ban on slavery, also discouraged immigration. Raising exotic export crops proved impractical. As in South Carolina, only rice, which required substantial capital and many cheap laborers, proved profitable. Oglethorpe struggled against economic reality for a decade and then gave up. After the trustees legalized slavery and lifted restrictions on landholdings in 1750, Georgia, like Britain's other plantation colonies, boomed.

Spain's Tenacity

While endeavoring to maintain its empire in the face of Native American, French, and British adversaries, Spain spread its language and culture over much of North America, especially in the Southwest. Seeking to repopulate New Mexico after the Pueblo Revolt, Spain awarded grants of approximately twenty-six square miles wherever ten or more families founded a town. Soldiers erected strong fortifications to protect against Indian attacks, now coming primarily from the Apaches. As in early New England towns, the settlers built homes on small lots around the church plaza, farmed separate fields nearby, grazed livestock at a distance, and shared a community wood lot and pasture.

The livestock-raising ranchos, radiating out for many miles from little clusters of houses, monopolized vast tracts along the Rio Grande and blocked further town settlement. On the ranchos, mounted cattle herders created the way of life later associated with the American cowboy, featuring lariat and roping skills, cattle drives, roundups (rodeos), and livestock branding.

By 1750 New Mexico numbered about 14,000, more than half of them Pueblo Indians. Most Pueblos now cooperated with the Spanish, and although many had converted to Catholicism, they also practiced their traditional religion. The two peoples continued to experience Apache raids, now augmented by those of armed and mounted Utes from the north and Comanches from the east. The raiders sought livestock and European goods as well as captives, often to replace those of their own people who had been enslaved by Spanish raiders and sent to mine silver in Mexico.

Spain had established Texas in order to counter growing French influence among the Comanches and other Native Americans on the southern Plains (see Chapter 3). Colonization began after 1716, when Spaniards established several outposts on the San Antonio and Guadalupe Rivers. The most prominent center was at San Antonio de Béxar, where two towns, a presidio, and a mission (later known as the Alamo) were clustered. But most Indians in Texas preferred trading with the French to farming, Christianity, and the ineffective protection of the Spanish. Lack of security also deterred Hispanic settlement, so that by 1760 only twelve hundred Spaniards faced the periodic raids by Comanches and other Indians.

Spain's position in Florida was equally precarious. After 1715 the neutrality of the Creeks enabled the Spanish to compete with the English and French in the southeastern deerskin trade, though with limited effectiveness, and to sponsor Indian counterraids into Carolina. In addition, the Spanish offered freedom to any English-owned slaves who escaped and made their way to Florida (see *A Place in Time: Mose, Florida, 1740*). As in Texas, Florida's relatively few colonists hampered Spain's ability to counter its chief imperial rival in the region. As early as 1700, there were already thirty-eight hundred English in recently founded Carolina, compared to just fifteen hundred Spanish in Florida. This disparity widened during the decades that followed. The Spanish saw Georgia's founding in 1733 as a bold new threat to Florida, but fought the English colony to a bloody draw when Spain and England went to war (see below).

By 1750 Spain controlled much of the Southeast and Southwest, while France exercised influence in the

Mississippi, Ohio, and Missouri River valleys, as well as around the Great Lakes and in Canada (see Map 4.3). Both empires were spread thin and depended on the goodwill or acquiescence of Native Americans. In contrast, British North America was compact, wealthy, densely populated by non-Indians, and aggressively expansionist.

The Return of War, 1739–1748

After a generation of war ended in 1713, the American colonies enjoyed a generation of peace as well as prosperity. But in 1739 British launched a war against Spain, using as a pretext Spain's cutting off the ear of a British smuggler named Jenkins. (Thus the British termed the conflict the War of Jenkins' Ear.) In 1740 James Oglethorpe led a massive British assault on Florida. Although failing to seize St. Augustine (see A Place in Time: Mose, Florida, 1740), he led 650 men in repelling 3,000 Spanish troops and refugee South Carolina slaves who counterattacked Georgia in 1742. Meanwhile 3,500

colonists joined a British assault on Cartagena, in what is now Colombia, but more than half perished due to Spain's repelling the attack and to yellow fever.

The Anglo-Spanish War quickly merged with a second one in Europe, the War of the Austrian Succession, called King George's War in British America (1740–1748). King George's War followed the pattern of earlier imperial conflicts. Few battles involved more than six hundred men, and most were attacks and counterattacks on civilians in the Northeast in which many noncombatants were killed and others captured. Most captives were New Englanders seized by French and Indians from isolated towns. Although prisoners were exchanged at the end of the war, some English captives, particularly women and children, elected to remain with the French or Indians.

King George's War produced just one major engagement. In 1745 almost four thousand New Englanders under William Pepperell of Maine besieged and, after seven weeks of intense fighting, captured the French bastion of Louisbourg, which guarded the entrance to the St. Lawrence River. After three more years

MAP 4.3
French and Spanish Occupation of North America, to 1750
 While British colonists concentrated themselves on the Atlantic seaboard, the French and Spanish together established themselves thinly over two-thirds of the present-day United States.



of inconclusive warfare, Britain signed the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle (1748), exchanging Louisbourg for a British outpost in India that the French had seized. The memory of how their sacrifices at Cartagena and Louisbourg went for naught would rankle colonists thereafter.

PUBLIC LIFE IN BRITISH AMERICA, 1689–1750

During the early and middle eighteenth century, the ties linking Britain and its colonies consisted of much more than the movements of goods and peoples. England's new Bill of Rights was the foundation of government and politics in the colonies. The ideas of English thinkers initially inspired the intellectual movement known as the Enlightenment, while the English preacher George Whitefield sparked a generation of colonists to transform the practice of Protestantism in British America. While reinforcing the colonies' links with Britain, these developments were also significant because they involved many more colonists than before as active participants in politics, in intellectual discussions, and in new religious movements. Taken as a whole, this wider participation signaled the emergence of a new phenomenon in colonial life, the "public."

Colonial Politics

The most significant political result of the Glorious Revolution was the rise of colonial legislatures, or assem-

blies, as a major political force. Except in Connecticut and Rhode Island, the crown or a proprietor in England chose each colony's governor. Except in Massachusetts, the governor named a council, or upper house of the legislature. The assembly was the only political body subject to control by colonists rather than by English officials. Before 1689 governors and councils took the initiative in drafting laws, and the assemblies followed their lead; but thereafter the assemblies assumed a more central role in politics.

Colonial leaders argued that their legislatures should exercise the same rights as those won by Parliament in its seventeenth-century struggle with royal authority. Indeed, Anglo-Americans saw their assemblies as miniature Houses of Commons, which represented the people and defended their liberty against centralized authority, in particular by its exclusive power to originate revenue-raising measures. After Parliament won supremacy over the monarchy through the Bill of Rights in 1689, assemblymen insisted that their governors' powers were similarly limited.

The lower houses steadily asserted their prestige and authority by refusing to permit outside meddling in their proceedings, by taking firm control over taxes and budgets, and especially by keeping a tight rein on executive salaries. Although governors had considerable powers (including the right to veto acts, call and dismiss assembly sessions, and schedule elections), they were vulnerable to legislatures' financial pressure because they received no salary from British sources and relied

on the assemblies for income. This “power of the purse” sometimes enabled assemblies to force governors to sign laws opposed by the crown.

The assemblies’ growing importance was reinforced by British policy. The Board of Trade, established in 1696 to monitor American developments, could have weakened the assemblies by persuading the crown to disallow objectionable colonial laws signed by the governors. But it rarely exercised this power before midcentury. The resulting political vacuum allowed the colonies to become self-governing in most respects except for trade regulation, restrictions on printing money, and declaring war. Representative government in the colonies originated and was nurtured within the protective environment of the British Empire.

The elite planters, merchants, and attorneys who monopolized colonial wealth also dominated politics. Most assemblymen ranked among the wealthiest 2 percent of colonists. To placate them, governors invariably appointed other members of the greater gentry to sit on their councils and as judges on the highest courts. Although members of the lesser gentry sat less often in the legislature, they commonly served as justices of the peace.

Outside New England (where any voter was eligible for office), legal requirements barred 80 percent of white men from running for the assembly, most often by specifying that a candidate must own a minimum of a thousand acres. (Farms then averaged 180 acres in the South and 120 acres in the middle colonies.) Even without such property qualifications (as New England showed), few ordinary colonists could have afforded to hold elective office. Assemblymen received only living expenses, which might not fully cover the cost of staying at their province’s capital, much less compensate a farmer or an artisan for his absence from farm or shop for six to ten weeks a year. As a result, a few wealthy families in each colony dominated the highest political offices. Nine families, for example, provided one-third of Virginia’s royal councilors after 1680. John Adams, a rising young Massachusetts politician, estimated that most towns in his colony chose their legislators from among just three or four families.

By eighteenth-century standards, the colonies set liberal qualifications for male voters, but all provinces barred women and nonwhites from voting. In seven colonies voters had to own land (usually forty to fifty acres), and the rest demanded that an elector have enough property to furnish a house and work a farm with his own tools. About 40 percent of free white men—mostly indentured servants and young men still living with parents or just beginning family life—could not

meet these requirements. Still, most white males in British North America could vote by age forty, whereas two-thirds of all men in England and nine-tenths in Ireland were never eligible.

In rural areas voter participation was low unless a vital issue was at stake. The difficulties of voting limited the average rural turnout to about 45 percent (a rate of participation higher, however, than in typical U.S. elections today, apart from those for president). Most governors called elections when they saw fit, so that elections might lapse for years and suddenly be held on very short notice. Thus voters in isolated areas often had no knowledge of upcoming contests. The fact that polling took place at the county seat discouraged many electors from traveling long distances over poor roads to vote. In several colonies voters stated their choices orally and publicly, often with the candidates present. This procedure inhibited the participation of those whose views differed from those of elites. Finally, most rural elections before 1750 were uncontested. Local elites decided in advance which of them would “stand” for office. Regarding office-holding as a gentleman’s public duty, they considered it demeaning to appear interested in being chosen, much less to compete or “run” for a position.

Given all these factors, many rural voters were indifferent about politics at the colony level. For example, to avoid paying legislators’ expenses at the capital, many smaller Massachusetts towns refused to elect assemblymen. Thirty percent of men elected to South Carolina’s assembly neglected to take their seats from 1731 to 1760, including a majority of those chosen in 1747 and 1749.

Despite these limitations, rural elections slowly emerged as community events in which many nonelite white men participated. In time, rural voters would follow urban colonists and express themselves more forcefully.

Meanwhile, a truly competitive political life developed in the northern seaports. Depending on their economic interests, wealthy colonists aligned themselves with or against royal and proprietary governors. To gain advantage over rivals, some factions courted artisans and small shopkeepers whose fortunes had stagnated or declined as the distribution of urban wealth tilted increasingly toward the rich. In actively courting nonelite voters, they scandalized rival elites who feared that an unleashing of popular passions could disturb the social order.

New York was the site of the bitterest factional conflicts. In one episode in 1733, Governor William Cosby suspended his principal rival, Lewis Morris, from Morris' position as chief justice after Morris ruled against the governor. To mobilize popular support for Morris, his faction established the *New-York Weekly Journal*, which repeatedly accused Cosby and his associates of rampant corruption. In 1734 the governor's supporters engineered the arrest of the *Weekly Journal's* printer, John Peter Zenger, on charges that he had seditiously libeled Cosby. Following a celebrated trial in August 1735, Zenger was acquitted.

Although it did not lead to a change in New York's libel law nor significantly enhance freedom of the press at the time, the Zenger verdict was significant for several reasons. In New York and elsewhere, it encouraged the broadening of political discussion and participation beyond a small circle of elites. Equally significant were its legal implications. Zenger's brilliant attorney, Andrew Hamilton, effectively seized on the growing colonial practice of allowing attorneys to speak directly to juries on behalf of defendants. He persuaded the jury that it alone, without the judge's advice, could reject a charge of libel "if you should be of the opinion that there is no falsehood in [Zenger's] papers." Until then, truth alone had not served as a sufficient defense against a charge of libel in British and colonial courts of law. By empowering nonelites as voters, readers, and jurors, the Morris-Cosby rivalry and the Zenger trial encouraged their participation in New York's public life.

The Enlightenment

If property and wealth were the keys to political participation and officeholding, literacy and education permitted Anglo-Americans to participate in the trans-Atlantic world of ideas and beliefs. Perhaps 90 percent of New

England's adult white men and 40 percent of white women could write well enough to sign documents, thanks to the region's traditional support for primary education. Among white males elsewhere in the colonies, the literacy rate varied from about 35 percent to more than 50 percent. (In England, by contrast, no more than one-third of all males could read and write.) How readily most of these people read a book or wrote a letter was another matter.

The best-educated colonists—members of the gentry, well-to-do merchants, educated ministers, and growing numbers of self-improving artisans and farmers—embraced a wider world of ideas and information. Though costly, books, newspapers, and writing paper could open up eighteenth-century European civilization to reading men and women. A rich, exciting world it was. Scientific advances seemed to explain the laws of nature; human intelligence appeared poised to triumph over ignorance and prejudice. For those who had the time to read and think, an age of optimism and progress was dawning, an age known as the Enlightenment.

Enlightenment ideals combined confidence in human reason with skepticism toward beliefs not founded on science or strict logic. A major source of Enlightenment thought was English physicist Sir Isaac Newton (1642–1727), who in 1687 explained how gravitation ruled the universe. Newton's work captured Europe's imagination by demonstrating the harmony of natural laws and stimulated others to search for rational principles in medicine, law, psychology, and government.

Before 1750 no American more fully embodied the Enlightenment spirit than Benjamin Franklin. Born in Boston in 1706, Franklin migrated to Philadelphia at age seventeen. He brought along skill as a printer, considerable ambition, and insatiable intellectual curiosity. In moving to Philadelphia, Franklin put himself in the right place at the right time, for the city was growing much more rapidly than Boston and was attracting merchants and artisans who shared Franklin's zest for learning and new ideas. Franklin organized some of these men into a reading-discussion group called the Junto, and they helped him secure printing contracts. In 1732 he first published *Poor Richard's Almanack*, a collection of maxims and proverbs that made him famous. By age forty-two Franklin had earned enough money to retire and devote himself to science and community service.

These dual goals—science and community benefit—were intimately related in Franklin's mind, for he believed that all true science would be useful, in the sense of making everyone's life more comfortable. For example, experimenting with a kite, Franklin demon-

strated in 1752 that lightning was electricity, a discovery that led to the lightning rod.

Although some southern planters, such as Thomas Jefferson, eventually championed progress through science, the Enlightenment's earliest and primary American centers were cities, where the latest European books and ideas circulated and where gentlemen and self-improving artisans met to investigate nature and conduct experiments. Franklin organized one such group, the American Philosophical Society, in 1743 to encourage "all philosophical experiments that let light into the nature of things, tend to increase the power of man over matter, and multiply the conveniences and pleasures of life." By 1769 this society had blossomed into an intercolonial network of amateur scientists. The societies emulated the Royal Society in London, the foremost learned society in the English-speaking world. In this respect, the Enlightenment initially strengthened the ties between colonial and British elites.

Although confident that science would benefit everyone, the Enlightenment's followers envisioned progress as gradual and proceeding from the top down. They trusted reason far more than they trusted the common people, whose judgment, especially on religious matters, seemed too easily deranged.

Just as Newton inspired the scientific bent of Enlightenment intellectuals, English philosopher John Locke, in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690), led many to embrace "reasonable" or "rational" religion. Locke contended that ideas, including religion, are not inborn but are acquired by toilsome investigation of and reflection upon experience. To most Enlightenment intellectuals, the best argument for the existence of God was the harmony and order of nature, which pointed to a rational Creator. Some individuals, including Franklin and, later, Jefferson and Thomas Paine, carried this argument a step farther by insisting that where the Bible conflicted with reason, one should follow the dictates of reason rather than the Bible. Called Deists, they concluded that God, having created a perfect universe, did not miraculously intervene in its workings but rather left it alone to operate according to natural laws.

Most colonists influenced by the Enlightenment described themselves as Christians and attended church. But they feared Christianity's excesses, particularly as indulged in by those who persecuted others in religion's name and by "enthusiasts" who emphasized emotion rather than reason in the practice of piety. Mindful of Locke's caution that no human can be absolutely certain of anything but his or her own existence, they distrusted zealots and sectarians. Typically,

Franklin contributed money to most of the churches in Philadelphia but thought that religion's value lay in its encouragement of virtue and morality rather than in theological hair splitting.

In 1750 the Enlightenment's greatest contributions to American life still lay in the future. A quarter-century later, Anglo-Americans drew on the Enlightenment's revolutionary ideas as they declared their independence from Britain and created the foundations of a new nation (see Chapters 5 and 6). Meanwhile, a series of religious revivals known as the Great Awakening challenged the Enlightenment's most basic assumptions.

The Great Awakening

Viewing the world as orderly and predictable, rationalists were inclined to a sense of smug self-satisfaction. Writing his will in 1750, Franklin thanked God for giving

him “such a mind, with moderate passions” and “such a competency of this world’s goods as might make a reasonable mind easy.” But many Americans lacked such a comfortable competency of goods and lived neither orderly nor predictable lives. For example, in 1737 and 1738 an epidemic of diphtheria, a contagious throat disease, killed every tenth child under sixteen from New Hampshire to Pennsylvania. Such an event starkly reminded colonists of the fragility of earthly life and turned their thoughts to religion.

Throughout the colonial period, religious fervor periodically quickened within a denomination or region and then receded. But in 1739 an outpouring of European Protestant revivalism spread to British North America. This “Great Awakening,” as its promoters termed it, cut across lines of class, gender, and even race. Above all, the revivals represented an unleashing of anxiety and longing among ordinary people—anxiety about sin, and longing for assurances of salvation. The answers

they received were conveyed through the powerful preaching of charismatic ministers who appealed directly and brazenly to their audiences’ emotions rather than to their intellects. Some revivalists were themselves intellectuals, comfortable amid the books and ideas of the Enlightenment. But for all, religion was primarily a matter of emotional commitment.

In contrast to rationalists, who stressed the potential for human betterment, revivalist ministers roused their audiences into outbursts of religious fervor by depicting the emptiness of material comfort, the utter corruption of human nature, the fury of divine wrath, and the need for immediate repentance. Although he was a brilliant thinker, well aware of contemporary philosophy and science, the Congregationalist Jonathan Edwards, who led a revival at Northampton, Massachusetts, in 1735, drove home this message with breathtaking clarity. “The God that holds you over the pit of Hell, much as one holds a spider or other loathsome insect over the fire, abhors you,” Edwards intoned in one of his famous sermons, “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God.” “His wrath toward you burns like fire; He looks upon you as worthy of nothing else but to be cast into the fire.”

Even before Edwards’s Northampton revival, two New Jersey ministers, Presbyterian William Tennent and Theodore Frelinghuysen of the Dutch Reformed Church, had stimulated conversions in prayer meetings called Refreshings. But the event that brought these various threads of revival together was the arrival in 1739 of George Whitefield (see above). So overpowering was Whitefield that some joked that he could make crowds swoon simply by uttering “Mesopotamia.” In age without microphones, crowds exceeding twenty thousand could hear his booming voice clearly, and many wept at his eloquence.

Whitefield’s American tour inspired thousands to seek salvation. Most converts were young adults in their late twenties. In Connecticut alone, the number joining churches jumped from 630 in 1740 to 3,217 after Whitefield toured in 1741. Within two more years, every fifth Connecticut resident under forty-five had reportedly been saved by God’s grace. Whitefield’s allure was so mighty that he even awed potential critics. Hearing him preach in Philadelphia, Benjamin Franklin first vowed to contribute nothing to the collection. But so admirably did Whitefield conclude his sermon, Franklin recalled, “that I empty’d my Pocket wholly into the Collector’s Dish, Gold and all.”

Divisions over the revivals quickly developed in Whitefield’s wake and were often exacerbated by social and economic tensions. For example, after leaving

Boston in October 1740, Whitefield invited Gilbert Tennent (William's son) to follow "in order to blow up the divine flame lately kindled there." Denouncing Boston's established clergymen as "dead Drones" and lashing out at aristocratic fashion, Tennent built a following among the city's poor and downtrodden. So did another preacher, James Davenport, who was expelled for having said that Boston's clergy were leading the people blindfolded to hell.

Exposing colonial society's divisions, Tennent and Davenport corroded support for the revivals among established ministers and officials. As Whitefield's exchange with Alexander Garden showed, the lines hardened between the revivalists, known as New Lights, and the rationalist clergy, or Old Lights, who dominated the Anglican, Presbyterian, and Congregational churches. In 1740 Gilbert Tennent published *The Danger of an Unconverted Ministry*, which hinted that most Presbyterian ministers lacked saving grace and hence were bound for hell, and urged parishioners to abandon them for the New Lights. By thus sowing the seeds of doubt about individual ministers, Tennent undermined one of the foundations of social order. For if the people could not trust their own ministers, whom would they trust?

Old Light rationalists fired back. In 1742 Charles Chauncy, Boston's leading Congregationalist, condemned the revival as an epidemic of the "enthusiasm" that enlightened intellectuals so loathed. Chauncy particularly blasted those who mistook the ravings of their overheated imaginations for the experience of divine grace. He even provided a kind of checklist for spotting enthusiasts: look for "a certain wildness" in their eyes, the "quakings and tremblings" of their limbs, and foaming at the mouth, Chauncy suggested. Put simply, the revival had unleashed "a sort of madness."

The Great Awakening opened unprecedented splits in American Protestantism. In 1741 New and Old Light Presbyterians formed rival branches that did not reunite until 1758, when the revivalists emerged victorious. The Anglicans lost many members to New Light congregations, especially Presbyterian and Baptist. Congregationalists splintered so badly that by 1760, New Lights had seceded from one-third of New England's churches and formed separate congregations.

The secession of New Lights was especially bitter in Massachusetts and Connecticut, where the Congregational church was established by law. To force New Lights into paying tithes to their former church, Old Lights repeatedly denied new churches legal status. Connecticut passed repressive laws forbidding revivalists to preach or perform marriages, and the colony expelled many New Lights from the legislature. In

Connecticut's Windham County, an extra story had to be added to the jail to hold all the New Lights arrested for not paying tithes. Elisha Paine, a revivalist imprisoned there for illegal preaching, gave sermons from his cell and drew such crowds that his followers built bleachers nearby to hear him. Paine and his fellow victims generated widespread sympathy for the New Lights, who finally won control of Connecticut's assembly in 1759.

Although New Lights made steady gains until the 1770s, the Great Awakening peaked in 1742. The revival then crested everywhere but in Virginia, where its high point came after 1755 with an upsurge of conversions by Baptists, who also suffered legal harassment.

For all the commotion it raised at the time, the Great Awakening's long-term effects exceeded its immediate impact. First, the revival marked a decline in the influence of Quakers (who were not significantly affected by revivalism), Anglicans, and Congregationalists. In undermining Anglicans and Congregationalists, the Great Awakening contributed to the weakening of officially established denominations. As these churches' importance waned after 1740, the number of Presbyterians and Baptists increased.

The Great Awakening also stimulated the founding of new colleges as both Old and New Lights sought institutions free of one another's influence. In 1746 New Light Presbyterians established the College of New Jersey (Princeton). Then followed King's College (Columbia) for Anglicans in 1754, the College of Rhode Island (Brown) for Baptists in 1764, Queen's College (Rutgers) for Dutch Reformed in 1766, and Dartmouth College for Congregationalists in 1769.

The revivals were also significant because they spread beyond the ranks of white society. The emphasis on piety over intellectual learning as the key to God's grace led some Africans and Native Americans to combine aspects of their traditional cultures with Christianity. The Great Awakening marked the beginnings of black Protestantism after New Lights reached out to slaves, some of whom joined white churches and even preached at revival meetings. Meanwhile, a few New Light preachers became missionaries to Native Americans residing within the colonies. A few Christian Indians, such as Samson Occom, a Mohegan born in Connecticut, became widely known as preachers themselves. Despite these breakthroughs, blacks and Indians still faced considerable religious discrimination, even among New Lights.

The Great Awakening also added to white women's religious prominence. For several decades ministers had singled out women—who constituted the majority of church members—as embodying the Christian ideal of

piety. Now some New Light churches, mostly Baptist and Congregationalist, granted women the right to speak and vote in church meetings. Like Anne Hutchinson a century earlier, some women moved from leading women's prayer and discussion groups to presiding over meetings that included men. One such woman, Sarah Osborn of Newport, Rhode Island, conducted "private praying Societies Male and female" that included black slaves in her home. In 1770 Osborn and her followers won a bitter fight over their congregation's choice of a new minister. While most assertive women were prevented from exercising as much power as Osborn, none was persecuted as Hutchinson had been in Puritan New England.

Finally the revivals had the unintended effect of blurring denominational differences among Protestants. Although George Whitefield was an Anglican who defied his superior, Garden, and later helped found Methodism, he preached with Presbyterians such as Gilbert Tennent and Congregationalists like Jonathan Edwards. By emphasizing the need for salvation over doctrinal and institutional fine points, revivalism emphasized Protestants' common experiences and promoted the coexistence of denominations.

Historians have disagreed over whether the Great Awakening had political as well as religious effects. Although Tennent and Davenport called the poor "God's people" and flayed the wealthy, they never advocated a social revolution, and the Awakening did not produce a distinct political ideology. Yet by empowering ordinary people to assert and act openly on beliefs that countered those in authority, the revivals laid some of the groundwork for political revolutionaries a generation later.

CONCLUSION

By 1750 Britain's mainland colonies barely resembled those of a century earlier. Mercantilist policies bound the colonies to the rising prosperity of the British Empire. A healthy environment for whites, along with a steady supply of Native Americans' land, enabled the population to grow and expand at an astonishing rate. The political settlement that followed England's Glorious Revolution provided the foundation for representative government in the colonies. Educated Anglo-Americans joined the intellectual ferment known as the Enlightenment. The Great Awakening, with its European origins and its intercolonial appeal, further signaled the colonies' emergence from provincial isolation.

The achievements of France and Spain on the North American mainland contrasted starkly with those of Britain. More lightly populated by Europeans, their colonies were largely remote from the more dynamic centers of Atlantic commerce. Despite their mercantilist orientations, neither France nor Spain developed colonies that substantially enriched the home country. And neither could avoid depending militarily on Native Americans for their colonies' survival.

For all of its evident wealth and progress, British America was rife with tensions. In some areas, vast discrepancies in the distribution of wealth and opportunities fostered a rebellious spirit among whites who were less well off. The Enlightenment and the Great Awakening revealed deep-seated religious and ideological divisions. Slave resistance and Anglo-Indian warfare demonstrated the depths of racial antagonisms. The revived imperial warfare of 1739–1748 added to the uncertainties of colonial life.

FOR FURTHER REFERENCE

READINGS

Bernard Bailyn and Philip D. Morgan, eds., *Strangers Within the Realm: Cultural Margins of the First British Empire* (1991). Leading historians examine the interplay of ethnicity and empire in North America, the Caribbean, and the British Isles.

CHRONOLOGY, 1660–1750

- 1651–1733** England enacts Navigation Acts.
- 1660** Restoration of the English monarchy.
- 1686–1689** Dominion of New England.
- 1688–1689** Glorious Revolution in England.
- 1689–1691** Uprisings in Massachusetts, New York, and Maryland; royal authority established.
- 1689–1697** King William's War (in Europe, War of the League of Augsburg).
- 1690** John Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*.
- 1693** Spain begins offering freedom to English slaves escaping to Florida.
- 1701** Iroquois Confederacy's Grand Settlement with England and France.
- 1702–1713** Queen Anne's War (in Europe, War of the Spanish Succession).
- 1711** Tuscarora War in Carolina.
- 1715–1716** Yamasee War in Carolina.
- 1716** San Antonio de B6xar founded.
- 1718** New Orleans founded.
- 1729–1730** French war on Natchez Indians in Louisiana.
- 1733** Georgia founded.
- 1735** John Peter Zenger acquitted of seditious libel in New York. Jonathan Edwards leads revival in Northampton, Massachusetts.
- 1737** Walking Purchase of Delaware Indian lands in Pennsylvania.
- 1739** Great Awakening begins with George Whitefield's arrival in British colonies. Stono Rebellion in South Carolina.
- 1739–1744** Anglo-Spanish War.
- 1743** Benjamin Franklin founds American Philosophical Society.
- 1744–1748** King George's War (in Europe, the War of the Austrian Succession).
- 1750** Slavery legalized in Georgia.

Jon Butler, *Becoming America: The Revolution Before 1776* (2000). A provocative discussion of the British colonies, arguing that they became a distinctive modern society between 1680 and 1770.

- W. J. Eccles, *France in America*, rev. ed. (1991). An interpretive overview of French colonization in North America and the Caribbean by a distinguished scholar.
- Ronald Hoffman et al., eds., *Through a Glass Darkly: Reflections on Personal Identity in Early America* (1997). Essays that explore issues of personal identity for individual Americans during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.
- John J. McCusker and Russell R. Menard, *The Economy of British America, 1607–1789*, rev. ed. (1991). A comprehensive discussion of the economy, drawing on a wide range of scholarship.
- James H. Merrell, *Into the Woods: Negotiators on the Pennsylvania Frontier* (1999). A brilliant, innovative study of intercultural diplomacy as practiced by Indians and colonists.
- Philip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Lowcountry* (1998). The definitive study of African-American life in Britain's southern colonies.
- Daniel K. Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America* (2001). A highly original examination of colonial American history from the perspective of Native Americans.
- Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *The Age of Homespun: Objects and Stories in the Creation of an American Myth* (2001). A pathbreaking study that uses New England women's work with textiles as a window into economic, gender, and cultural history.
- David J. Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (1992). A masterful synthesis of Spanish colonial history north of the Caribbean and Mexico.

WEBSITES**From Indentured Servitude to Racial Slavery**

<http://innercity.org/holt/slavechron.html>

Part 1, 1619–1789, includes an excellent discussion of slavery and the slave trade in North America, including African contexts. Features useful maps and links to primary and secondary sources.

Historic Deerfield Collections and Research

<http://www.historic-deerfield.org/collections/collections.html>

View furniture, china, and other examples of elite consumption in eighteenth-century New England. Photos are accompanied by information on artisans and techniques.

Religion and the Founding of the American Republic

<http://lcweb.loc.gov/exhibits/religion/rel02.html>

Part 2, Religion in Eighteenth-Century America, shows the role of religion in the British colonies, examining both the revivals and the deism of Enlightenment thinkers. Includes illustrations from the period.

For additional works please consult the bibliography at the end of the book.