Chapter 3: Planting Colonies in North America, 1598–1701

Chapter Review

1. AMERICAN COMMUNITIES Communities Struggle with Diversity in Seventeenth-Century Santa Fe

In 1680 the Pueblo peoples of the American southwest revolted against the Spanish. No longer willing to tolerate Spanish labor practices, chafing under Spanish militarism, unable to accept the violations of their religious places and practices perpetuated by the Catholic priests, and under great stress as a result of prolonged drought, population decimation resulting from widespread epidemics, and the ongoing conflict with the Apache peoples, the Pueblos had simply had enough. For a time the Pueblo set up their own confederacy and contested for the right to live unmolested. Within three years the Spanish had crushed the Pueblo resistance. But the Spanish had learned a lesson and while they did not give up the right to rule over the land and the people, their methods became more tolerant and based on the mutual interests of both peoples.

1. SPAIN AND ITS COMPETITORS IN NORTH AMERICA

Europeans imposed their views and will on the continent and its peoples, including the widespread use of the Spanish term “Indios.” When the seventeenth century opened, Spain alone had mainland North American settlements. Just twenty years later, however, the French, Dutch, and English were all establishing settlements. They all shared some similar traits. But they also differed, most notably over the extent to which they included or excluded the Native American peoples from their settlements. Policies of inclusion and exclusion extended to religious conversion, individual intermixing, and geographic boundaries.

a. New Mexico

Spain’s interest in the continental southwest was tenuous, growing and fading based on rumors of wealth, conversion of souls, Indian resistance, and missionary ventures. Juan de Onate’s attempt to find wealth in 1598 led to numerous brutalities against the Pueblo peoples and no great riches. He was recalled by 1606 and political and military interest in the region ceased. The Catholic Church filled the void, helping to establish Santa Fe as a center for missionary work. The region remained mostly populated by Indians and mestizos and became a “frontier of inclusion.” But it still received very little attention from Mexico City.

b. New France

The French came with the idea of monopolizing the trade in furs. Samuel de Champlain set up the first colony in Acadia on the coast but quickly moved to establish Quebec along the St. Lawrence from which control of the access to the interior was assured. The French established alliances with the Hurons to gain great inland access to trapping grounds and control the trade. The French practiced the most inclusive of all colonial systems, sending traders to live among the Indians, helping the Hurons challenge and defeat their enemies within the Iroquois Confederacy, marrying into Indian tribes, not seeking to dispossess the tribes of their land, and seeking to integrate their Catholicism into Indian life and mores rather than forced conversion. New France grew only slowly, despite La Salle’s claim of the entire Mississippi watershed, owing to small clusters of riverbank farmers, the widespread use of hired men who ultimately returned home, and the main focus centered on the wilderness.

c. New Netherland

The Dutch from Holland used their military and economic prowess to establish colonies through trading companies whose vessels were often protected by men-of-war ships. The Dutch trading empire extended to China, India, Africa, Brazil, the Caribbean, and North America, making it the most successful and powerful of all the empires. Their efforts in North America were in the New York interior (present-day Albany) and Manhattan Island and even reached down into the lower reaches of the Delaware River area. In contrast to the French, the Dutch sided with the Iroquois and assisted them in their fight for control of the fur trade against the Hurons. The Dutch wealth and supplies allowed the Iroquois to conduct the Beaver Wars of the 1640s which eventually resulted in their control of the trade. Despite their economic and political discourse with the Indians, when it came to social and religious matters the Dutch presented a “frontier of exclusion.”

1. ENGLAND IN THE CHESAPEAKE

England’s first colonial attempts were failures, more often as a consequence of events in Europe than any inability of the colonies to thrive.

a. Jamestown and the Powhatan Confederacy

Once England’s wars with Spain were over, she turned her attention to the North American mainland. Using the Dutch example of chartering corporations to bear the risk of exploration and settlement, most notably the Virginia Company. The colony of Jamestown was established in 1607 with a predetermined practice of exclusion with respect to the Native Americans. But both sides needed each other for their own ends (even if they did not wish to live together) and Wahunsonacock, chief of the Powhatan peoples, agreed to allow English settlement and engage in trade in exchange for the goods and services he needed to secure his own power and status. Jamestown’s prospects for success were uncertain. Shifting ties with the Indians, internal dissent, and lack of substantial re-supply from England all led to mass waves of disease, starvation, and violence. When the Company decided to secure its position by sending a new wave of settlers and supplies they also ordered the colonists to engage the Powhatan peoples in a sustained war in order to end their resistance. Although the capture and marriage of Pocahontas (Matoka) was a symbol of possible peace and inclusion, it was but an exception to the well-entrenched practices of exclusion by the English.

b. Tobacco, Expansion, and Warfare

Tobacco became the first viable commercial commodity for the Virginia colony after John Rolfe developed a hybrid variety that was milder than the native crop in the Americas and smoking became fashionable in Europe. Tobacco cultivation, though highly lucrative, was labor intensive and exhausted the soil very quickly. This led to a massive importation of labor from England as well as an equally massive push westward into Indian lands. The Indians responded, in 1622, with an all-out assault on the colonists, killing nearly one-third of all settlers. The “Good Friday” attack resulted in a conflict that would linger for a decade. In 1624 the Crown converted Virginia into a Royal Colony and facilitated continued immigration so that by 1640, despite disease, violence, and other challenges, the colony numbered 10,000 and in 1670 it stood at nearly 40,000. The Powhattans tried one more attempt to rid themselves of the English presence in 1644, but were soundly defeated and relegated to a few small areas of land.

c. Maryland

Founded in 1634 following a grant of 10 million acres by a grateful King, Maryland was a proprietary colony owned in its entirety by the Calvert family. The Lords Baltimore were also Catholic and thus encouraged Catholic immigration to the colony by making it the only colony to support and protect Catholics as a minority and appoint Catholic landowners to important political positions. Although very different in culture and customs, economically Maryland quickly emulated Virginia by establishing a tobacco plantation economy. The demand for labor and land altered the Calvert’s original plans to create a system of land tenure based on feudal land rents (rather than giving ownership) to one based on headright grants.

d. Indentured Servants

Nearly three-quarters of all immigrants came to the Chesapeake region as indentured servants. In exchange for the costs of transportation they pledged to labor for a set term of service. The terms varied by circumstances, skills, gender, and age. Most terms for unskilled, young males ranged from two to seven years. Servants were treated rather harshly and worked without regard for personal health, often treated no better than slaves. Disease and fatigue meant that two-fifths of all indentures died before their term of service ended. Slaves, introduced in 1619, were far more expensive and thus not nearly as prevalent.

e. Community Life in the Chesapeake

Women’s relative scarcity in the colonies gave them certain social and economic advantages, particularly when they were single or widowed. They were often able to secure substantial shares of property and estates far beyond what the law proscribed as part of their marital arrangements. The communities and settlements, and living conditions, were often much more crude than in Europe, with few towns, only the rare church or school, and a much dispersed population. Yet, the region had grown to 90,000 by 1700 and retained close ties with England.

1. THE NEW ENGLAND COLONIES

The northern region of North America was different from the Chesapeake in terms of climate, customs, culture, and commodities, making it a vastly different place.

a. The Social and Political Values of Puritanism

The followers of John Calvin became known as the Puritans for their desire to purify the English Church. And they were attracted to the Puritan faith by its encouragement of enterprise. But they were also critics of the consequences of social and economic change. Seeing themselves as advocates for change, they were often in conflict with the established leaders and religion, leading to Charles I’s decision to curtail their rights or force their departure.

b. Early Contacts in New England

First contact by the English with the region that eventually became New England was established by a fleet sent from Jamestown to keep the French and Dutch at bay. John Smith later traveled to the region and gave it its modern name. The English were aided in their hopes of settling this region by an epidemic between 1616 and 1618 that wiped out nearly half of the native population in the region.

c. Plymouth Colony

The Pilgrims were the first to establish an English colony within the region, arriving in September 1620 aboard the *Mayflower*. The Pilgrims were religious separatists and their community consisted of families and hired, single men. This situation led to the drafting of the Mayflower Compact, giving both the hired men and Pilgrim leaders a say in the government of Plymouth settlement. Like Jamestown, however, the colonists struggled in their first year, nearly half dying of disease and starvation, only to be rescued by the local Indians, the Pokanokets, in exchange for an alliance against the Narragansets. With this help and through the development of a cod fishing economy, the Pilgrims were able to sustain their colony.

1. COMMUNITIES IN CONFLICT

William Bradford wrote “History of Plimouth Plantation” and Thomas Morton “New English Canaan.” Bradford laments the licentiousness of the local Indians and certain colonists who cavort with them as they erected a maypole and celebrated and, most alarmingly, were schooled in the use of firearms and then were able to trade for the weapons. Morton, who was scorned by Bradford, defended the Indians’ behavior as positive step in securing an alliance and integrating the native peoples into the New England colonial sphere.

a. The Massachusetts Bay Colony

The changing political and religious situation in England led another group of separatists, the Puritans, to seek refuge in New England. In 1629 a Royal Charter was granted to the Massachusetts Bay Company, who then sent 200 settlers to establish a settlement. Under the leadership of John Winthrop they created the “city in a hill” that was to serve as a model for reform in England. Over the next fourteen years nearly 20,000 Puritans flocked to the colony, resulting in numerous villages, the creation of Boston, and stretching seventy-five miles into the interior. Because their charter allowed them to establish rule within the colony itself, a government evolved within the colony that centered on a governor, deputy, board of magistrates, and all freemen with rights and privileges of voting and church membership. Eventually the delegates chosen by the freemen from each town were formed into two legislative houses. This was the origin of American democratic suffrage and bicameral legislative representation.

b. Dissent and New Communities

The Puritans, despite being persecuted in Europe, were not tolerant of religious differences. This not only created theological schisms but also political separation as well. Thomas Hooker protested Puritan controls on male suffrage and founded in Connecticut in 1636. That same year Roger Williams was banished from the colony for advocating religious toleration and left to found Rhode Island. A year later, Anne Hutchinson was also banished, after denouncing the arbitrary power of the clergy and their theological teachings that ran counter to her views of Puritanism. She left to join Williams in Rhode Island, for which Williams had received a Royal Charter in 1644.

c. Indians and Puritans

While the English settlers of the region were interested in the fur trade, their primary interest was in expanding their land holdings to accommodate their growing communities and agricultural needs. They were very different than the French and Dutch and employed a “frontier of exclusion” as much as possible. This led to conflicts with the local natives as the New England governments declared the authority to take all land not enclosed or fenced. Relations between the natives and settlers deteriorated to such an extent that the English often forced the Indians into submission, forced them to sign quitclaims, and continued to harass the natives even as their population numbers declined due to disease and conflict. The lone surviving tribe of some strength, the Pequots, came under attack and was singled out for destruction by the English colonists.

d. The New England Merchants

The English Civil War, won by the Puritans under the leadership of Oliver Cromwell, led to the creation of the English Commonwealth and the end of Puritan persecution. This resulted in many colonists deciding to return home. Meanwhile the New England merchant class emerged as they began shipping cod to the Caribbean and eventually developing an entire fleet of transatlantic vessels, making Boston the third largest trading center in the British world and diversifying the New England economy.

e. Community and Family in New England

A well-ordered community was essential to the Plymouth and Massachusetts colonists. Lands and privileges were allotted according to wealth and social status, securing the social hierarchy, placing both the church and village at the center of the social and physical landscape. Puritan families were equally well-ordered by hierarchy and reaffirmed through the educational system. Towns were required to build a public school and Harvard College was established for higher learning in 1636. Literacy among males was among the highest in the British world. Puritans, while they also had their rules and conservative leanings, were very liberated. Within marriage and courtship, sexuality was celebrated, families often operated as cooperative ventures—sharing both the work and the fruits of labor. Men, however, were still the hierarchy in almost all matters, from property ownership to community status. Women had to submit to men in most matters and those who failed to follow the community strictures were often viewed with suspicion or chastised.

f. The Salem Witch Trials

Cultural suspicion of women who did not conform to the social expectations was one of the leading causes of the era of witchcraft scares. Most charges of witchcraft were dismissed as baseless or seen for the social anxieties that spawned them. But in 1692 the entire community of Salem became embroiled in a series of accusations. Before the hysteria was halted twenty people were tried, convicted, and executed for sorcery. Scholars have clearly shown that the Salem event was fostered by the social and economic tensions manifest by migrations, uneven economic growth, and the continuing insecurities about independent, single women.

1. THE PROPRIETARY COLONIES

With the death of Cromwell and the end of the Commonwealth, Charles II assumed the throne and took an active interest in North America and sought to establish new proprietary colonies.

a. Early Carolina

The two Carolinas, North and South, were chartered by Charles in 1663 and 1670, respectively. Settlement in each area had begun long before those dates as thousands of Virginia settlers had steadily moved into the Albemarle Sound area over three decades and hundreds of planters from Barbados had been moving to the lands beyond Charles Town encouraged by land grants and the ability to bring their slaves. Charles also wanted to take over the Dutch colony of New Netherlands. The conflict over control of the Dutch territories and trade, particularly in Africa raged throughout a series of conflicts known as the Anglo-Dutch Wars. In 1664 during the second war, an English fleet sailed to Manhattan and forced the surrender of the Dutch colony. Although this was a tenuous possession and for a time the Dutch regained control, ultimately it fell permanently into the English sphere of power. Charles granted the land to his brother James and renamed it New York. New York was one of the most diverse of the English colonies, including many different peoples and customs and ultimately its southernmost territory was split off to form modern-day New Jersey.

b. The Founding of Pennsylvania

Originally split off from the western region of New Jersey, the proprietary grant of land that became Pennsylvania was granted to William Penn in 1681 as repayment for a debt owed by the King. Penn, a dissenting Quaker, used the territory to establish a “holy experiment” and through the Frame of Government (and subsequent revisions) guaranteed religious freedoms, civil liberties, and elected representation. Penn also sought to protect the Indians from the pressures of colonization. As Penn’s widespread tolerance and liberties attracted more than 20,000 settlers in its first two decades, the colony became the home to the nation’s leading port, Philadelphia, and the leading agricultural producing region as well. In 1704 a southern tip of the colony was split off, with Penn’s approval, to form Delaware.

1. CONFLICT AND WAR

The social, economic, religious, political, and territorial pressures resulting from rapid expansion of English colonization and the quest for land resulted in a long-lasting period of violence throughout the colonies from 1675 onward.

a. King Philip’s War

Despite the fact that thousands of Indians had converted to Christianity and lived in “praying towns” near established New England villages, the tensions continued to mount throughout the seventeenth century as the colonists sought more land. Metacom (King Philip to the English) had been raised and educated among the New Englanders, and sought inclusion for his peoples among them. But he felt betrayed when he was forced to cede sovereignty of his homelands. He formed an alliance with the Narragansets, which sparked a hostile response from the colonists who set out to attack and burn the Pokanoket villages. The Indians quickly gained the upper hand, but over the next two years found themselves outnumbered and under attack not just from the colonists but also the Iroquois to the southwest. In 1676 the Pokanokets were routed, Metacom beheaded, the praying towns destroyed and over 6,000 people dead, two-thirds of them natives. The resulting peace left the power and prominence of the Iroquois virtually uncontested.

b. Bacon’s Rebellion and Southern Conflicts

The typical issues of land and labor also sparked a series of violent outbreaks and attack upon the natives in Virginia in 1676. As the demand for land pushed Virginians ever further westward the Indians due to rising taxes and exhausted soil, the Governor William Berkeley sided with the Indians and their important role in the colonial trade. Upset that the landed gentry of the east would not support the needs of an increasing landless freemen population, Nathaniel Bacon, a wealthy member of the gentry seeking his frontier fortunes, led a band of freemen against the Indians in repeated and brutal attacks. Berkeley tried to quell the unrest by calling for elections and allowing Bacon to have a role in the Governor’s Council, but Bacon extended his grievances to include the policies of the Crown and Governor, attacked Jamestown, causing Berkeley to flee. Bacon’s followers destroyed the village. But their leader died soon thereafter, Berkeley reasserted control and executed many of Bacon’s followers. This was the first revolt of many that pitted the tidewater and costal region elites against the backcountry farmers.

c. The Glorious Revolution in America

Events in England also resulted in unrest and violence in America. When Charles II died and his brother James II reasserted control over the colonies, many of the colonies balked as they found themselves consolidated under the Dominion of New England (all of New England, New York, and New Jersey) and the fears that James would spread his Catholicism over all of the colonies and England. His ouster in 1688 in favor of his Protestant daughter Mary and her husband William of Orange, resulted in the bloodless “Glorious Revolution” that bestowed a Bill of Rights, respect for civil liberties, an increased role for Parliament, and a restricted monarchy upon the people of England and her colonies. In the colonies, the overthrow set of a series of rebellions against James’ appointed officials, the revocation of the Dominion of New England, and the restoration of self-government under the auspices of colonial assemblies and charters. Still, Massachusetts, Maryland, and New York remained as Royal Colonies.

d. King William’s War

This was the first skirmish in a seventy-five year war between the English and the French. As both empires contested for control of trade and the interior of the North American continent, frontier attacks by combined native and European forces raged throughout the regions of New England and the Great Lakes. As a result of this constant turmoil and the expense associated with defending her claims in North America, England tightened control over the colonies.

1. EXPLORING AMERICA

a. Jamestown

This module examines the myths and realities of Jamestown as students learn about the reasons behind the settlement’s establishment, the interactions between the Powhattan peoples and the settlers, and how the colony changed over time as its residents responded to the realities they encountered in the new land.

b. Witches in the American Imagination

This module allows students to come to terms with the actions and consequences of the Salem Witchcraft trial through an understanding of the European antecedents, and the numerous other witchcraft trials that did not end in mass executions.

Chapter Resources at a Glance

**Maps**

New Mexico in the Seventeenth Century

New France in the Seventeenth Century (plus outline and interactive map on CD-ROM)

European Colonies of the Atlantic Coast, 1607–1639 (plus outline and interactive map on CD-ROM)

The Proprietary Colonies (plus outline and interactive map on CD-ROM)

Spread of Settlement: British Colonies, 1650–1700 (plus outline and interactive map on CD-ROM)

**Visual Sources**

Acoma Pueblo

Huron Men Funneling Deer

The Founding of New France

John Smith’s Map of Virginia

Eighteenth-century Engraving

Governor John Winthrop

The First Map Printed in the English Colonies

The Mason Children

New Amsterdam

The Wampum Belt

A Map of New England

**Figures**

Population Growth of the British Colonies in the Seventeenth Century

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, students should be able to explain:

1. How the planting of colonies by European powers compared.

2. The role of Native Americans in the success and failure of colonization.

3. The impact of colonization on the culture and lives of the Native peoples.

4. The distinctions between the colonial regions within the English sphere of settlement

5. How a century of English settlement ended in open warfare with the Native Americans.

Discussion Suggestions and Possible Answers

1. Was violence between the Indians and Europeans inevitable?

**Answer:** While not inevitable, violence was nearly always the result of European settlement. Europeans often formed alliances with specific native tribes, relationships that were grounded in promises to assist the tribes against their enemies. Even these alliances often resulted in violence as the two sides rarely agreed on all matters and particularly as the nature of the relationship changed and Europeans came to be seen less as partners or trading agents and more as settlers who threatened the Indian hold on land and resources.

1. How did the Indians change as a result of European settlement?

**Answer:** Many tribes were forced to relocate as Europeans expanded their physical presence, thus creating conflicts among the various tribes. Indians also adopted many European ways, some wholly and some in part, that led to changes in their tribal relationships, religious beliefs, and economic status. Most notably, the Indians changed as a result of the persistent depopulation that was the result of constant encroachment and contact. Many tribes were forced to either subjugate themselves to the Europeans or fight.

1. Were Virginia and Massachusetts similar or different and in what ways?

**Answer:** While both were settled by English subjects and both practiced a “frontier of exclusion” when it came to the Indians, the two colonies were vastly different. Virginia was home to followers of the Church of England, developed into a plantation agricultural system, engaged in widespread indentured servitude and, ultimately, slavery, and became dependent almost wholly on tobacco. New England, as it developed into a shipping center, diversified its economy, was settled by religious dissenters, based in rural, small-scale agricultural practices, and while slavery and indentured servitude were not absent, they were not prevalent either.

1. What lessons had been learned by the British from their earlier colonization efforts that shaped their later efforts in the South and New York / Pennsylvania?

**Answer:** Colonial and corporate charters were often written too loosely in the early years, allowing the colonists to make decisions that were for the benefit of the colonial leadership and the companies doing business in the colony, but equally as often not in alignment with the needs and desires of the Crown. Later charters, while still granting land to individuals or corporations, included provisions that retained monarchial control and ensured that the companies and colonies were operating under the terms of the Navigation Acts.

Lecture Outline

The Four Colonial Empires

New Spain

New France

New Netherland

Virginia and New England

Jamestown and the Powhatan Peoples

Werwocomoco and Powhatan Confederacy

Development and Growth of Jamestown

Economic Expansion

Conflict and Massacre in 1622

The Colonists Respond

English Expansion

Popham Colony

Plymouth Bay Colony and Massachusetts

Maryland and the Chesapeake

The South

New York and Pennsylvania

The Growth of New England

Plymouth and the Mayflower Compact

The Puritan Migration

John Winthrop and the “City Upon a Hill”

The Great Migration

Community and Trade

Witchcraft and Conflict

Salem: The Exception to the Rule

Cotton Mather and the Return of Reason

Frontier of Exclusion

Indian Wars of the late 1600s

Resources (Web, Films/Video)

**Web**

*National Museum of the American Indian:* <http://www.nmai.si.edu/index.cfm> is the official website of the NMAI and provides both historical and contemporary accounts of the lives of the indigenous peoples of the Americas.

*Plimouth Plantation:* <http://www.plimoth.org/> is the official site of the modern-day recreation of Plimouth and its history, historical interpretation, and the interactions with the Wamponaug Indian peoples.

*The Plymouth Colony Archive Project:* [http://etext.virginia.edu/users/deetz/Plymouth/ topical.html](http://etext.virginia.edu/users/deetz/Plymouth/%20topical.html) presents primary source documents, secondary articles, maps, court records, biographies, material culture, research papers and lesson plans on the history behind the first settlement in New England.

*Virtual Jamestown:* <http://www.virtualjamestown.org> provides primary and secondary sources, including court records, letters, maps, labor contracts, newspapers, and virtual recreations of the process of settlement and development and daily life at Jamestown and among the Powhatan peoples.

**Films/Video**

*The New World* (150 mins.), New Line Cinema, 2005. Tells the story of John Smith, the founding of Jamestown, the life and role of Pocahontas, and the clashes between Native Americans and English settlers.

*Black Robe* (101 mins.), Alliance Communications*,* 1991. The story of Jesuit priests among the Canadian Cree, Mohawk, and Algonquin peoples. Depicts the travails of the French and Native Peoples as they work through the process of contact and settlement.

*Whose Land Is This?* (45 mins.), Global TV, 2002. Examines the First Nations’ historical and contemporary relationship to Canadian settlers and the question of land ownership in both political and heritage terms.

Instructor’s Resources (Available on CD-ROM)

**Additional Visual Sources**

A Letter Written by William Penn

Captain John Smith Fights with “the King of Pamaunkee”

Champlain’s Conference with the Indians

Events of John Smith’s Life

Iroquois Fort

William Penn’s Treaty with the Indians

Pocahontas Pleading for John Smith’s Life

Thanksgiving Proclamation, Connecticut, 1721

**Biographies**

Pocahontas

John Winthrop

**Interactive Learning Activity**

*Estate Inventories of Early Virginians.* An interactive exercise that uses documents from the Library of Congress to examine the estate inventories of three elite Virginians—George Eaton, William Ireland, and Charles Burges—and in so doing gain a personal look into the daily lives of the colonies elites and in the process recreate their lives and the world in which they lived.

Primary Sources

Thomas Harriot, *The Algonquin Peoples of the Atlantic Coast* (1588)

The Laws of Virginia (1610-1611)

The Third Charter of Virginia (1612)

The Mayflower Compact (1620) (Audio Clips and Transcript)

Richard Frethorn, *Letter to His Parents* (1623) (Audio Clips and Transcript)

John Smith, *The Starving Time* (1624) (Audio Clips and Transcript)

Powhatan (Audio Clips and Transcript)

John Winthrop, *A Model of Christian Charity* (1630)

William Bradford, *History of Plymouth Plantation* (1630–1650)

The Charter of Maryland (1632)

Anne Bradstreet, *Before the Birth of One of Her Children* (c. 1650)

Critical Thinking Exercises

While New England emerged as a family and community-based society with an important merchant class and the Chesapeake continued to prosper as an agricultural society consumed with tobacco, how did the two regions quickly become dependent upon each other? Discuss this in terms of labor, shipping, trade goods, and the laws of the British Empire.