

American Experiments

1518–1700

CHAPTER OUTLINE

The following annotated chapter outline will help you review the major topics covered in this chapter.

I. Spain's Tribute Colonies

A. A New American World

1. Once conquistadors had overthrown Native American leaders, Spanish monarchs rewarded them with *encomiendas*, land grants that included the Native American tradition of tribute, or the right to demand free labor and goods from Indian communities. Discoveries of gold and silver increased the value of these land grants at little cost as Spaniards utilized the pre-existing mita system that made Indian workers available to the mines.
2. The Spanish Empire became fabulously wealthy. Silver shipped to China was minted into coins and exchanged for silks, spices, and ceramics. Gold transported to Europe flowed into the countinghouses of Spain and embellished the Catholic churches of Europe.
3. Between 1500 and 1650, at least 350,000 Spaniards migrated to Mesoamerica and western South America. Also 250,000 to 300,000 Africans arrived involuntarily.

More than 75 percent of the Spanish settlers were men.

4. The development of a substantial mixed-race population of mestizos (Spaniard-Indian), mulattos (Spaniard-African), and zambos (Indian-African) contributed to the drafting of legal codes that differentiated among the increasingly complex racial categories.
 5. Spaniards and their descendants moved from their initial urban sanctuaries to large estates known as haciendas and expanded trade networks.
 6. Indians continued to live in their communities but experienced profound change as their numbers declined. Although Spanish monks suppressed native religious practices and converted thousands to Catholicism, the merging of ideologies and practices did occur and new forms of Native American Christianity emerged.
- #### B. The Columbian Exchange
1. The Spanish invasion of the Americas had a significant impact on life in the Americas, in Africa, and in Europe due to the process of biological transfer that historians have called the Columbian Exchange.
 2. Diseases imported from Europe and Africa to which Native Americans had no

immunity drastically reduced and often wiped out Indian populations.

3. Food items brought from the Americas to Europe and other continents contributed to population booms. The arrival of domesticated animals and crops from the Old World, as well as unintended travelers like dandelions and other weeds, forever changed the American landscape.
- C. The Protestant Challenge to Spain
1. Despite fortified outposts in Havana and St. Augustine, Spain had to constantly protect its transatlantic shipping routes from pirates and privateers who used the Lesser Antilles as their hide outs.
 2. King Philip II, the ruler of the most powerful nation in Europe and an ardent Catholic, intended to eliminate any challenges to Spain and the Catholic Church. When wealthy Calvinists in the Dutch- and Flemish-speaking provinces of Spanish Netherlands revolted against Spanish rule in 1566, a fifteen-year war ensued. It ended in 1581 with the independence of the Dutch Republic (or Holland).
 3. While the English king Henry VIII initially opposed Protestantism, he broke with the Roman Catholic Church when the pope denied his request for a marriage annulment, and he then created a national Church of England.
 4. Henry's daughter, Elizabeth I, approved of Protestant teachings but retained the Catholic ritual of Holy Communion in her religious reforms. This compromise angered some radical Protestants as well as the Spanish king, Philip II.
 5. Queen Elizabeth I authorized English sailors to take aggressive action against Spanish control of the Western Hemisphere. Francis Drake, a devout Protestant, challenged and disrupted Spanish shipping in the Atlantic and Pacific. Despite heavy losses in men and ships, he captured two Spanish treasure ships and became the first Englishman to circumnavigate the globe.
6. Elizabeth I also supported military expeditions to extend direct English rule over Gaelic-speaking Catholic regions of Ireland. Calling the Irish "wild savages," English troops brutally massacred thousands, prefiguring the treatment of Indians in North America.
 7. In 1588, the Spanish Armada sailed out to restore Catholic rule in England and Holland, but it was defeated when a fierce storm allowed the English to claim victory.
 8. Shrugging off this defeat, Philip continued to spend his American gold and silver on religious wars. This ill-advised policy diverted resources, weakened Spain's economy, and inspired 200,000 Castilians that were fearful of taxation and conscription to leave the richest region of Spain and migrate to America.
 9. By contrast, England's economy was stimulated by a rise in population (from 3 million in 1500 to 5 million in 1630) and by mercantilism, a system of state-supported manufacturing and trade.
 10. The domestic English textile industry relied on outwork: Merchants bought wool from estate owners and hired landless peasants to spin and weave the wool into cloth. The government helped these textile entrepreneurs by setting low rates for wages.
 11. Mercantilist-oriented monarchs like Queen Elizabeth encouraged merchants to invest in domestic manufacturing, thereby increasing exports and decreasing imports.
 12. By 1600, the success of merchant-oriented policies helped England to challenge Spain's control over American wealth and to establish its own colonial empire in the New World.
- II. Plantation Colonies**
- A. Brazil's Sugar Plantations

1. Portuguese colonists established more than one thousand sugar plantations in the tropical lowlands of coastal Brazil by 1590. Plantations took on the appearance of factories because they combined backbreaking agricultural labor with milling, extracting, and refining processes.
 2. After a wave of diseases drastically reduced the indigenous population and labor supply, Portuguese planters increasingly turned to African slaves for laborers. By 1620, the transition was complete. Unlike Spain's colonies in Mexico and Peru, Portugal's colony in Brazil took longer to develop and turn a profit, requiring both trial and error and hard work to build a paying colony.
- B. England's Tobacco Colonies
1. The Jamestown Settlement
 - a. Initial privately organized and poorly funded attempts to establish English colonies in the Americas ended in disaster.
 - b. This situation changed after 1600, when English merchants established the Virginia Company of London for expansion purposes.
 - c. In 1606, King James I granted this group of merchants a trading monopoly stretching from present-day North Carolina to southern New York. They named this region Virginia in memory of Elizabeth I, the never-married "Virgin Queen."
 - d. In 1607, the Virginia Company sent an expedition of men to North America, landing in Jamestown, Virginia. The goal of the Virginia Company was trade, not settlement. Life in Jamestown was harsh: death rates were high, and there was no gold and little food.
 - e. The English at Jamestown expected tribute from local Indians. Powhatan, the paramount chief of thirty tribal chiefdoms, expected tribute from the English in exchange for supplying them with food. Disputes over who would pay tribute to whom resulted in uneasy relations and eventual warfare.
 - g. Despite King James I's initial dislike of the plant, growing tobacco as a cash crop became the basis of economic life, a source of revenue for the royal treasury, and an impetus for permanent settlement in Jamestown.
 - h. To encourage English settlement, the Virginia Company granted land to freemen, established a land-dispersal and a local court system, and approved a system of representative government under the House of Burgesses. By 1622, English settlement in Virginia included over 4,500 new recruits.
2. The Indian War of 1622
- a. The continued influx of settlers and English suggestions that Indian children go to school to become proper Christians sparked a war in 1622 led by Opechancanough, Powhatan's younger brother and successor.
 - b. Nearly one-third of the English population was killed during a surprise attack. The English reacted by seizing Indian fields and food and forcing captured Indians into slavery.
 - c. Shocked by the Indian uprisings, James I accused the Virginia Company of mismanagement, revoked their charter, and in 1624, made Virginia a royal colony.
 - d. The king established the Church of England in Virginia, and property owners paid taxes to support the clergy.
 - e. Virginia's new institutions, consisting of a royal governor, an elected assembly, and an established Anglican Church, became the model for royal colonies in America.
3. Lord Baltimore Settles Catholics in Maryland

- a. King Charles I (James's successor) granted most of the territory bordering the vast Chesapeake Bay to Lord Baltimore, a Catholic aristocrat. Baltimore created Maryland, a second tobacco colony in the Chesapeake.
 - b. Baltimore wanted Maryland to become a refuge from persecution for English Catholics; the settlement of Maryland began in 1634 and grew rapidly due to ample land.
 - c. Settlers elected a representative assembly, and in order to settle internal political conflict, Baltimore granted the assembly the right to initiate legislation.
 - d. In 1649, upon urging from Lord Baltimore, the assembly enacted the Toleration Act, granting religious freedom to all Christians.
 - e. Demand for tobacco started an economic boom in the Chesapeake and, despite their religious differences, Virginia and Maryland established similar economic and social systems.
- C. The Caribbean Islands
- 1. The English began to permanently expand into the Caribbean in 1624 when Sir Thomas Warner established a settlement on St. Kitts.
 - 2. Soon, several of the islands of the Lesser Antilles became English colonies. In 1655, Jamaica became an English colony.
 - 3. After experimenting with several cash crops such as tobacco and cotton, several planters on the larger islands, including Barbados and Jamaica, followed Brazil's example and adopted sugar cultivation. These islands became the most valuable colonies in the English Empire.
- D. Plantation Life
- 1. Indentured Servitude
 - a. To maximize production and profits, planters in the Chesapeake and Caribbean consolidated land into ever fewer hands and experimented with different labor systems, including indentured servitude and slavery.
 - 2. African Laborers
 - a. In the Caribbean, the available supply of indentured servants was inadequate for production needs. Sugar planters quickly shifted to African slave labor and by 1661 established the first comprehensive slave code to control the black majority.
 - b. The transition to slave labor was more gradual in the Chesapeake colonies. In
- b. Life was harsh in the colonies of North America and the Caribbean, and diseases, especially malaria, kept population low and life expectancy short. Although 15,000 English arrived in Virginia between 1622 and 1640, the population rose only from 2,000 to 8,000.
 - c. Despite these odds, hundreds of thousands of English migrants came to the Chesapeake regions and the Caribbean. The majority were indentured servants, who had contractually bound themselves to work for a master for four to five years, after which they gained their freedom.
 - d. Planters benefitted greatly from indentured servitude. In Virginia, under the headright system, a planter received 50 additional acres for every servant he shipped to the colony, and a good servant could produce more than his purchase price in just one year.
 - e. Most masters exploited servants, beat them without cause, withheld permission to marry, or sold the contracts of disobedient workers.
 - f. Most indentured servants did not achieve the escape from poverty they had sought, although about 25 percent benefitted from their ordeal, acquiring property and respectability. Female servants generally fared better and sometimes married propertied planters.

1649, Africans represented just 2 percent of the total population; by 1670, that number had risen to 5 percent.

- c. Although many Africans served their English masters for life, they were not legally enslaved because English common law did not acknowledge the ownership of a human being as property.
- d. By becoming a Christian, buying one's freedom, or petitioning for one's freedom in the courts, an enterprising African could become a landowner, purchase slaves, and live a life of near equality with English settlers.
- e. Beginning in the 1660s, following a collapse in the tobacco industry, Chesapeake legislatures, increasingly under control of the wealthy gentry, began enacting laws that lowered the status of Africans. Being a slave was becoming a permanent and hereditary condition, synonymous with African people.

III. Neo-European Colonies

A. New France

1. Quebec, established in 1608, was the first permanent French settlement. New France became a vast fur-trading empire.
2. The Huron received guns from the French and were the first to welcome French Catholic missionaries, or "Black Robes," into their communities.
3. Royal attempts to turn New France into a prosperous agricultural colony failed despite generous terms for indentured servants.
4. Few people moved to the cold and forbidding region; by 1698, only 15,200 Europeans lived in New France.
5. Explorers and fur traders geographically expanded the colony into the center of the North American continent from the St. Lawrence Valley through the Great Lakes to the Mississippi River and southward

along the river to the Gulf of Mexico, where they established New Orleans by 1718.

B. New Netherland

1. The Dutch republic in 1600 emerged as the financial and commercial hub of northern Europe. Through conquest, the Dutch gained control of the slave and sugar trade in the Atlantic and spice and silk trade in the Indian Ocean.
2. In 1614, following Henry Hudson's explorations and discoveries, Dutch merchants established Fort Orange (Albany) as a fur trading post.
3. In 1621, the government-chartered West India Company founded the town of New Amsterdam (on Manhattan Island) as the capital of New Netherland.
4. In the attempt to make the colony a self-sustaining enterprise, the company encouraged migration by granting huge estates along the Hudson River to wealthy Dutchmen who promised to populate them; however, few people came. By 1664, only 5,000 residents lived in the colony.
5. Although New Netherland failed as a settler colony, it briefly flourished in fur trading.
6. While Dutch colonial strategy emphasized commerce, not religious conversion or seizure of land, it nevertheless resulted in conflict with Native Americans. When the Dutch seized prime farming land from the Algonquians and took over their trading networks, the Algonquians responded with force resulting in a crippling war.
7. The West India Company largely ignored the floundering Dutch settlement and concentrated instead on the profitable African slave and sugar trade.
8. Dutch authoritarian rule in New Amsterdam rejected requests for representative government, and after light resistance during an English invasion in

1664, New Netherland fell under English control and became New York.

C. The Rise of the Iroquois

1. The Five Nations of the Iroquois used their strategic location between the French and Dutch colonies to obtain guns and goods and to expand their territory in a series of devastating wars against their Native American neighbors.
2. New France committed to all-out war after the Iroquois attacked French-allied Algonquians, resulting in the defeat of the Five Nations and their acceptance of French missionaries into their communities.
3. Iroquois who allied with the English after the Dutch defeat remained a powerful force in the Northeast for generations to come.

D. New England

1. The Pilgrims

- a. New England differed from other European settlements; it was settled by family groups and focused not on commerce but on religion and morality.
- b. The Pilgrims, Puritans who were religious separatists from the Church of England, sailed to America in 1620 on the *Mayflower*.
- c. They created the Mayflower Compact, a covenant for religious and political autonomy and the first constitution in North America.
- d. The first winter in America tested the Pilgrims, and only half of the population survived. Thereafter, the Plymouth colony became a healthy and thriving community with a representative government, widespread property ownership, and religious freedom.
- e. Religious turmoil in England, brought on by King Charles I's repudiation of Protestant doctrines and Archbishop William Laud's purging of dissident

ministers, resulted in thousands of Puritans leaving for North America.

2. John Winthrop and Massachusetts Bay

- a. In 1630, John Winthrop and 900 Puritans established the Massachusetts Bay Colony in order to build a reformed Christian society, and by so doing, they hoped to inspire religious reform throughout Christendom.
- b. Over the next decade, 10,000 Puritans migrated to Massachusetts Bay, along with 10,000 others fleeing hard times in England.
- c. The Puritans created representative political institutions that were locally based by transforming the initial joint-stock corporation that Winthrop and his associates had utilized to organize and found the colony.
- d. The right to vote and hold office was limited to men who were church members, and the Bible was the legal as well as spiritual guide for the Massachusetts Bay Colony.
- e. The Puritans eliminated bishops and placed power in the hands of the laity.
- f. Influenced by John Calvin, the Puritans believed in predestination. They dealt with the uncertainties of divine election in three ways: some hoped for a conversion experience, an intense sensation of receiving God's grace or a "born-again" conviction of salvation; others relied on "preparation," the confidence in redemption built on years of spiritual guidance; and still others believed in a "covenant" with God that promised salvation in exchange for obedience to God's laws.

3. Roger Williams and Rhode Island

- a. The Puritans of Massachusetts Bay felt that they must purge their society of religious dissidents to maintain God's favor.
- b. The Puritans targeted Roger Williams, a religious dissenter who advocated

- toleration and agreed with the Pilgrims' separation of church and state. He was banned from Massachusetts Bay in 1636.
- c. Williams and his followers founded settlements in Rhode Island, where there was no legally established church.
4. Anne Hutchinson
 - a. Anne Hutchinson was considered a heretic because her beliefs diminished the role of Puritan ministers. Like Martin Luther, Hutchinson denied that salvation could be earned through good deeds, called a "covenant of works," believing instead that salvation could only occur through a "covenant of grace" through which God saved those he predestined for salvation.
 - b. Puritans believed that, when it came to governance of church and state, women were clearly inferior to men. The magistrates convicted and banished Hutchinson and her family from the colony.
 - c. In 1660, Puritans who had left Massachusetts and settled on or near the Connecticut River gained a charter for the self-governing colony of Connecticut. Their form of government included an established church, a popularly elected governor and assembly, and voting rights for most property-owning men—not just church members.
 5. The Puritan Revolution in England
 - a. England fell into a religious civil war between royalists and parliamentary forces in 1642, and thousands of English Puritans joined the revolt, demanding greater authority for Parliament and reform of the established church.
 - b. After four years of civil war, parliamentary forces led by Oliver Cromwell were victorious, but the Puritan triumph was short-lived with the restoration of monarchy in 1658.
 - c. After the failure of the English Revolution, Puritans looked to create a permanent society in America based on their faith and ideals.
 6. Puritanism and Witchcraft
 - a. Puritans believed that the physical world was full of supernatural forces and that one could see God's (or Satan's) power in unusual events.
 - b. Condemning people who aimed to influence spiritual forces as witches, Puritan civil authorities in Massachusetts and Connecticut hanged fourteen people for witchcraft between 1647 and 1662.
 - c. In Salem, Massachusetts, 175 people were arrested and 19 were hanged for witchcraft in 1692. Historical debate over the causes of this mass hysteria determined that class conflict, an effort to subordinate women, political instability, and fear raised by Indian attacks played a role.
 - d. Popular revulsion against the executions brought an end to legal prosecutions for witchcraft and heresy in New England.
 - e. The European Enlightenment helped promote a more rational, scientific view of the world.
 7. A Yeoman Society, 1630–1700
 - a. In organizing Puritan town governments, the General Courts of Massachusetts Bay and Connecticut bestowed the title to each township on a group of settlers, or proprietors, who then divided the land among the male heads of families.
 - b. Puritans believed in a social and economic hierarchy: the largest plots of land were given to men of high social status.
 - c. As all male heads of families received some land, a society of independent

- yeomen farmers emerged, and most men could vote in town meetings.
- d. In these self-governing communities, farmers enjoyed far more political power than their European or Chesapeake counterparts.
- e. Town meetings chose selectmen, levied taxes, and enacted ordinances and regulations; as the number of towns increased, so did their power, enhancing local control.
- f. Possibility to acquire property turned New England for many into a new world of opportunity.

IV. Instability, War, and Rebellion

A. New England's Indian Wars

1. Puritan-Pequot War

- a. Various alliances between Indians and European settlers in the New England region established a complex and precarious system of relationships.
- b. When Pequot warriors killed an English trader in 1636, Puritan militiamen and their Indian allies retaliated by massacring about five hundred Pequots in 1637 and driving the survivors from the region.
- c. Seeing themselves as God's chosen people, the Puritans justified taking Indian lands on religious grounds.
- d. English Puritans viewed Native Americans not as genetically inferior but as tainted by "sin" or Satan, which they believed accounted for their degenerate condition, rather than race.
- e. In their efforts to Christianize Indians, the Puritans created praying towns that supervised the Indian population.

2. Metacom's War, 1675–1676

- a. By the 1670s, there were three times as many whites as Indians in New England; whites numbered 55,000, while Indians numbered 16,000.
- b. Seeking to stop the European advance, the Wampanoag leader Metacom

forged a military alliance with the Narragansetts and Nipmucks in 1675.

- c. The group attacked white settlements throughout New England, and the fighting continued until Metacom's death in 1676.
- d. Losses were high on both sides, but the Indians' losses were worse: 25 percent of the already diminished Indian population died from war or disease.
- e. Many of the surviving Algonquian peoples migrated farther into the New England backcountry, where they intermarried with other Algonquian tribes tied to the French, who became their ally in future attacks against the English.

B. Bacon's Rebellion

1. Frontier War

- a. By the 1670s, freed indentured servants in Virginia had fewer and fewer opportunities to gain economic independence. The wealthy gentry had consolidated most land into their hands, renting out what they could not plant, and declining tobacco prices made it impossible for a small farmer to make a profit.
- b. Social tensions between elite planters and struggling landless laborers reached a breaking point in Virginia during Governor William Berkeley's tenure; Berkeley gave tax-free land grants to members of his council and suspended the right to vote for landless freemen.
- c. To acquire land, poor white freeholders and aspiring tenants wanted local Indians removed from the treaty-guaranteed lands along the frontier.
- d. Wealthy planter-merchants opposed Indian removal; they wanted to maintain the labor supply and to continue trading furs with the Native Americans.

- e. Poor freeholders and landless men formed militias and began killing Indians in 1675; the Indians retaliated by killing whites.
 - f. Settlers dismissed Governor Berkeley's defensive proposal to build frontier forts as a plot to impose higher taxes and take control of the tobacco trade.
2. Challenging the Government
- a. Nathaniel Bacon, a member of the governor's council, led a protest against Berkeley's Indian policy. Bacon and his men killed a number of Indians for which Berkeley arrested Bacon.
 - b. When Bacon's militant supporters threatened with force, Berkeley freed Bacon and agreed to political reform; the House of Burgesses restored voting rights to landless freemen and reduced the powers of the governor.
 - c. Not satisfied, Bacon and his men burned Jamestown and issued a "Manifesto and Declaration of the People," demanding removal of all Indians and an end to the rule of wealthy "parasites."
 - d. Although Bacon's sudden death from disease in 1676 ended the uprising, Bacon's Rebellion prompted Virginia's wealthy leaders to work more closely with poor whites.
 - e. To forestall another rebellion by indentured servants, Chesapeake planters turned away from indentured servitude and moved to legalize slavery, whose workers they could exploit for a lifetime.