Eurasia and Africa in the Fifteenth Century

China's Glory In 1450, however, the Western European kingdoms that would one day dominate much of the world still sat at the fringe of an international economy that revolved around China. By a variety of measures Ming China was the richest, most powerful, and most advanced society in the world. All Eurasia sought Chinese goods, especially spices, ceramics, and silks, and Chinese ships sped these goods to faraway ports. Seven times between 1405 and 1433, China's "treasure fleet"—300 ships manned by 28,000 sailors and commanded by Zheng He (pronounced "Jung Huh")—unfurled its red silk sails off the south China coast and traveled as far as the kingdoms of eastern Africa. The treasure fleet's largest craft were nine-masted junks measuring 400 feet long. They boasted multiple decks and luxury cabins with balconies. (By comparison, Columbus's largest ship in 1492 was a mere 85 feet long, and the crew aboard all three of his ships totaled just 90 men.) Chinese leaders soon grounded their trading fleet and put a stop to the long-distance voyages that might eventually have made Zheng He a forerunner to Columbus. But Chinese luxuries, most transported overland, continued to be Eurasia's most sought-after commodities.

Islamic Kingdoms The next mightiest powers in the Old World were not European kingdoms but rather huge Islamic empires, especially the Ottomans in the eastern Mediterranean. The Ottomans rose to prominence during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and expanded aggressively in every direction. Muslim rulers gained control of critical trade routes and centers of commerce between Asia and Europe. The Ottomans' greatest triumph came in 1453, when the sultan Mehmet II conquered Constantinople (now Istanbul), the ancient and supposedly impregnable Christian city that straddled Europe and Asia and was one of the world's premier trading hubs. Mehmet's stunning victory sounded alarms throughout Europe.

Europe's Place in the World Europe's rulers had good reason for alarm. Distant from Asia's profitable trade and threatened both economically and militarily by the Ottomans, most of the continent remained fractious and vulnerable. During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, 90 percent of Europe's people, widely dispersed in small villages, made their living from the land. But warfare, poor transportation, and low grain yields all created food shortages, and undernourishment produced a population prone to disease. Under these circumstances life was nasty, brutish, and usually short. One-quarter of all children died in the first year of life. People who reached the age of 40 counted themselves fortunate.

It was also a world of sharp inequalities, where nobles and aristocrats enjoyed several hundred times the income of peasants or craftworkers. It was a world with no strong, centralized political authority, where kings were weak and warrior lords held sway over small towns and tiny fiefdoms. It was a world of violence and sudden death, where homicide, robbery, and rape occurred with brutal frequency. It was a world where security and order of any kind seemed so fragile that many people clung to tradition, and more than a few used witchcraft in an attempt to master the chaotic and unpredictable world around them.

The Black Death But Europe was changing, in part because of a great calamity. Between the late 1340s and the early 1350s, bubonic plague—known as the Black Death—swept away one-quarter of Europe's population. Some urban areas lost 70 percent of their people to the disease. The Black Death disrupted both agriculture and commerce, and provoked a spiritual crisis that resulted in violent, unsanctioned religious movements, scapegoating of marginal groups, even massacres of Jews. Although Europeans seem to have met recurrent outbreaks of the disease with less panic; the sickness continued to disrupt social and economic life nonetheless.

Yet the sudden drop in population relieved pressure on scarce resources. Survivors of the Black Death found that the relative scarcity of workers and consumers made for better wages, lower prices, and more land. These changes intersected in an overall expansion of trade. In earlier centuries Italian merchants had begun building wealth by encouraging commerce across Europe and by tapping into...
HISTORIAN’S TOOLBOX

Known as a “Bellarmine jar.”
Why? (Do a little web research!)

A Witch Bottle

Pins and needles. Why might these have been deliberately bent?

Fingernail clippings: well manicured, suggesting someone of higher social standing.

Liquid: analysis shows it to be urine.

Historians often find clues about a culture from material artifacts discarded long ago. A Bellarmine jar was dug up in a cellar in England in 2004. Archaeologists recognized it as a “witch bottle,” so called because some English folk used such items to defend against the perceived ill will of witches. The whole rationale for these bottles was sympathetic magic—so you put something intimate to the bewitched person in the bottle and then you put in bent pins and other unpleasant objects which are going to poison and cause great pain to the witch,” explained historian Owen Davies.

When shaken, this bottle splashed and rattled. An X-ray showed the objects inside, whose contents were examined in a laboratory. Among other items, the bottle included hair, naval fluff, and a heart-shaped piece of leather with a nail through it. The liquid also contained traces of sulphur (popularly called brimstone in the seventeenth century). An estimated 40,000–60,000 witches were hanged and burned in early modern Europe, demonstrating that despite the Reformation’s disdain for “Papish superstitions,” supernaturalism and magic remained potent religious strains.

Thinking Critically

Why might brimstone have been added to the witch bottle? What social factors helped explain why 15th-century Europeans saw witchcraft as a significant part of the way the world worked? Would illnesses such as the plague contribute to attitudes about witchcraft?

The direction of Europe’s political development also laid the groundwork for overseas colonization. After 1450 strong monarchs in Europe steadily enlarged the sphere of royal power at the expense of warrior lords. Henry VII, the founder of England’s Tudor dynasty, Francis I of France, and Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain began the trend, forging modern nation-states by extending their political control over more territory, people, and resources. Such larger, more centrally organized states were able to marshal the
resources necessary to support colonial outposts and to sustain the professional armies and navies capable of creating and protecting overseas empires. By the mid-fourteenth century western Europe had commercial networks, private fortunes, strong kingdoms, and ambitions that would lead to a transformative period of expansion.

**Africa and the Portuguese Wave**

European expansion began with Africa. For centuries, African spices, ivory, and gold had entered the Eurasian market either westward, through ports on the Indian Ocean, or northward, through the Sahara Desert and into the Mediterranean Sea. Powerful African kingdoms controlled the routes through which these prized commodities moved, and prices ballooned by the time the goods reached cities in Europe. Islamic expansion in the fifteenth century made competition all the more intense. Merchants throughout the continent yearned to access West African markets directly, by ship. But navigational and shipbuilding technology was not yet up to the challenge of the Atlantic's prevailing currents, which sped ships south along Africa's coast but made the return voyage virtually impossible.

Portugal was the first to solve this problem and tap directly into West African markets, thanks in large part to the vision and tenacity of one man. Prince Henry "the Navigator," as he became known, was a passionate advocate for Portugal's maritime interests, an ardent Catholic, and a man who dreamed of turning back Islam's rising tide. He understood that direct commerce with West Africa would allow his kingdom to circumvent the costly trans-Saharan trade. To forward his vision, Henry funded exploratory voyages, established a maritime school, and challenged sailors and engineers to conquer the problem of the current. His advocacy helped the Portuguese develop the caravel, a lighter, more maneuverable ship that could sail better against contrary winds and in rough seas. More seaworthy than the lumbering galleys of the Middle Ages, caravels combined longer, narrower hulls—a shape built for speed—with triangular lateen sails, which allowed for more flexible steering. The caravel allowed the Portuguese to regularly do what few Europeans had ever done: sail down Africa's west coast and return home. Other advances, including a sturdier version of the Islamic world's astrolabe, enabled Portugal's vessels to calculate their position at sea with unprecedented accuracy.

The farther south the Portuguese extended their influence along the Atlantic rim of sub-Saharan Africa, the more likely they were to meet with peoples who had had no earlier encounters with Europeans and, indeed, had no knowledge of the existence of other continents. On catching their first sight of a Portuguese expedition in 1455, the inhabitants of one village on the Senegal River marveled at the strangers' clothing and their white skin. As an Italian member of that expedition recounted, some Africans " rubbed me with their spittle to discover whether my whiteness was dye or flesh."

But the Portuguese were wrong to mistake such acts of innocence for economic or political naiveté. As they made their way south in stages, the newcomers found mature commercial networks and formidable African states, states eager to trade but intent on protecting their interests. Portugal could not simply take what it wanted from West Africa. With few exceptions, it proved impossible for European powers to colonize territory in West Africa before the nineteenth century because the region's people were too many and too organized. Furthermore, its disease environment was too dangerous. Malaria would kill between one-fourth and one-half of all Portuguese unwise and unlucky enough to try to stay. Hence the newcomers had to seek partners, to forge trading relationships with coastal elites. The Portuguese established forts and trading houses on the coast. They gave tribute or taxes to local rulers in return for trading privileges and exchanged textiles, especially, but also raw and worked metal goods, currency (in the form of cowry shells), and beads for prized commodities such as gold, ivory, and malagueta pepper. Portuguese traders also expressed interest in another commodity, one that would reshape the wider Atlantic world: slaves.

**Sugar and the Origins of the Atlantic Slave Trade**

Unfree labor has existed in nearly all human societies. Although the norms, characteristics, and economic importance of slavery have varied widely over time and place, men, women, and children have been held as slaves from before recorded history to the present. (U.S. and international organizations estimate that today there are as many as 27 million people held in some form of labor bondage and that nearly 1 million unfree people are sold across international borders every year.)

By the Middle Ages, elites in Europe had largely abandoned the slave culture of the Roman Empire and relied instead on serfs or peasants for labor. Slaves became more important as status symbols than as workers, and most were young white women. Indeed, the word "slave" comes originally from "Slav"; Slavic girls and women from the Balkans and the coasts of the Black Sea were frequent targets of slave raids.
This African fortune-teller reads the palm of her white client in this seventeenth-century painting by a Franco-Flemish artist, Nicolas Regnier. In early modern Europe, class and religion were more important than color and ethnicity in defining social divisions. Slaves, servants, and free workers of all races often worked and socialized together.

But European slavery began to change again following the Crusades. In 1099 Christian forces captured Jerusalem from the Seljuk Turks (forerunners to the Ottomans). In the Holy Land the crusaders discovered sugar plantations that the Turks had cultivated. At that time some sugar was being produced by Moors in North Africa and Iberia, yet it remained an expensive luxury item coveted by merchants and elites as a medicine and preservative. Crusaders recognized sugar’s economic potential, but because it was so labor-intensive they found it a difficult commodity to produce. It required intense work during planting and close tending during the growing season. On maturity the crop had to be harvested and processed 24 hours a day to avoid being spoiled. In short, sugar demanded cheap, pliable labor. The newly arrived crusaders relied in part on slave labor to make their plantations turn a profit.

Once Islamic forces under the famed leader Saladin reconquered Jerusalem in the twelfth century, European investors established new plantations on eastern Mediterranean islands. In addition to being labor intensive, though, sugar was a crop that quickly exhausted soils and forced planters to move operations regularly. Plantations spread to new islands, and by the early 1400s sugar was even being grown in Portugal. As production expanded, planters had to work harder than ever to obtain the necessary labor because of the Black Death and because Ottoman conquests restricted European access to the traditional slaving grounds of the eastern Mediterranean and the Balkans.

Thus by the fifteenth century the Portuguese were already producing sugar on slave-run plantations, but they were seeking new cropland and new sources of slaves. Once again Prince Henry’s vision enhanced his kingdom’s economic interests. While Portugal’s merchants were establishing trading posts along the west coast of Africa, Iberian mariners were discovering or re-discovering islands in the eastern Atlantic: the Canaries, Madeira, and the Azores, islands with rich, volcanic soils ideally suited to sugarcane. By the late fifteenth century sugar plantations were booming on the Atlantic islands, staffed by West African slaves. By the middle of the sixteenth century people of African descent accounted for 10 percent of the population of Lisbon, Portugal’s capital city.

Portugal was growing great in wealth and in ambition. Convinced that they could reach coveted Asian markets by sea, bold mariners sailed their caravels farther and farther south. In 1488 Bartolomeu Dias rounded the Cape of Good Hope on the southern tip of Africa, sailing far enough up that continent’s eastern coast to claim discovery of a sea route to India. Ten years later Vasco da Gama reached India itself, and Portugal’s interests ultimately extended to Indochina and China.

Portuguese geographers had long felt certain that travel around Africa was the shortest route to the Orient, but an Italian sailor disagreed. Cristoforo Colombo was 25 years old when he shipwrecked on the Portuguese coast in 1476. The ambitious young man spent the next 10 years learning from the world’s master mariners. He also threw himself into research, devouring Lisbon’s books on geography and cartography. Columbus (the Latinized version of his name) became convinced that the fastest route from Portugal to China lay west, across the uncharted Atlantic Ocean. He appealed to Portugal’s king to support an exploratory voyage, but royal geographers scoffed at the idea. They agreed
that the world was round but insisted (correctly, as it turns out) that the globe was far larger than Columbus had calculated; hence the proposed westward route was too distant to be practical. Almost a decade of rejection had grayed Columbus's red hair, but—undaunted—he packed up in 1485 and took his audacious idea to Spain.

**Spain in the Americas**

But Columbus arrived a few years too early. Spain's monarchs, Ferdinand and Isabella, were then engaged in a campaign to drive the Muslims out of their last stronghold on the Iberian Peninsula, the Moorish kingdom of Granada. At first the monarchs rejected Columbus's offer, leading him to make other (failed) overtures to the kings of England, France, and even Portugal again. Then in 1492 Ferdinand and Isabella took Granada and completed their reconquest of Spain, or _reconquista_. Flush with victory and ready to expand their horizons, the pair granted Columbus another audience. The mariner insisted that a westward route to Asia would allow Spain to compete with Portugal and generate sufficient revenue to continue the reconquest, even into the Holy Land itself. Ignoring the advice of their geographers, the monarchs agreed to his proposal.

Columbus's first voyage across the Atlantic could only have confirmed his conviction that he was destiny's darling. His three ships, no bigger than fishing vessels that sailed to Newfoundland, plied their course over placid seas, south from Seville to the Canary Islands and then due west. On October 11, a little more than two months after leaving Spain, branches, leaves, and flowers floated by their hulls, signals that land lay near. Just after midnight, a sailor spied cliffs shining white in the moonlight. On the morning of October 12, the Niña, the Pinta, and the Santa María set anchor in a shallow sapphire bay, and their crews knelt on the white coral beach. Columbus christened the place San Salvador (Holy Savior).

**The Spanish Beachhead in the Caribbean**

Like many men of destiny, Columbus mistook his true destination. At first he confused his actual location, the Bahamas, with an island off the coast of Japan. He coasted along Cuba and Hispaniola (today's Haiti and Dominican Republic), expecting at any moment to catch sight of gold-roofed Japanese temples or fleets of Chinese junks. He encountered instead a gentle, generous people who knew nothing of the Great Khan but who welcomed the newcomers profusely. Columbus's journals note that these people wore little clothing (see Daily Lives, "Barbaric Dress—Indian and European," page 36), but they did wear jewelry—tiny pendants of gold suspended from the nose. He dubbed the Taino people "Indians"—inhabitants of the Indies.

Columbus would long insist that he had indeed reached the Indies, and it would take some years before other mariners and geographers understood clearly that these newfound islands and the landmasses beyond them lay between Europe and Asia. One of the earliest geographers to do so was the Florentine Amerigo Vespucci, who first described Columbus's Indies as _Mundus Novus_, a "New World." Rather than dub the new lands "Columbia," a German mapmaker called them "America" in Vespucci's honor. The German's maps proved wildly successful, and the name stuck.

Whether Columbus had found Asian islands or a new world, Europeans seemed to agree that the simple societies he encountered were better suited to be ruled than protected. Unlike the kingdoms of West Africa, the Taino chiefdoms lacked the military power to resist European aggression. Moreover, although the newfound islands would eventually present their own threats to European health, they seemed a good deal more inviting than the deadly coast of West Africa. Hints of gold, a seemingly weak and docile population, and a relatively healthy climate all ensured that Columbus's second voyage would be one of colonization rather than commerce. During the 1490s and early 1500s Spanish colonizers imposed a terrifyingly brutal regime on
the Tainos, slaughtering native leaders and forcing survivors to toil in mines and fields.

Only a few Spaniards spoke out against the exploitation. Among them was Bartolomé de Las Casas, a man who spent several years in the Caribbean, participating in conquests and profiting from native labor. Eventually, Las Casas had an epiphany, renounced his role in the conquest, and, as a Dominican friar, became a tireless foe of Spanish cruelties toward Indians. He railed against the "unjust, cruel, and tyrannical warfare" waged on Indians, war waged in order to disrupt native societies and force their people into "the hardest, harshest, and most heinous bondage to which men or beasts might ever be bound into." Las Casas's writings, translated throughout Europe and illustrated with gruesome drawings, helped give rise to the "Black Legend" of Spanish oppression in the Americas.

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**Principal Routes of European Exploration**

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34 Chapter 2 Old Worlds, New Worlds
The warnings had some effect, but not for decades. Within a generation of Columbus’s landfall, the Taíno population had nearly collapsed from war, overwork, malnutrition, despair, and strange new Eurasian diseases. Ambitious Spaniards began scouring the Caribbean basin, discovering new lands and searching for new populations of Indians to subjugate or enslave in place of the vanishing Taínos. Soon the Bahamas were depopulated by Spanish slavers, and conquests had done to present-day Cuba, Jamaica, and Puerto Rico what they had done to Hispaniola.

Conquest of the Aztecs

Would-be conquistadors turned their eyes to the mainland. Spanish sailors surveyed the Yucatán Peninsula and clashed with the formidable Maya. In 1519 an expedition led by the impetuous Hernán Cortés made contact with native peoples on Mexico’s gulf coast. They spoke of an oppressive imperial people who occupied a fantastic city to the west. These were the Aztecs.

Aztecs had much in common with Spaniards. Both societies were predominantly rural, with most inhabitants living in small villages and engaging in agriculture. In both places, merchants and specialized craftworkers clustered in cities, organized themselves into guilds, and clamored for protection from the government. Aztec noble and priestly classes, like those in Europe, took the lead in politics and religion, demanding tribute from the common people. Finally, both societies were robustly expansionist, bent on bringing new lands and peoples under their control.

Yet critical differences between these two peoples shaped the outcome of their meeting. The Aztecs lacked the knowledge of ocean navigation, metal tools and weaponry, and firearms. Equally important, the relatively young Aztec empire had not yet established total control over central Mexico. Formidable peoples remained outside Aztec domination, and conquered city-states within the empire bitterly resented Aztec rule. It was a weakness that Cortés exploited ably. Massing an army of disgruntled native warriors, Cortés and his men marched inland to the mighty Aztec capital Tenochtitlán, home to more people (roughly a quarter million) than any city then existing in Europe. When the emperor Moctezuma’s ambassadors met Cortés on the road and attempted to appease him with gold ornaments and other gifts, an Indian witness noted that “the Spaniards . . . picked up the gold and fingered it like monkeys . . . Their bodies swelled with greed.”

Both the Aztecs and the Spanish tried to understand the new in terms of the familiar. Hence an Aztec artist portrayed Cortés as an Indian with strange clothes and stranger beard (left), whereas a European artist depicted Moctezuma in the style of a Greco-Roman warrior (right).
"Barbaric" Dress—Indian and European

It was remarkable to sixteenth-century Europeans how many things seemed to be missing from Indian culture. Even more remarkable, the Indians themselves did not seem to notice. Michel de Montaigne, a French philosopher who had never been to America but liked to talk with explorers and read their accounts, managed to compile quite a list. According to Montaigne, Indians had "no kind of traffic [trade], no knowledge of letters, no intelligence of numbers, no name of magistrate, nor of politics, no use of service [servants], of riches, nor of poverty, no contracts, no successions, no partitions, no occupation but idle, no apparel but natural." That last item—"nakedness"—was crucial. Europeans were shocked by the Indians' nudity, and paintings regularly showed native peoples either entirely nude or clad in skimpy loincloths or grass skirts.

Some Europeans interpreted the lack of clothing as evidence of "barbarism." André Thevet, a French visitor to Brazil in 1557, voiced this point of view when he attributed nakedness to simple lust. If the Indians could weave hammocks, he sniffed, why not shirts? But other Europeans viewed unashamed nakedness as a badge of innocence. As remnants of a bygone "golden age," they believed, Indians needed clothing no more than government, laws, regular employment, or other corruptions of civilization. In fact, Indians were no more "naked" than they were without trade, politics, employment, or religion. Although the simplest peoples of the Caribbean and Brazil wore little, the members of more advanced Indian cultures in South, Central, and North America clothed themselves with animal pelts sewn into mantles and robes, breechclouts, leggings, and moccasins. They wove bird feathers into headdresses and ear decorations and fashioned reptile skins into belts and pouches. Even more formidably clad were the Inuits of the Far North, who dressed head to toe in sealskin suits with waterproofed seams.

If natives struck whites as undressed, Europeans seemed, by the Indians' standards, grotesquely overdressed. Indeed, European fashion was ill suited to the environment between the Chesapeake and the Caribbean. Elizabethan gentlemen strutted in silk stockings attached with garters to padded, puffed knee breeches, topped by long-sleeved shirts and tight quilted jackets called "doublets." Men of lesser status wore coarse woolen hose, canvas breeches, shirts, and fitted vests known as "jerkins." Women wore gowns with long, full skirts, low-cut bodices, aprons, and hose held up by garters. Ladies went about in silk and wore hoods and mantles to ward off the sun, while women from humbler backgrounds dressed in flannels or canvas and covered their heads with linen caps or coifs.

Such fashions complicated life in the American environment, since heavy clothing and even shoes rooted rapidly from sweat and humidity. The pungent aroma of Europeans also compounded the discomfort of natives who came in contact with them—for the whites who swaddled themselves in woollens also disdained regular bathing. To them, Indian devotion to daily washing seemed just another uncivilized oddity.

It would have been natural for Indians to wonder why the barbaric newcomers did not adapt their dress to a new setting. The answer may be that for Europeans the psychological risk of shedding familiar apparel was simply too great. However, inappropriate or even unhealthy, heavy, elaborate dress afforded the comfort of familiarity and distinguished "civilized" newcomers from "savage" native in America.

Thinking Critically
From the perspective of Europeans, how did Native American dress seem barbaric? From the point of view of Indian peoples, how did European dress seem barbaric?
In the midst of this victory the city encountered another foe—smallpox. Geographically isolated from Eurasia and its complex disease environment, the Aztecs and all other native peoples in the Americas lacked the acquired immunity that gave Europeans a degree of protection against Old World pathogens. The resulting *virgin soil epidemics*—so called because the victims had no prior exposure—took a nightmarish toll. Smallpox claimed millions in central Mexico between 1520 and 1521. This too presented Cortés with opportunities. Supported by a massive Indian force, he put Tenochtitlán to siege, killing tens of thousands before the ragged, starving survivors surrendered in August of 1521. The feared Aztec Empire lay in ruins. Conquistadors fanned out from central Mexico, overwhelming new populations and eventually learning of another mighty kingdom to the south. Again relying on political faction, disease, technological advantages, and luck, by 1532 Spaniards under Francisco Pizarro and his brothers had conquered the Inca Empire in South America, which in certain regards rivaled even the Aztecs.

### The Columbian Exchange

Virgin soil epidemics, which contributed to the devastation of the Indian populations, were only one aspect of a complex web of interactions between the flora and fauna of the Americas on the one hand and that of Eurasia and Africa on the other. Just as germs migrated along with humans, so did plants and animals. These transfers, begun in the decades after Columbus first landed in the Caribbean, are known by historians as the *Columbian exchange*, and they had far-reaching effects on either side of the Atlantic. Europeans brought a host of American crops home with them, as seen in Chapter 1 (page 11). They also most likely brought syphilis, an American disease that broke out across Europe in more virulent form than ever before. Europeans brought to the Americas the horses and large dogs that intimidated the Aztecs; they brought oranges, lemons, figs, and bananas from Africa and the Canary Islands. Escaped hogs multiplied so readily that they overran some Caribbean islands, as did European rats.

The Columbian exchange was not a short-lived event. In a host of different ways it continued to reshape the globe over the next half millennium as travel, exploration, and colonization brought cultures ever closer. Instead of smallpox, today H1N1 influenza or the West Nile virus threatens populations worldwide. But the exchanges of the sixteenth century were often more extreme, unpredictable, and far-reaching because of the previous isolation of the two hemispheres.

### The Crown Steps In

The proud conquistadors did not long enjoy their mastery in the Americas. Spain's monarchs, who had just tamed an aristocracy at home, were not about to allow a colonial nobility to arise across the Atlantic. The Crown bribed the conquistadors into retirement—or was saved the expense when men such as Francisco Pizarro were assassinated by their own followers. The task of governing Spain's new colonies passed from the conquerors to a small army of officials, soldiers, lawyers, and Catholic bishops, all appointed by the Crown, reporting to the Crown, and loyal to the Crown. Headquartered in urban centers such as Mexico City (formerly Tenochtitlán), an elaborate, centralized bureaucracy administered the Spanish Empire, regulating nearly every aspect of economic and social life.

### Spanish and Indian Populations

Few Spaniards besides imperial officials settled in the Americas. By 1600 only about 5 percent of the colonial population was of Spanish descent, the other 95 percent being either Indian or African. Even by 1800 only 300,000 Spanish immigrants had come to Central and South America. Indians often remained on the lands that they had farmed under the Aztecs and the Incas, now paying Spanish overlords their taxes and producing livestock for export. More importantly, Indians paid for the new order through their labor, sometimes as slaves but more often through an evolving administrative system channeling native workers to public and private enterprises throughout New Spain. The Spanish also established sugar plantations in the West Indies; these were worked by black slaves who by 1520 were being imported from Africa in large numbers.

### Silver Bonanza

Spain's colonies returned even more spectacular profits to the mother country by the 1540s—the result of silver discoveries of epic proportions in both Mexico and Peru. Silver mining developed into a large-scale capitalist enterprise requiring substantial investment. European investors and Spanish immigrants who had profited from cattle raising and sugar planting poured their capital into equipment and supplies that would mine the silver deposits more efficiently: stamp mills, water-powered crushing equipment, pumps, and mercury. Whole villages of Indians were pressed into service in the mines, joining black slaves and free white workers employed there.

In the last decades of the sixteenth century the economies of Mexico and Peru revolved around the mines. By 1570 the town of Potosí, the site of a veritable mountain of silver, had become larger than any city in either Spain or its American empire, with a population of 120,000. Local farmers who supplied mining centers with food and Spanish merchants in Seville who exported European goods to Potosí profited handsomely. So, too, did the Spanish Crown, which claimed one-fifth of all extracted silver. During the sixteenth century some 16,000 tons of the precious metal were exported from Spanish America to Europe.

### The Search for North America's Indian Empires

Riches and glory radicalized Spanish expectations. Would-be conquistadors embarked on an urgent race to discover and topple the next Aztec or Inca Empire, a race to
HOW DID SPANIARDS AND AZTECS REMEMBER FIRST CONTACT?

The first encounter between the Spaniards under Hernán Cortés and ambassadors of the emperor Montezuma in 1519 represents a fateful turning point in history. While we have no full contemporary account of that meeting, two remarkable sources present Spanish and Mexican memories of the event written years later. The first selection below was written in the 1580s by one of Cortés's lieutenants, the conquistador Bernal Díaz. The second section comes from a work compiled in the 1540s by the missionary Bernardino de Sahagún, in which indigenous informants recalled Aztec culture, religion, society, and history up to and through the conquest.

**DOCUMENT 1  Bernal Díaz**

Seeing the big ship with the standards flying they knew that it was there that they must go to speak with the captain; so they went direct to the flagship and going on board asked who was the Tatuán [Tlatocan] which in their language means the chief. Doña Marina who understood the language well pointed him out. Then the Indians paid many marks of respect to Cortés, according to their usage, and bade him welcome, and said that their lord, a servant of the great Montezuma, had sent them to ask what kind of men we were and of what we were in search. ... [Cortés] told them that we came to see them and to trade with them and that our arrival in their country should cause them no uneasiness but be looked on by them as fortunate. ... [Several days later, one of Montezuma's emissaries] brought him some clever painters such as they had in Mexico and ordered them to make pictures true to nature of the face and body of Cortés and all his captains, and of the soldiers, ships, sails, and horses, and of Doña Marina and Aguilar, even of the two greyhounds, and the cannon balls, and all of the army we had brought with us, and he carried the pictures to his master. Cortés ordered our gunsners to load the lubambas with a great charge of powder so that they should make a great noise when they were fired off. ... [The emissary] went with all haste and narrated everything to his prince, and showed him the pictures which had been painted ...


**DOCUMENT 2  Fray Bernardino de Sahagún**

When they had gotten up into [Cortés's] boat, each of them made the earth-eating gesture before the Captain. Then they addressed him, saying, 'Mey the god attend: his agent Moteucome who is in charge in Mexico for him addresses him and says, 'The god is doubly welcome.' Then they dressed up the Captain. They put on him the turquoise serpent mask attached to the quetzal-feather head fan, to which were fixed, from which hung the green stone serpent earplugs. And they put the sleeveless jacket on him, and around his neck they put the plated green stone necklace with the golden disk in the middle. On his lower back they tied the back mirror, and also they tied behind him the cloak called a cízalli. And on his legs they placed the green stone bands with the golden bells. And they gave him, putting it on his arm, the shield with gold and shells crossing, on whose edge were spread quetzal feathers, with a quetzal banner. And they laid the obsidian sandals before him.

Then the Captain ordered that they tied up their hair on their foreheads and cheeks. When this had been done they shot off the cannon. And at this point the messengers truly fainted and swooned; one after another they swooned and fell, losing consciousness. ... Then [Cortés] let them go.

(Upon returning to Tenochtitlán and reporting to Moteucome, he replied) I will not hear it here. I will hear it at the Coacalco, let them go there! And he gave orders, saying: 'Let some captives be covered in chalk [for sacrifice].'

Then the messengers went to the Coacalco, and so did Moteucome. There upon the captives died in their presence: they cut off their cheeks and sprinkled their blood over the messengers. (The reason they did it was that they had gone to very dangerous places and had seen, glozed on the countenances of, and spoken to the gods) ... When this was done, they talked to Moteucome, telling him what they had beheld, and they showed him what the Spaniards' food was like.

And when he heard what the messengers reported, he was greatly afraid and taken aback, and he was amazed at their food. It especially made him faint when he heard how the guns went off at [the Spaniards'] command, sounding like thunder, causing people to actually sworn blocking the ears. And when it went off, something like a ball came out from inside, and fire went showering and spitting out. And the smoke that came out had a very foul stench, striking one in the face. And if they shot at a hill, it seemed to crumble and come apart. ... Their war gear was all iron. They clothed their bodies in iron, they put iron on their heads, their swords were iron, their bows were iron, and their shields were iron.

And the deer that carried them were as tall as the roof. And they wrapped their bodies all over: only their faces could be seen, very white. ... And their dogs were huge creatures, with their ears folded over and their jaws dragging. They had burning eyes, eyes like coals, yellow and fiery ...

When Moteucome heard it, he was greatly afraid; he seemed to faint away, he grew concerned and disturbed.


**Thinking Critically**

How did the Aztecs and the Spaniards communicate? Why does Díaz pay so little attention to the gifts the emissaries brought Cortés? Why might the painters be absent from the Nahuatl account? What principles of critical thinking should be kept in mind when reading such documents?
sailed back to Puerto Rico and then returned for some years to Spain, until Cortés's early exploits in Mexico rekindled his ambitions. Filled with visions of glory, he returned to Florida in 1521 only to be mortally wounded in a battle with Calusa Indians.

Ponce de León died miserably, yet his countrymen still believed that wealthy Indian empires remained undiscovered in the North. In 1526 Spain established a settlement in present-day Georgia, but the endeavor soon collapsed. Two years later Pánfilo de Narváez, a redbearded veteran from the conquest of Cuba, led a major expedition back to Florida. Ignoring advice from his second-in-command, Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, Narváez separated from his main force near Tampa Bay and led 300 men on a harrowing march in search of riches. For months the force plundered its way through Florida, while the men fell ill or fell victim to Indian archers, whose longbows could bury an arrow six inches into a tree. Disillusioned and desperate, 242 survivors lashed together makeshift rafts and tried to sail along the Gulf Coast to Mexico. Weeks later proud Narváez and most of his men had disappeared at sea, whereas Cabeza de Vaca and a handful of survivors washed up on islands off the Texas coast.

Local Indian groups then turned the tables and made slaves of the Spaniards. Cabeza de Vaca later recalled that his captors were appalled to learn that the starving castaways had eaten their dead. After years as prisoners, Cabeza de Vaca and three others, including a black slave named Esteban, escaped to make an extraordinary trek across Texas and northern Mexico. Somewhere in present-day Chihuahua they passed through what had been the trading hinterland of Paquimé, and Cabeza de Vaca noted an enduring regional commerce in feathers and "green stones"—turquoise. Finally, in July 1536 a shocked party of Spanish slavers stumbled across the four rag-tag castaways and brought them to Mexico City.

The stories the four men told of their trek inspired two more massive expeditions to discover and conquer North America's elusive Indian empires. The first was led by Hernán de Soto, who had grown wealthy helping to conquer Peru. Confident that Florida held similar riches, de Soto scoured the Southeast's agricultural villages searching for gold and taking whatever he wanted: food, clothing, luxury goods, even young women whom he and his men "desired both as servants and for their foul uses ..." As they raped, stole, and killed their way through the Southeast, de Soto and his men unwittingly had the honor of being the first and last Europeans to glimpse several declining Mississippian chiefdoms, echoes of Cahokia's ancient majesty. Some native communities resisted, inflicting huge losses on de Soto's men. Others shrewdly feigned friendship and insisted that gold and glory could be found in this or that nearby village, thus reducing themselves of a great danger and directing it at enemies instead. De Soto's men ravaged Indian societies through parts of present-day Florida, Georgia, North and

Fabulous gold and silver discoveries in their New World empire led Spaniards to force Indians and Africans to labor in the mines under dangerous and brutal conditions. This late-sixteenth-century illustration portrays Africans mining for a Spaniard in Panama, but it seems almost pastoral, compared to the dangers of earthen collapses in the mining pits and tunnels or the risks of suffocation or black lung disease from the dust underground.

become the next Cortés or Pizarro. The prevailing mood was captured by the portrait of a Spanish soldier that adorns the frontispiece of his book about the West Indies. He stands with one hand on his sword and the other holding a pair of compasses on top of a globe. Beneath is inscribed the motto "By compasses and the sword / More and more and more and more."
South Carolina, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas. The expedition never found the treasures it sought, but it did hasten the transformation of the southeastern chiefdoms into decentralized confederacies.

Spanish ambition met a similar fate in the West. In 1539, 29-year-old Francisco Vázquez de Coronado led 300 Spaniards and 1,000 Mexican Indian warriors north into the present-day American Southwest. Emboldened by tales of cities more wondrous even than Tenochtitlán, Coronado’s brash confidence began to fail him when instead he found only mud and straw pueblos inhabited by modest farmers. Determined to turn his hugely expensive expedition to advantage, Coronado sent men in all directions. Some went west, until they ran into the vastness of the Grand Canyon and had to turn back. Others traveled east, taking up temporary residence among the Pueblo peoples of the upper Rio Grande. The increasingly abusive visitors soon provoked battles with their hosts, forcing them to abandon 13 villages, which the Spaniards then destroyed. Desperate to redeem his reputation and investment, Coronado followed an Indian he dubbed the Turk out onto the Great Plains in search of a rumored kingdom called Quivira. Perhaps the Turk had in mind one of the easternmost Mississippian chiefdoms, but

As Hernán de Soto traveled through North America, he brought a herd of pigs much like the razorback hog. At times the herd numbered more than 700. The animals were an efficient way of providing protein to the expedition. More than 80 percent of a carcass could be consumed, compared with only 50 percent of a cow or sheep. Hogs could be herded on the march as well, foraging for food as they went. But some anthropologists and historians believe that the hogs were also carriers of disease that migrated to humans. The diseases may have sparked the deaths of thousands of Indians, who lacked the immunity built up by Europeans over centuries of exposure to Eurasian illnesses.
the frustrated conquistador became convinced he had been deceived. He had the Turk strangled somewhere in present-day Kansas and in 1542 returned to Mexico, where Crown authorities brought him to trial for inflicting "great cruelties" on Indians.

Conquistadors such as Coronado might be ruined by their unfulfilled ambitions, but Spain could afford its failed North American excursions. It had taken vast wealth from the Americas, conquered the hemisphere's mightiest peoples, and laid claim to most of the New World. Spaniards warily expected competition, and yet for most of the sixteenth century rival European powers took little interest in the Americas. England's fishermen continued to explore the North Sea, Labrador, and Newfoundland. Portugal discovered and laid claim to Brazil. France sent expeditions to explore North America's eastern shoreline (Giovanni da Verrazano, 1524) and the St. Lawrence River valley (Jacques Cartier, 1534, 1535, and 1541). These efforts proved important in the long run, but for most of the century Spain could treat the Americas as their own. They owed that luxury, in part, to religious upheaval in Europe. During the second decade of the sixteenth century—the same decade in which Cortés laid siege to Tenochtitlán—religious changes of enormous significance began spreading through Europe. That revolution in Christianity, known as the Protestant Reformation, occupied European attentions and eventually figured as a crucial force in shaping the history of the Americas.

How did the Spanish respond to the discovery of a "new world"?

The Teachings of Martin Luther

Into this climate of heightened spirituality stepped Martin Luther, who abandoned studying the law to enter a monastery. Like many of his contemporaries, Luther was consumed by fears over his eternal fate. He was convinced that he was damned, and he could not find any consolation in the Catholic church. Catholic doctrine taught that a person could be saved by faith in God and by his or her own good works—by leading a virtuous life, observing the sacraments (such as baptism, the Mass, and penance), making pilgrimages to holy places, and praying to Christ and the saints. Because Luther believed that human nature was innately evil, he despised of being able to lead a life that "merited" salvation. If men and women are so bad, he reasoned, how could they ever win their way to heaven with good works?

Luther finally broke through his despair with the Bible. It convinced him that God did not require fallen humankind to earn salvation. Salvation, he concluded, came by faith alone, the "free gift" of God to undeserving sinners. The ability to live a good life could not be the cause of salvation but its consequence: once men and women believed that they had saving faith, moral behavior was possible. Luther elaborated that idea, known as "justification by faith alone," between 1513 and 1517.

Luther was ordained a priest and then assigned to teach at a university in Wittenberg, Germany. He became increasingly critical, however, of the Catholic church as an institution. In 1517 he posted on the door of a local church 95 theses attacking the Catholic hierarchy for selling salvation in the form of indulgences.

The novelty of this attack was not Luther's open break with Catholic teaching. Challenges to the church had cropped up throughout the Middle Ages. What was new were the passion and force behind Luther's protest. Using the blunt, earthy Germanic tongue, he expressed the anxieties of many devout laypeople and their outrage at the
church hierarchy's neglect. The "gross, ignorant asses and knaves at Rome," he warned, should keep their distance from Germany, or else "jump into the Ruine or the nearest river, and take... a cold bath."

The pope and his representatives in Germany at first tried to silence Martin Luther, then excommunicated him. But opposition only pushed Luther toward more radical positions. He asserted that the church and its officials were not infallible; only the Scriptures were without error. Every person, he said, should read and interpret the Bible for himself or herself. In an even more direct assault on church authority, he advanced an idea known as "the priesthood of all believers." Catholic doctrine held that salvation came only through the church and its clergy, a privileged group that possessed special access to God. Luther asserted that every person had the power claimed by priests.

Although Luther had not intended to start a schism within Catholicism, independent Lutheran churches were forming in Germany by the 1520s. And, during the 1530s, Luther's ideas spread throughout Europe, where they were eagerly taken up by other reformers.

The Birth of Spanish Florida and French Huguenots

The Protestant Reformation shattered the unity of Christendom in western Europe. Spain, Portugal, Ireland, and Italy remained firmly Catholic. England, Scotland, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and France developed either dominant or substantial Calvinist constituencies. Much of Germany and Scandinavia opted for Lutheranism. As religious groups competed for political power and the loyalties of believers, brutal wars swept sixteenth-century Europe, and France experienced some of the worst violence. An influential group of Huguenots (Calvin's French followers) saw in North America a potential refuge from religious persecution. Under the leadership of Jean Ribault, 150 Huguenots from Normandy in 1562 established a simple village on Parris Island off present-day South Carolina. That experiment ended in desperation and cannibalism, but two years later Ribault led another, larger group to a site south of present-day Jacksonville, Florida. Here the Huguenots constructed a settlement they named Fort Caroline and nurtured a cordial relationship with the local Timucua Indians. It seemed a promising start.

But Spanish authorities in the Caribbean took the Huguenots for a triple threat. First, French pirates had long sought to siphon silver from the Americas by waylaying Spanish galleons. Silver shipments rode the Gulf Stream past the Bahamas and up the southeastern coast of North America before turning east toward Spain. In only four years, from 1556 to 1560, French ships preying on this vulnerable route had helped cut Spain’s colonial revenues in half. With good reason, Spanish administrators feared that Fort Caroline would entrench the threat of piracy. Second, Spain had to worry that France would
plant successful colonies and take a broader interest in the Americas, perhaps eventually making claims on all of North America. Finally, many Spanish Catholics saw Protestantism as a loathsome contagion, to be expunged from Europe and barred from the Americas.

These interlocking concerns prompted Spain to found a permanent colony in Florida. To do so the Crown turned to a focused and unforgiving man named Pedro Menéndez de Avilés. In 1565 Menéndez established a settlement on the coast called St. Augustine (still the United States' oldest continuously occupied, non-Indian settlement) and immediately marched north to destroy Fort Caroline. He and 500 soldiers slogged through the rain and marsh until they found the simple fort. In battle and through later executions, the attackers killed Ribault and about 500 of his Huguenots. Flush with victory, Menéndez established several more outposts or Florida's Atlantic and Gulf coasts, and in 1570 even encouraged a short-lived Jesuit mission just miles from where English colonists would establish Jamestown a generation later. As for the Huguenots, the calamity at Fort Caroline dashed hope that the New World would be their haven. Most had to resign themselves to intensifying persecution in France.

The English Reformation

While the Reformation wracked northern Europe, King Henry VIII of England labored at a goal more worldly than those of Luther and Calvin. He wanted a son, a male heir to continue the Tudor dynasty. When his wife, Catherine of Aragon, gave birth to a daughter, Mary, Henry petitioned the pope to have his marriage annulled in the hope that a new wife would give him a son. This move enraged the king of Spain, who also happened to be Catherine's nephew. He persuaded the pope to refuse Henry's request. Defiantly, England's king proceeded with the divorce nonetheless and quickly married Anne Boleyn. He then went further, making himself, not the pope, the head of the Church of England. Henry was an audacious but practical man, and he had little interest in promoting reformist doctrine. Apart from discarding the pope, the Church of England remained essentially Catholic in its teachings and rituals.

England's Protestants gained ground during the six-year reign of Henry's son Edward VI but then found themselves persecuted when Edward's Catholic half-sister Mary became queen in 1553. Five years later the situation turned again, when Elizabeth I (Anne Boleyn's daughter) took the throne, proclaiming herself the defender of Protestantism. Elizabeth was no radical Calvinist, however. A vocal minority of her subjects were reformers of that stripe, calling for the English church to purge itself of bishops, elaborate ceremonies, and other Catholic "impurities." Because of the austerity and zeal of such Calvinist radicals, their opponents proclaimed them "Puritans."

Radical Protestants might annoy Elizabeth as she pursued her careful, moderate policies, but radical Catholics frightened her. She had reason to worry that Spain might try to employ English Catholics to undermine her rule. More ominously, Elizabeth's advisors cautioned that Catholic Ireland to the west would be an ideal base from which Spain or France could launch an invasion of England. Beginning in 1555 the queen encouraged a number of her elite subjects to sponsor private ventures for subduing the native Irish and settling loyal English Protestants on their land. As events fell out, this Irish venture proved to be a prelude to England's bolder attempt to found colonies across the Atlantic.

How did religious reform divide Europe in the sixteenth century?

England's Entry into America

Among the gentlemen eager to win fame and fortune were Humphrey Gilbert and Walter Raleigh, two adventurers with conquistador appetites for more and more. The pair were like most of the English who went to Ireland, ardent Protestants who viewed the native Catholic inhabitants as superstitious, pagan savages. "They blaspheme, they murder, commit whoredom," complained one Englishman, "hold no wedlocke, ravish, steal and commit all abomination without scruple." Thus the English found it easy enough to justify their conquest. They proclaimed it their duty to teach the Irish the discipline of hard work, the rule of law, and the truth of Protestant Christianity. And, while the Irish were learning these civilized, English ways, they would not be allowed to buy land or hold office or serve...
on juries or give testimony in courts or learn a trade or bear arms.

When the Irish rebelled at that program of "liberation," the English ruthlessly repressed them, slaughtering not only combatants but civilians as well. Most English in Ireland, like most Spaniards in America, believed that native peoples who resisted civilization and proper Christianity should be subdued at any cost. No scruples stopped Gilbert, in an insurgent country, from planting the path to his camp with the severed heads of Irish rebels.

The struggle to colonize and subdue Ireland would serve as a rough model for later English efforts at expansion. The approach was essentially military, like that of the conquistadores. It also set the ominous precedent that Englishmen could treat "savage" peoples with a level of brutal cruelty that would have been inappropriate in wars between "civilized" Europeans. But the campaigns in Ireland seemed to leave the queen's men with little more than lessons. "Neither reputation, or profytt is to be wonne" in Ireland, concluded Gilbert. He, Raleigh, and many other West Country gentry wanted to take their ambition and their Irish education to North America.

The Ambitions of Gilbert, Raleigh, and Wingina

In 1578 Gilbert was the first to get his chance for glory when Elizabeth granted him a royal patent—the first English colonial charter—to explore, occupy, and govern any territory in America "not actually possessed of any Christian prince or people." The vague, wildly unrealistic charter matched Gilbert's vast ego. It ignored the Indian possession of North America and made him lord and proprietor of all the land lying between Florida and Labrador. In many ways his dreams looked backward. Gilbert hoped to set up a kind of medieval kingdom of his own, where loyal tenant farmers would work the lands of manors, paying rent to feudal lords. Yet his vision also looked forward to a utopian society.

He planned to encourage England's poor to emigrate by providing them free land and a government "to be chosen by consent of the people." Elizabeth had high hopes for her haughty champion, but a fierce storm got the better of his ship, and the Atlantic swallowed him before he could ever plant a settlement.

Meanwhile, Gilbert's stepbrother Raleigh had been working more industriously to lay the groundwork for a British American empire. Raleigh enlisted the talents of Richard Hakluyt, a clergyman with a passion for spreading knowledge of overseas discoveries. At Raleigh's bidding, Hakluyt wrote an eloquent plea to Elizabeth for the English settlement of America, titled A Discourse Concerning Western Planting. The temperate and fertile lands of North America, Hakluyt argued, would prove ideal for growing tropical commodities and would be an excellent base from which to harry the Spanish, search for a northwest passage to the Orient, and extend the influence of Protestantism. He also stressed the advantages of colonies as potential markets for English goods and as havens for the poor and unemployed. Finally, Hakluyt predicted that because the "Spaniardes have executed most outrageous and more then Turkishe cruelties in all the west Indies," Indians would greet Englishmen as liberators.

Raleigh's chance to test the prediction finally came in 1584, when Elizabeth granted him a patent nearly identical to Gilbert's. By the summer Raleigh had dispatched an exploratory voyage to the Outer Banks of present-day North Carolina. Expedition leaders reported making friendly contact with a people known as the Roanoke and ruled by a "weroance," or chief, named Wingina. The enthusiastic Hakluyt envisioned a colony that would become the Mexico of England, full of plantations producing sugar and silk and mountains yielding gold.

Elizabeth knighted Raleigh and allowed him to name the new land "Virginia," after her virgin queen.

But Raleigh was not the only one with grand plans. Almost certainly Wingina had encountered or at least heard of Europeans before 1584. Like most coastal groups in the region, his people would have obtained prized European tools and commodities through indirect trade or by scouring wrecked ships. Preoccupied with the political geography of his own region and eager to fortify his own and his people's power, Wingina recognized that friendly relations with the English would give him privileged access to their trade and influence. Perhaps he believed that he would act as patron to the newcomers. After all, they knew...
little of the region, spoke no Indian languages, and even lacked the basic skills necessary to survive in the area without native assistance. In short, Wingina seems to have welcomed the English and encouraged their return because he believed that they could be useful and that they could be controlled. It was a tragic if understandable miscalculation—one that Indian leaders would make again and again in colonial America.

Raleigh apparently aimed to establish on Roanoke a mining camp and a military garrison. In a stroke of genius, he included in the company of 108 men a scientist, Thomas Harriot, to study the country’s natural resources and an artist, John White, to make drawings of the Virginia Indians. *A Briefe and True Reports of the New Found Land of Virginia* (1588), written by Harriot and illustrated by White, served as one of the principal sources about North America and its Indian inhabitants for more than a century. Far less inspired was Raleigh’s choice to lead the expedition—two veterans of the Irish campaigns, Sir Richard Grenville and Ralph Lane. Even his fellow conquistadors in Ireland considered Lane proud and greedy. As for Grenville, he was given to breaking wineglasses between his teeth and then swallowing the shards to show that he could stand the sight of blood, even his own.

The bullying ways of both men quickly alienated the natives of Roanoke. Wingina found the newcomers disrespectful, haughty, and cruel: when a local stole a cup, the English tried to teach everyone a lesson by torching his village and destroying its corn stores. As winter arrived and supplies ran low, the hungry colonists made greater and greater demands. The Roanokes’ resentment fueled English anxiety that a revolt was brewing, and these anxieties led only to more brutality and more resentment. The following summer Wingina made a final attempt to regain control of the situation. He had agreed to parlay with Lane about improving relations. But the meeting was a ruse. Lane’s men opened fire at the Indian envoys, killed Wingina, and hacked the head from his body. All that averted a massive counterattack was the arrival of England’s preeminent privateer, Sir Francis Drake, fresh from freebooting up and down the Caribbean. The settlement’s 102 survivors piled onto Drake’s ships and put an ocean between themselves and the avenging Roanokes.

**A Second Roanoke—and Croatoan**

Undaunted, Raleigh organized a second expedition to plant a colony farther north, in Chesapeake Bay. He now projected an agricultural community of manors, much like those in England. He recruited 119 men, women, and children, members of the English middle class, and granted each person an estate of 500 acres. He also appointed as governor the artist John White, who brought along a suit of armor for ceremonial occasions.

White deplored Lane’s treachery toward Wingina and hated the brazen, senseless violence that had characterized the entire endeavor. The artist had spent his time on Roanoke closely observing native peoples, their material cultures, and their customs. His sensitive watercolors, especially those featuring women and children, indicate a genuine respect and affection. White felt strongly that under prudent, moral leaders an English colony could indeed coexist peacefully with American Indians.

Despite his best intentions, everything went wrong. In July of 1587 the expedition’s pilot, Simon Ferdinando, insisted on leaving the colonists at Roanoke Island rather than along Chesapeake Bay. Understandably, the Roanokes took no pleasure in seeing the English return, and even before Ferdinando weighed anchor the settlers began skirmishing with Indians. Sensing that the situation on Roanoke could quickly become desperate, the colonists...
prevailed on White to sail back with Ferdinando and bring reinforcements.

But White returned home in 1588 just as the massive Spanish navy, the Armada, was marshaling for an assault on England. Elizabeth enlisted every seaworthy ship and able-bodied sailor in her realm to stave off invasion. The Armada was defeated, but Raleigh left the Roanoke colonists to fend for themselves. When White finally returned to Roanoke Island in 1590, he found only an empty fort and a few cottages in a clearing. The sole clue to the colony's fate was carved on a post: CROATOAN. It was the name of a nearby island off Cape Hatteras.

Had the Roanoke colonists fled to Croatoan for safety? Had they moved to the mainland and joined Indian communities? Had they been killed by Wingina's people?

The fate of the "lost colony" remains a mystery, though later rumors suggest that the missing colonists merged with native societies in the interior. His dream of a tolerant, cooperative colony dashed, White sailed back to England, leaving behind the little cluster of cottages, which would soon be overgrown with vines, and his suit of armor, which was already "almost eaten through with rust."

Why did Elizabeth agree to charter a colony in America, and how successful were the first attempts?

CONCLUSION

THE WORLD AT LARGE

All the world lay before them. Or so it had seemed to the young men from England's West Country who dreamed of gold and glory, conquest and colonization. True, they lived on the fringe of the civilized world in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. China remained the distant, exotic kingdom of power and wealth, supplying silks and spices and other luxurious goods. Islamic empires stood astride the land routes from Europe to the east. Nations on the western edge of Europe thus took to the seas. Portugal sent slave and gold traders to Africa, as well as merchants to trade with the civilizations of the Indies. Spanish conquistors such as Cortés toppled Indian empires and brought home mountains of silver. But England's West Country sea dogs—would-be conquistadors—met only with frustration. In 1580, more than a century after Columbus's first crossing, not a single English settlement existed in the Americas. The Atlantic had devoured Humphrey Gilbert before he could establish an outpost; Raleigh's Roanoke ventures lay in ruins.

What was left of the freebooting world of West Country adventurers? Raleigh, his ambition unquenchable, sailed to South America in quest of a rich city named El Dorado. In 1603, however, Elizabeth's death brought to the English throne her cousin James I, the founder of the Stuart dynasty. The new king arrested the old queen's favorite for treason and imprisoned him for 15 years in the Tower of London. Set free in 1618 at the age of 64, Raleigh returned to South America, his lust for El Dorado undiminished. Along the way he plundered some Spanish silver ships, defying King James's orders. It was a fatal mistake, because England had made peace with Spain. Raleigh lost his head.
James I did not want to harass the king of Spain; he wanted to imitate him. The Stuarts were even more determined than the Tudors had been to enlarge the sphere of royal power. There would be no room in America for a warrior nobility of conquistadors, no room for a feudal fiefdom ruled by the likes of Raleigh or Gilbert. Instead, there would be English colonies in America like the new outpost of Jamestown, planted on the Chesapeake Bay in Virginia in 1607. There would be profitable plantations and other bold enterprises, enriching English royalty and managed by loyal, efficient bureaucrats.

Colonizing America would strengthen English monarchs, paving their path to greater power, just as the dominions of Mexico and Peru had enlarged the authority of the Spanish Crown. America would be the making of kings and queens.

Or would it? For some Europeans, weary of freebooting conquistadors and sea rovers, the order and security that Crown rule and centralized states promoted in western Europe would be enough. But others, men and women who were often desperate and sometimes idealistic, would cast their eyes west across the Atlantic and want more.

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**Chapter Summary**

**During the Late Fifteenth Century, Europeans and Africans Made Their First Contact with the Americas.**

- Western Europeans had lived on the fringes of an international economy drawn together by Chinese goods.
- Technological advances, the rise of new trade networks and techniques, and increased political centralization made Europe's expansion overseas possible.
- Led by Portugal, European expansion pushed south along the West African coast. Sugar plantations and a slave trade in Africans became critical to this expansive commerce.
- Spain led in exploring and colonizing the Americas, consolidating a vast and profitable empire. Divisions within Indian empires and the devastating effects of European diseases made Spanish conquest possible.
- The early conquistadors were replaced by a centralized royal bureaucracy. The discovery of vast silver deposits provided Spain with immense wealth, while leading to sharply increased mortality among the native population.
- Conquistadors also explored much of the present-day southeastern and southwestern United States. The native peoples they encountered thwarted their efforts.
- Martin Luther and later John Calvin spearheaded the Protestant Reformation, which spread to England, Scotland, the Netherlands, and the Huguenots in France.
- England did not turn to exploration and colonization until the 1570s and 1580s. By that time, European rivalries were heightened by splits arising out of the Protestant Reformation.
- England's merchants and gentry supported colonizing ventures, although early efforts, such as those at Roanoke, failed.
Additional Reading


For a good introduction to the Reformation in England, see Christopher Hill, English Revolutions (1993); Eamon Duffy's The Voices of Morebath (2001) asks how the Reformation transformed the lives of ordinary people. For early English attempts at colonization, in both Ireland and the Americas, consult the works of Nicholas Canny in the Bibliography, as well as Michael L. Oberg, The Heart in Edward Nugent's Hand (2007).

For a fuller list of readings, see the Bibliography at www.mhhe.com/eh8e.
**European Exploration: Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries**

**PORTUGAL**
- 1420s Madeira and Azores colonized
- 1430s and 1440s Exploration of West African coast
- 1488 Dias rounds the Cape of Good Hope
- 1498 da Gama reaches India
- 1500 Cabral discovers Brazil
- 1492–1502 Voyages of Columbus
  - 1508–1513 Expansion into the Caribbean
  - 1519–1521 Conquest of the Aztecs
  - 1530s Conquest of the Incas
  - 1540 Discovery of silver

**SPAIN**
- 1496 West Country mariners fish the western Atlantic
- 1497 John Cabot reaches Newfoundland

**ENGLAND**
- 1500–1550s Growth of Newfoundland fishery
  - 1565 Conquest of Ireland begins
  - 1577–1583 Frobisher and Gilbert's failed colonies
  - 1585–1590 Roanoke expeditions

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**Significant Events** 49
In Jamestown's early years its military orientation was clear. The fort's heavy palisade and its strategic location upriver and some distance inland underscore the colonists' concern for defense—as does the imposing figure of Powhatan seated at the right.
Colonization and Conflict in the South

1600-1750

Outlandish Strangers

In the year 1617, European time, on a bay Europeans called the Chesapeake, in a land they named Virginia, the mighty weroance Powhatan surveyed his domain with satisfaction. While in his prime, the tall, robust man had drawn some 30 villages along the Virginia coast into a powerful confederacy. As tribute for his protection and leadership, Powhatan collected food, furs, and skins. He forged alliances with communities too distant or too powerful for him to dominate. He married the daughters of prominent men, dozens in all, to solidify his network of patronage and power. His confederacy numbered perhaps 20,000 souls. Some coastal villages had fiercely resisted Powhatan's efforts to incorporate them; some peoples to the west still threatened the security of his confederacy.
After 1607 Powhatan was forced to take into account yet another group. The English, as this new people called themselves, came by sea, crammed into three ships. They were 100 men and 4 boys, all clad in heavy, outlandish clothing, many dressed in gaudy colors. The ships followed a river deep into Powhatan’s territory and built a fort on a swampy, mosquito-infested site that they called Jamestown.

Powhatan knew of these strangers from across the waters, who had larger boats and louder, more deadly weapons. But the Indians quickly learned how to use guns, and they vastly outnumbered the English, a clumsy and unprepared people who seemed unlikely to live long and prosper in Powhatan’s land. Even amid the bounty of the Chesapeake they failed to feed themselves. With bows and arrows, spears and nets, Indian men brought in an abundance of meat and fish. Fields tended by Indian women yielded generous crops of corn, beans, squash, and melon, and edible nuts and fruits grew wild. Still, for several years the English starved. Powhatan could understand why the English refused to grow food. Cultivating crops was women’s work—like building houses, or making clothing, pottery, and baskets; or caring for children. And the English settlement included no women until two arrived in the fall of 1608. Yet even after more women came, the English still starved, and they expected—no, they demanded—that Powhatan’s people feed them.

Worse, these hapless folk put on such airs. They boasted about the power of their god—they had only one—and denounced the Indians’ “devil-worship” of “false gods.” They crowed endlessly about the power of their king, James I, who expected Powhatan to become his vassal. The English had even planned a “coronation” to crown Powhatan as a “subject king.” He was unimpressed. “If your king has sent me presents,” he responded, “I also am a king, and this is my land. . . . Your father is to come to me, not I to him.” In the end the English did come to Powhatan, only to find what “a foul trouble there was to make him kneel to receive his crown.” . . . [He] indulged so many persuasions, examples and instructions as tired them all. At last by leaning hard on his shoulders, he a little stooped, and . . . put the Crown on his head.”

Inconceivable to Powhatan—that he should bow before this King James, the ruler of so small and savage a people! When the Indians made war, they killed the male warriors of rival communities but adopted their women and children. But when Powhatan’s people defended their land from these invaders, the English retaliated by murdering Indian women and children. Worse, the English could not even keep order among themselves. Too many of them wanted to lead, and they squabbled constantly among themselves.

Only one man, a brash fellow named Captain John Smith, had briefly brought order to the English settlement. Powhatan granted him a grudging respect, though Smith bragged endlessly of his earlier exploits across the ocean, where he had fought as a soldier of fortune. He told fanciful tales of his irresistible appeal to beautiful women who had rescued him from harrowing perils. A rough man, he bullied the Indians for food and would have enslaved them if it had been in his power. Even so, Smith took a genuine interest in Indian ways. But the fellow returned to England in 1609 after being injured when some English gunpowder blew up by mistake. Thereafter the newcomers returned to squabbling and starving.

The temptation to wipe out the helpless, troublesome, arrogant tribe of English—or simply to let them starve to death—was almost overwhelming. But Powhatan had allowed the English to survive. Like Wingina before him, he decided that even those barbaric people had their uses. English labor, English trading goods, and, most important, English guns would help subdue his Indian rivals, within and beyond his confederacy. In 1614 Powhatan cemented his claim on the English and their weapons with the marriage between his favorite child, Pocahontas, and an ambitious Englishman, John Rolfe.

By 1617 events had vindicated Powhatan’s strategy of tolerating the English. His chiefdom flourished, ready to be passed on to his brother. Powhatan’s people still outnumbered the English, who seldom starved outright now but continued to fight among themselves and sicken and die.
Only one thing had changed in the Chesapeake by 1617: the English were clearing woodland along the rivers and planting tobacco.

That was the doing of Powhatan’s son-in-law, Rolfe, a man as strange as the rest of the newcomers. Rolfe had been obsessed with finding a crop that could be grown in Virginia and then sold for gain across the sea. When he succeeded by growing tobacco, other English followed his lead. Odder still, not women but men tended the tobacco fields. Here was more evidence of English inferiority. Men wasted long hours laboring when they might supply their needs with far less effort.

In 1617 Powhatan, ruler of the Pemunkeys, surveyed his domain, and sometime in that year, he looked no longer. He had lived long enough to see the tobacco fields lining the riverbanks, straddling the charred stumps of felled trees. But perhaps he went to his grave believing that he had done what Wingina had failed to do: bend the English to his purposes. He died before those stinking tobacco weeds spread over the length of his land and sent his hard-won dominion up in smoke.

Wingina and Powhatan were not the only native leaders that dreamed of turning Europeans to their advantage. Across North America, the fleeting if destructive encounters of the sixteenth century gave way to sustained colonialism in the seventeenth. As Europeans began to settle the edges of North America in earnest, Indian peoples struggled not only to survive and adapt to new realities but also, when possible, to profit from the rapid changes swirling around them.

Those often dramatic changes reflected upheavals under way all across the globe. The tobacco John Rolfe had begun to cultivate was only one of several plantation monocultures that Europeans began to establish in their far-flung colonies. Sugar, already flourishing in the Atlantic islands off the coast of West Africa, was gaining a foothold in the islands of the Caribbean. Rice, long a staple in Asia and grown also in Africa, made its way into South Carolina toward the end of the seventeenth century. Because these crops were grown most efficiently on plantations and required intensive labor, African slavery spread during these years, fueled by an expanding international slave trade. Whites, blacks, and Indians were all, in different ways, caught up in the wrenching transformations.

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**Spain’s North American Colonies**

And just as Spain had been the first European power to explore North America’s interior, so, too, it led the way in establishing lasting colonies north of Mexico. But while France and especially England would eventually colonize territory ideally suited to European-style agriculture, territory capable of sustaining large colonial populations, Spain confined its North American ventures to the ecologically challenging regions of the upper Rio Grande and coastal Florida. Because economic opportunities and quality farmland existed in abundance elsewhere in Spanish America, relatively few Spaniards chose to eke out an existence in distant and difficult northern outposts. Nonetheless, Spain’s colonial endeavors would have tremendous implications for North America’s native peoples and for the geopolitics of the continent as a whole.

**The Founding of a “New” Mexico**

By the 1590s Coronado’s dismal expedition a half century earlier had been all but forgotten. Again, rumors were circulating in Mexico about great riches in the North. New Spain’s viceroy began casting about for a champion of means to establish a “new” Mexico, one perhaps as magnificent and profitable as its namesake. He chose Juan de Oñate, son of one of New Spain’s richest miners and husband to Isabel de Telosa Cortés Mocetza, granddaughter of Hernán Cortés and great-granddaughter of Mocetza. Oñate needed wealthy connections. Colonizing New Mexico would eventually cost him and his backers more than half a million pesos. But the would-be conquistador expected to recoup the investment with ease. Ignorant of North America’s geography and overestimating New Mexico’s riches, Oñate even
requested and received permission to sail ships up the Pacific to Pueblo country, so that twice a year he could resupply his would-be colony and export its expected treasures.

The colonizers mistook this cautious courtesy for subservience. Oñate’s oldest nephew, Juan de Zaldívar, was bolder and cruder than most. At Acoma Pueblo, known today as “Sky City”...
because of its position high atop a majestic mesa, he brazenly seized several sacred turkeys to kill and eat, answering Indian protests with insults. Outraged, Acoma's men fell upon Zaldívar, killing him and several of his companions. Oñate responded by putting Zaldívar's younger brother Vicente in command of a punitive expedition. Fueled by grief and rage, Vicente de Zaldívar and his men laid siege to the Pueblo, killed perhaps 800 of its people, and made slaves of several hundred more. Following up on these punishments, Oñate decreed that all adult male survivors were to have one foot chopped off, so that they might spend their lives as limping advertisements for Spanish power. Scholars now doubt that this sentence was actually carried out, but even today, many Pueblos still consider Oñate's harsh edict as emblematic of Spanish cruelty. Whether or not Oñate executed his cruel judgment, the savagery of the Acoma siege and the brutal repression of other acts of defiance educated all of the region's native communities about the risks of resistance.

But it was easier to instill terror than grow rich. Desperate to salvage their enterprise and turn their investments to account, Oñate and key followers toiled on long, fruitless expeditions in search of gold, silver, and cities, and a place to dock those biannual ships. Some more practical entrepreneurs decided to exploit the resources they could see. The younger Zaldívar, headstrong conqueror of Acoma, spent time with Apache hunters and decided it would be more efficient to domesticate bison than search for them on the plains. He and his men labored for three days to build a sprawling cottonwood corral, only to discover that bison were "stubborn animals, brave beyond praise," dangerous to catch, and virtually impossible to hold. With varying degrees of enthusiasm, most Spaniards had to turn to more mundane and less hazardous pursuits, to farming and husbandry, in order to support themselves and their families. Others despaired of even securing a living in arid New Mexico, let alone getting rich. The Spanish Crown had promised to make minor nobles of those who stayed at least five years, but many spurned even this incentive and fled back into New Spain.

They were not the only ones losing confidence. In 1606 royal authorities removed Oñate from his position, brought him up on charges of mismanagement, and, as they had with Coronado, accused him of abusing Indians. Ruined, the would-be conqueror spent the rest of his days struggling to rebuild his fortune and clear his name. Meanwhile, a new viceroy decided that the colonization of "worthless" New Mexico had been an expensive mistake and began planning for its evacuation. The colony would have been abandoned but for the Franciscan religious order. Arguing that it would be a crime and a sin to forsake the many thousands of Indians they claimed to have baptized since 1598, the Franciscans convinced a skeptical King Philip III to continue supporting his outpost on the Upper Rio Grande.

The Growth of Spanish Florida

Franciscans would become key actors in Spanish North America. Members of a medieval religious order founded by St. Francis of Assisi, Franciscan monks forewore property, remained celibate, and survived by begging for alms or accepting donations from wealthy patrons. Like their peers and occasional rivals the Jesuits, Franciscans wore only sandals, simple robes, and a rope belt and took it as their charge to live with and minister to the poor. Contact with the Americas reinvigorated their mission. Franciscans accompanied Columbus on his second voyage, and they began ministering to the Indians of central Mexico soon after Tenochtitlán fell. By the 1570s Spanish authorities started secularizing central Mexico's missions, transforming them into self-supporting parishes, and the friars looked to the frontiers for new fields of conversion. Jesuits established several missions in present-day Arizona, and Franciscans went on to become powerful figures in colonial New Mexico.

The Crown needed them, nowhere more so than in Florida. Seventeenth-century New Mexico was a Catholic obligation for Spain's monarchs, but a small worry compared with the strategic importance of Florida. As long as pirates or rival colonies on the Atlantic seaboard threatened Spanish shipping, the king had to control Florida. Pedro Menéndez de Avilés did much to secure the peninsula in the 1560s when he destroyed France's Fort Caroline and established several Spanish posts on the coast. Chapter 2). By the 1580s, however, the energetic Menéndez was dead and nearly all his coastal establishments destroyed by Indians or privateers. Only St. Augustine endured, with a population of perhaps 500 in 1600. Spanish Florida needed something more than a beachhead along the coast if it was to survive.

The king turned to the Franciscans, as part of a two-stage policy to consolidate his influence over Florida's interior. First, royal administrators enticed or menaced the peninsula's many native peoples into alliances. In return for trade privileges and regular diplomatic presents, native leaders promised to trade with no other European power, support the Spanish in war, and tax their people on behalf of the Spaniards. Second, allied Indian communities were made to accept Franciscan missions and a few resident soldiers, a policy that would be critical to gardening and monitoring native villages. Franciscans set about their work with characteristic determination. By 1675, 40 missions were ministering to as many as 25,000 baptized Indians. That same year, the bishop of Cuba toured Florida and spoke enthusiastically of converts who embraced "with devotion the mysteries of our holy faith."

Spain's plan for Florida seemed to be working, barely. St. Augustine had grown to a settlement of 1,500 by the time of the bishop's tour. Still, Florida's mission system and network of Indian alliances convinced Spanish authorities that they could maintain their grip on this crucial peninsula.
Popé and the Pueblo Revolt

As the seventeenth century progressed, Spain's colony in New Mexico also seemed to stabilize. Although more than a few desperate colonists fled south, enough remained to establish a separate Spanish town, El Villa Real de Santa Fe, in 1610. Santa Fe (the second-oldest European town in the United States after St. Augustine) became the hub of Spanish life in New Mexico. The demands of agriculture and stock raising forced many families to settle elsewhere on the Rio Grande, on well-watered lands near Pueblo villages. Economic and political life revolved around a dozen prominent families. By 1675 New Mexico had a colonial population of perhaps 2,500. It was a diverse community, including Spaniards, Africans, Mexican Indians, mestizos (persons of mixed Spanish-Indian heritage), and mulattoes (of Spanish-African heritage).

This population of 2,500 also included large numbers of Indian captives. Occasionally captives came to Spanish households through war, as after the siege of Acoma. In addition, Spaniards purchased enslaved women and children from other Indians and regularly launched slave raids against so-called enemy Indians such as Utes, Apaches, and Navajos. By 1680 half of all New Mexican households included at least one Indian captive, someone who, depending on age, gender, and the master's disposition, could be treated affectionately as a low-status family member or terrorized and abused as disposable human property.

The colonists also extracted labor from Pueblo Indians. Officially Pueblo households had to surrender three bushels of corn and one processed hide or large cotton blanket each year. Pueblos were also sometimes made to labor on public works, and elite Spaniards often exploited their privileges by insisting on more tribute and labor than legally allowed. Still, the populous Pueblos would have been able to satisfy Spanish demands with little difficulty but for other changes in their world. First and most importantly, colonialism meant epidemics. Smallpox arrived in the early 1620s. In less than a generation the Pueblo population plummeted by 70 percent, to about 30,000. Whereas New Mexico had approximately 100 native villages at contact, by 1680 only 30 remained inhabited. Infestations of locusts, severe droughts, and crop failures compounded the crisis. By 1667 a distraught Franciscan reported widespread famine, with native men, women, and children "lying dead along the roads, in the ravines, and in their hovels." Mounted Utes, Apaches, and Navajos, embittered by New Mexican slaving and barred from their customary trade in the pueblos, launched punishing raids against the most vulnerable Pueblo villages.

In their deepening misery Pueblos turned to religion—their own. Since 1598 the Franciscans had worked tirelessly to suppress the dances, idols, and ceremonies that long mediated Pueblo relationships with the divine. By the 1670s Pueblo elders could argue convincingly that the calamities of the past decades could be reversed only by a rejection of Christianity and a return to the old faith. Such revivalist sentiments threw the friars into a panic. Franciscans and civil authorities scrambled to extinguish the movement, arresting key Pueblo leaders, executing two and whipping 43 others in front of large crowds.
SPANISH MISSIONS IN NORTH AMERICA, CA. 1675

From St. Augustine, Spanish missionaries spread north into Guale Indian villages in present-day Georgia and westward among the Indians of Timucua, Apalachee, and Apalachicola. In New Mexico, missions radiated outward from the Rio Grande, as distant as Hopi Pueblos in the west.

One of the 43, a prominent Tewa man known to history as Popé, nursed his wounds in Taos and laid the groundwork for a general uprising against the Spaniards. Appealing to headmen throughout the Pueblo world, Popé called for a war to purify the land. Many individuals and some entire villages refused to participate. But on August 10, 1680, Indians from across New Mexico rose up and began killing Spaniards. Astonished survivors fled to Santa Fe, followed by Popé and his army, who put the town to siege. Weeks later the desperate Spanish governor, wounded by an arrow in the face and a gunshot to the chest, gathered the remainder of the colonial population and fled south out of New Mexico. The most successful pan-Indian uprising in North American history, the Pueblo Revolt sent shock waves throughout Spanish America, and left the Catholic devout agonizing over what they might have done to provoke God’s wrath.

Where and why did Spain establish colonies in North America, and how did native peoples resist colonization?

ENGLISH SOCIETY ON THE CHESAPEAKE

By 1700, then, Spain viewed its situation in the Americas from a very different perspective than it had 100 years earlier. The Pueblo Revolt had checked its power at the northern reach of its American possessions. Equally disturbing was the progress of Spain’s European rivals in the Americas during the seventeenth century. During the sixteenth, both France and England had envied the wealth Spain reaped from its American conquests. But neither nation did much to check Spain’s power, beyond preying on Spanish ships and fishing for cod. During the seventeenth century, this would change.

Mercantilism In fact, by 1600 other European kingdoms were beginning to view overseas colonies as essential to a nation’s power and prosperity. They did so in part because of an economic model known as mercantilism, which guided Europe’s commercial expansion for 200 years. (The theory was so named by the eighteenth-century economist Adam Smith.) Mercantilists called for the state to regulate and protect industry and commerce. Their primary objective was to enrich the nation by fostering a favorable balance of trade. Once the value of exports exceeded the cost of imports, they theorized, gold and silver would flow into home ports.

If a nation could make do without any imports from other countries, so much the better. It was here that the idea of colonies entered the mercantilist scheme. Colonial producers would supply raw materials that the mother country could not produce, while colonial consumers swelled demand for the finished goods and financial services that the mother country could provide. Convinced that colonies would enhance national self-sufficiency, mercantilists urged states to sponsor overseas settlements.

Mercantilist notions appealed to Europe’s monarchs. A thriving trade meant that more taxes and customs...
WHAT CAUSED THE PUEBLO REVOLT?

In the chaotic days following the outbreak of the Pueblo Revolt, shocked Spanish authorities detained several Indians and interrogated them about the rebels' motives. The first informant, Pedro García, was a Spanish-speaking Indian who had been raised in a Spaniard's household. Don Pedro Nanboa, the second informant, was captured by the Spanish and gave his testimony through an interpreter. The final declaration comes from Juan, detained and interrogated more than a year after the rebellion.

DOCUMENT 1 Pedro García

The defendant said that he was in the service of Captain Joseph Nieto, because he was born and has been brought up in his house... While weeding part of a cornfield on his master's estancia, which is something like a league from the pueblo of Galisteo, he saw coming to the place where he was an Indian named Bartolomé, the cantor mayor of the Pueblo of Galisteo. He came up weeping and said to him, "What are you doing here? The Indians want to kill the custodian, the fathers, and the Spaniards, and have said that the Indian who shall kill a Spaniard will get an Indian woman for a wife, and he who kills four will get four women, and he who kills ten or more will have a like number of women, and they have said that they are going to kill all the servants of the Spaniards and those who know how to speak Castilian, and they have also ordered that the Spaniards be taken away from everyone and burned. Hurry! Go! Perhaps you will be lucky enough to reach the place where the Spaniards are and will escape with your wife and an orphan girl that you have." Asked why they were plotting such treason and rebellion, he said that the said cantor told him that they were tired of the work they had to do for the Spaniards and the religious, because they did not allow them to plant or do other things for their own needs, and that, being weary, they had rebelled.


DOCUMENT 2 Don Pedro Nanboa

Having been asked his name and of what place he is a native, his condition, and age, he said that his name is Don Pedro Nanboa, that he is a native of the pueblo of Alameda, a widower, and somewhat more than 80 years old. Asked for what reason the Indians of this kingdom have rebelled, forsaking their obedience to his Majesty and failing in their obligation as Christians, he said that for a long time, because the Spaniards punished sorcerers and idolaters, the nations of the Teguas, Taos, Pecos, and Jemez had been plotting to rebel and kill the Spaniards and religious, and that they have been planning constantly to carry it out, down to the present occasion... He declared that the resentment which all the Indians have in their hearts has been so strong from the time this kingdom was discovered, because the religious and the Spaniards took away their idols and forbade their sorceries and idolatries; that they have inherited successively from their old men the things pertaining to their ancient customs; and that he has heard this resentment spoken of since he was an age to understand. What he has said is the truth and what he knows, under the oath taken, and he ratifies it.

Source: Declaration of one of the rebellious Christian Indians who were captured on the road, September 6, 1680, in Hockett, ed., Revolt of the Pueblo Indians, 183-89.

DOCUMENT 3 Juan, of the Tegua Nation

Asked for what reasons and causes all the Indians of the kingdom in general rebelled... he said that what he knows concerning this question is that not all of them joined the said rebellion willingly; that the chief mover of it is an Indian who is a native of the pueblo of San Juan, named El Popé, and that from fear of this Indian all of them joined in the plot that he made. Thus he replied. Asked why they held the said Popé in such fear and obeyed him, and whether he was the chief man of the pueblo, or a good Christian, or a sorcerer, he said that the common report that circulated and still is current among all the natives is that the said Indian Popé talks with the devil, and for this reason all held him in terror, obeying his commands although they were contrary to the señores governors, the prelate and the religious, and the Spaniards, he giving them to understand that the word which he spoke was better than that of all the rest; and he states that it was a matter of common knowledge that the Indian Popé, talking with the devil, killed in his own house a son-in-law of his named Nicolás Bua, the governor of the pueblo of San Juan. On being asked why he killed him, he said that it was so that he might not warn the Spaniards of the rebellion, as he intended to do.

Source: Declaration of the Indian, Juan, December 16, 1681, in Hackett, ed., Revolt of the Pueblo Indians, 2233-233, 533-534.
duties would fill royal coffers, increasing royal power. That logic led England’s King James I to approve a private venture to colonize the Chesapeake Bay, a sprawling inlet of the Atlantic Ocean fed by over 100 rivers and streams.

The Virginia Company

In 1606 the king granted a charter to a number of English merchants, gentlemen, and aristocrats, incorporating them as the Virginia Company of London. The members of the new joint stock company sold stock in their venture to English investors, as well as awarding a share to those willing to settle in Virginia at their own expense. With the proceeds from the sale of stock, the company planned to send to Virginia hundreds of poor and unemployed people as well as scores of skilled craftworkers. These laborers were to serve the company for seven years in return for their passage, pooling their efforts to produce any commodities that would return a profit to stockholders. If gold and silver could not be found, perhaps North America would yield other valuable commodities—furs, pitch, tar, or lumber. In the spring of 1607—nearly a decade after Oñate had launched Spain’s colonies in New Mexico—the first expedition dispatched by the Virginia Company founded Jamestown.

Jamestown’s Problems

Making the first of many mistakes, Jamestown’s 104 men and boys pitched their fort on an island peninsula in order to prevent a surprise attack from the Spanish. Unfortunately, the marshy, thickly wooded site served as an ideal breeding ground for malaria. The settlers, as well as those who followed them, were weakened by bouts of the disease and beset by dysentery, typhoid, and yellow fever. They died by the scores. During the summers, Indians familiar with the region’s environment scattered beyond the estuary waters of the Chesapeake to find food. The English newcomers, by contrast, remained close to their fort, where the brackish waters became even more salty in the hot summer months. Salt poisoning in the wells left many colonists listless and apathetic.

Even before sickness took its toll, many of Jamestown’s colonists had little taste for labor. The gentlemen of the expedition expected to lead rather than to work, and most of the other early settlers were gentlemen’s servants and craftworkers who knew nothing about growing crops. As did the colonists on Roanoke, Jamestown’s settlers resorted to bullying native people for food. Many colonists suffered from malnutrition, which heightened their susceptibility to disease. Only 60 of Jamestown’s 500 inhabitants lived through the winter of 1609–1610, known as the “starving time.” Some desperate colonists unearthed and ate corpses; one settler even butchered his wife. De facto martial law failed to turn the situation around, and skirmishes with the Indians became more brutal and frequent as rows of tobacco plants steadily invaded tribal lands.

Reform and a Boom in Tobacco

Key Reforms

Determined to salvage their investment, Virginia Company managers in 1618 set in place sweeping reforms. To attract more capital and colonists, the company established a “headright” system for granting land to individuals. Those already settled in the colony received 100 acres apiece. New settlers each received 50 acres, and anyone who paid the passage of other immigrants to Virginia—either family members or servants—received 50 acres per “head.” The company also abolished martial law, allowing the planters to elect a representative assembly. Along with a governor and an advisory council appointed by the company, the House of Burgesses had the authority to make laws for the colony. It met for the first time in 1619, beginning what would become a strong tradition of representative government in the English colonies.

The new measures met with immediate success. The free and unfree laborers who poured into Virginia during the 1620s made up the first wave of an English migration to the Chesapeake that numbered between 130,000 and 150,000 over the seventeenth century. Drawn from the ranks of ordinary English working people, the immigrants were largely men, outnumbering women by six to one. Most were young, ranging in age from 15 to 24. Because of their youth, most lacked skills or wealth. Some of those who came to the Chesapeake as free immigrants prospered as Virginia’s tobacco economy took off. When in the 1620s demand soared and prices peaked in European markets, colonists with an eye for profit planted every inch of their farms in tobacco and reaped windfalls.

Indentured Servants

Indentured servants accounted for three-quarters of all immigrants to Virginia. For most of them, the crossing was simply the last of many moves made in the hope of finding work. Although England’s population had been rising since the middle of the fifteenth century, the demand for farm laborers was falling because many landowners were converting croplands into pastures for sheep. The search for work pushed young men and women out of their villages, sending them through the countryside and then into the cities. Down and out in London, Bristol, or Liverpool, some decided to make their next move across the Atlantic and signed indentures. Pamphlets promoting immigration promised abundant land and quick riches once servants had finished their terms of four to seven years.

Even the most skeptical immigrants were shocked at what they found. The death rate in Virginia during the 1620s was higher than that of England during times of epidemic disease. The life expectancy for Chesapeake men who reached the age of 20 was a mere 48 years; for women it was lower still. Servants fared worst of all, because malnutrition, overwork, and abuse made them vulnerable to disease. As masters scrambled to make quick profits, they extracted the maximum amount of work before death carried off their laborers. An estimated 40 percent of servants did not survive to the end of their indentured terms.
The expanding cultivation of tobacco also claimed many lives by putting unbearable pressure on Indian land. After Powhatan’s death in 1617 leadership of the confederacy passed to Opechancanough, who watched, year after year, as the tobacco mania grew. In March 1622 he coordinated a sweeping attack on white settlements that killed a quarter of Virginia’s colonial population. English retaliation over the next decade cut down an entire generation of young Indian men, drove the remaining Powhatans to the west, and won the colonists hundreds of thousands more acres for tobacco.

News of the ongoing Indian war jolted English investors into determining the true state of their Virginia venture. It came to light that, despite the tobacco boom, the Virginia Company was plunging toward bankruptcy. Nor was that the worst news. Stockholders discovered that more than 3,000 immigrants had succumbed to the brutal conditions of Chesapeake life. An investigation by James I revealed the grisly truth, causing the king to dissolve the Virginia Company and take control of the colony himself in 1624. Henceforth Virginia would be governed as a royal colony.

As the tobacco boom broke in the 1630s and 1640s, Virginians began producing more corn and cattle. Nutrition and overall health improved as a result. More and more poor colonists began surviving their indenture and establishing modest farms of their own. For women who survived servitude, prospects were even better. With wives at a premium, single women stood a good chance of improving their status by marriage. Even so, high mortality rates still fractured families: one out of every four children born in the Chesapeake did not survive to maturity, and among those children who reached their 18th birthday, one-third had lost both parents to death.

By 1650 Virginia could boast about 15,000 colonists, although much of that increase resulted from servants and free immigrants arriving in the colony every year. But Virginians looking to expand into more northerly bays of the Chesapeake found their way blocked by a newer English colony.

The Founding of Maryland and the Renewal of Indian Wars

Unlike Virginia, established by a private corporation and later converted into a royal colony, Maryland was founded in 1632 by a single aristocratic family, the Calverts. They held absolute authority to dispose of 10 million acres of land, administer justice, and establish a civil government. All these powers they exercised, granting estates, or “manors,” to their friends and dividing other holdings into smaller farms for ordinary immigrants. From all these “tenants”—that is, every settler in the colony—the family collected “quitrents” every year, fees for use of the land. The Calverts appointed a governor and a council to oversee their own interests while allowing the largest landowners to dispense local justice in manorial courts and make laws for the entire colony in a representative assembly.

Virginians liked nothing about Maryland. To begin with, the Calvert family was Catholic and had extended complete religious freedom to all Christians, making Maryland a haven for Catholics. Worse still, the Marylanders were a source of economic competition. Two thousand inhabitants had settled on Calvert holdings by 1640, virtually all of them planting tobacco on land coveted by the Virginians.

Another obstacle to Virginia’s expansion was the remnant of the Powhatan confederacy. Hounded for corn and supplies (most colonial fields grew tobacco rather than food), and constantly pressured by the expanding plantation economy, Virginia’s native peoples became desperate and angry enough to risk yet another war. Aged Opechancanough led a new generation of Indians into battle in 1644 against the encroaching Virginia planters. Though his warriors killed several hundred English and brought the frontier to a standstill, Opechancanough was eventually captured and summarily shot through the head. The Powhatan confederacy died with him. Virginia’s Indians would never again be in a position to resist the colony militarily. Over the next decades and centuries, many Indians fled the region altogether. But whole communities remained, quietly determined to continue their lives and traditions in their homeland.

Changes in English Policy in the Chesapeake

Throughout the 1630s and 1640s colonial affairs drew little concern from royal officials. England itself had become engulfed first by a political crisis and then by a civil war.

Outraged at the contempt that King Charles I had shown toward Parliament, disaffected elites and radical Puritans overthrew the king and executed him in 1649. When the “republic” of Oliver Cromwell turned out to be something closer to a military dictatorship, most English were happy to see their throne restored in 1660 to Charles II, the son of the beheaded king. The new monarch was determined to ensure that not only his subjects at home but also his American colonies abroad contributed to England’s prosperity. His colonial policy was reflected in a series of regulations known as the Navigation Acts.

The first, passed by Parliament in 1660, gave England and English colonial merchants a monopoly on the shipping and marketing of all colonial goods. It also ordered that the colonies could export certain “enumerated commodities” only to England.
or other British ports. These goods included sugar, tobacco, cotton, ginger, indigo (a blue dye), and eventually rice. In 1663 Parliament added another regulation, giving British merchants a virtual monopoly on the sale of European manufactured goods to Americans by requiring that most imports going to the colonies pass through England. In 1673 a third Navigation Act placed duties on the coastal trade of the American colonies and provided for customs officials to collect tariffs and enforce commercial regulations.

These acts were mercantilistic, insofar as they were designed to ensure that England—and no foreign nations or their merchants—would profit from colonial production and trade. Chesapeake planters chafed under the Navigation Acts. They were used to conducting their affairs as they pleased—and they were often pleased to trade with the Dutch. What was worse, the new restrictions came at the same time as a downturn in tobacco prices. In the effort to consolidate its empire, England had unintentionally worsened the economic and social difficulties of Chesapeake society.

How did the Chesapeake colonies support the aims of British mercantilism?
CHESAPEAKE SOCIETY IN CRISIS

By the 1660s overproduction was depressing tobacco prices, and wealthy planters reacted by putting even more prime coastal land into production. Newly freed servants had either to become tenants or try to establish farms to the west in Indian country. Meanwhile, export duties on tobacco paid under the Navigation Acts helped plunge many small planters into crushing debt, and some were forced back into servitude. By 1676 one-quarter of Virginia’s free white men remained landless and frustrated.

Diminishing Opportunities Diminishing opportunities in the 1660s and 1670s provided the tinder for unrest in Virginia. As the discontent of the poor mounted, so did the worries of big planters. The assembly of the colony lengthened terms of servitude, hoping to limit the number of servants entering the free population. It curbed the political rights of landless men, hoping to stifle opposition by depriving them of the vote. But these measures only set off a spate of mutinies among servants and protests over rising taxes among small planters.

Bacon’s Rebellion and Coode’s Rebellion

Those tensions came to a head in 1676. The rebellion was renewed fighting between desperate Indians and the expanding colonial population. Virginia’s royal governor, William Berkeley, favored building forts to guard against Indians, but frontier farmers opposed his plan as an expensive and ineffective way to defend their scattered plantations. As they clamored for an expedition to punish the Indians, Nathaniel Bacon stepped forward to lead it.

Wealthy and well connected, Bacon had arrived recently from England, expecting to receive every favor from the governor—including permission to trade with the Indians from his frontier plantation. But Berkeley and a few select friends already held a monopoly on the Indian trade. When they declined to include Bacon, he took up the cause of his poorer frontier neighbors against their common enemy, the governor. Other recent, well-to-do immigrants who resented being excluded from Berkeley’s circle of power and patronage also joined Bacon.

In the summer of 1676 Bacon marched into Jamestown with a body of armed men and bullied the assembly into approving his expedition to kill Indians. While Bacon carried out that grisly business, slaughtering friendly as well as hostile Indians, Berkeley rallied his supporters and declared Bacon a rebel. Bacon retaliated by turning his forces against those led by the governor. Both sides sought allies by offering freedom to servants and slaves willing to join their ranks. Many were willing, for months the followers of Bacon and Berkeley plundered one another’s plantations. In September 1676 Bacon reduced Jamestown to a mound of ashes. It was only his death from dysentery a month later that snuffed out the rebellion.

Political upheaval also shook Maryland, where colonists had long resented the sway of the Calvert family. As proprietors, the Calverts and their favorites monopolized political offices, just as Berkeley’s circle had in Virginia. Well-to-do planters wanted a share of the Calverts’ power. Smaller farmers, like those in Virginia, wanted a less expensive and more representative government. Compounding the tensions were religious differences: the Calverts and their friends were Catholic, but other colonists, including Maryland’s most successful planters, were Protestant.

The unrest among Maryland’s discontented planters peaked in July 1689. A former member of the assembly, John Coode, gathered an army, captured the proprietary governor, and then took grievances to authorities in England. There Coode received a sympathetic hearing. The Calverts’ charter was revoked and not restored until 1715, by which time the family had become Protestant.

GROWING STABILITY After 1690 rich planters in both Chesapeake colonies fought among themselves less and cooperated more. In Virginia older leaders and newer arrivals divided the spoils of political office. In Maryland Protestants and Catholics shared power and privilege. Those arrangements ensured that no future Bacon or Coode would mobilize restless gentlemen against the government. By acting together in legislative assemblies, the planter elite managed to curb the power of royal and proprietary governors for decades.

But the greater unity among the Chesapeake’s leading families did little to ease that region’s most fundamental problem—the sharp inequality of white society. The gulf between rich and poor planters, which had been etched ever more deeply by the troubled tobacco economy, persisted long after the rebellions of Bacon and Coode. All that saved white society in the Chesapeake from renewed crisis and conflict was the growth of black slavery.

From Servitude to Slavery

Like the tobacco plants that spread across Powhatan’s land, a labor system based on African slavery was an on-the-ground innovation. Both early promoters and planters preferred paying for English servants to importing alien African
slaves. Black slaves, because they served for life, were more expensive than white workers, who served only for several years. Because neither white nor black immigrants lived long, cheaper servant labor was the logical choice. The black population of the Chesapeake remained small for most of the seventeenth century, constituting just 5 percent of all inhabitants in 1675.

Africans had arrived in Virginia by 1619, most likely via the Dutch, who dominated the slave trade until the middle of the eighteenth century. The lives of those newcomers resembled the lot of white servants, with whom they shared harsh work routines and living conditions. White and black bound laborers socialized with one another and formed sexual liaisons. They conspired to steal from their masters and ran away together; if caught, they endured the same punishments. There was more common ground: many of the first black settlers did not arrive directly from Africa but came from the Caribbean, where some had learned English and had adopted Christian beliefs. Not all were slaves; some were indentured servants. A handful were free.

A number of changes after 1680 caused planters to invest more heavily in slaves than in servants. First, as death rates in the Chesapeake began to drop, slaves became a more profitable investment. Although they were more expensive to buy than servants, planters could now expect to get many years of work from their bondpeople. Equally important, masters would have title to the children that slaves were now living long enough to have. At the same time, the influx of white servants was falling off just as the pool of available black labor was expanding. When the Royal African Company lost its monopoly on the English slave trade in 1698, other merchants entered the market. The number of Africans sold by British dealers swelled to 20,000 annually.

**Africa and the Atlantic Slave Trade**

From 1492 to 1820, enslaved African migrants outnumbered European migrants to the New World by nearly five to one. Put differently, before the twentieth century, African workers did most of the heavy lifting in the economies of the Americas.

For a century after Columbus's arrival, the traffic in slaves to the Americas had numbered a few thousand annually. But as sugar cultivation steadily prospered after 1600, slave imports rose to 19,000 a year during the seventeenth century and mushroomed to 60,000 a year in the eighteenth century. All told, as many as 21 million people were captured in West Africa between 1700 and 1850: some 9 million among them entered the Americas as slaves, but millions died before or during the Atlantic crossing, and as many as 7 million remained slaves in Africa. Although slavery became indispensable to its economy, British North America played a relatively small role in the Atlantic slave trade.

Nine-tenths of all Africans brought to the New World landed in Brazil or the Caribbean islands.

The rapid growth of the trade transformed not only the Americas but also Africa. Slavery became more widespread within African society, and slave trading more central to its domestic and international commerce. Most important, the African merchants and political leaders most deeply invested in the slave trade used their profits for political advantage—to build new chieftoms and states such as Dahomey, Asante, and the Lunda Empire. Their ambitions and the greed of European slave dealers drew an increasingly large number of Africans, particularly people living in the interior, into slavery's web. By the late seventeenth century, Africans being sold into slavery were no longer only those who had put themselves at risk by committing crimes, running into debt, or voicing unpopular political and religious views. The larger number were instead captives taken by soldiers or kidnappers in raids launched specifically to acquire prisoners for the slave trade, or else desperate refugees captured while fleeing war, famine, and disease. During the decades after 1680, captives coming directly from Africa made up more than 80 percent of all new slaves entering the Chesapeake and the rest of mainland North America. Many were shipped from the coast of Africa that Portuguese explorers had first probing, between the Senegal and Niger Rivers. Most of the rest came from Angola, farther south.

Seized by other Africans, captives were yoked together at the neck and marched hundreds of miles through the interior to coastal forts or other outposts along the Atlantic. There, they were penned in hundreds of prisons, in lots of anywhere from 20 or 30 to more than 1,000. They might be forced to work for slaving vessels in French captivities below the fine houses of traders on the island of Goree, or herded into “outfactories” on the Banana Islands upstream on the Sierra Leone River, or perhaps marched into the dank underground slaveholds at the English fort at Cape Coast. Farther south, captives were held in marshy, fever-ridden lowlands along the Bight of Benin, waiting for a slave to drop anchor. One African, Ottobah Cugoano, recalled finally being taken aboard ship:

There was nothing to be heard but the rattling of chains, smacking of whips, and the groans and cries of our fellowmen. Some would not stir from the ground, when they were lashed and beaten in the most horrible manner. ... And when we found ourselves at last taken away, death was more preferable than life, and a plan was concerted amongst us that we might burn and blow up the ship and perish altogether in the flames.

**The Middle Passage**

Worse than the imprisonment was the voyage itself: the so-called Middle Passage, a nightmarish journey across the Atlantic that could take anywhere between three weeks and three months, depending on currents, weather, and where ships
Toward the end of the seventeenth century, Chesapeake and Carolina planters began importing increasing numbers of slaves. In Africa the center of that trade lay along a mountainous region known as the Gold Coast, where more than a hundred European trading posts and forts funneled the trade. Unlike most of the rest of West Africa's shoreline, the Gold Coast had very little dense rain forest. Despite the heavy trade, only about 4 percent of the total transatlantic slave trade went to North America.

Slaves captured in the African interior were marched out in slave "coffles," a forced march in which captives were linked either by chains or by wooden yoke restraints linking two slaves together as they walked.

Africans found themselves in a variety of conditions in the Americas. Most tailed on plantations. Some, however, like these "watermen" along the James River in Virginia (lower right), claimed more independence. Still others ran away to Maroon communities in the interior. This armed Maroon (a runaway slave, lower left) is from Dutch Guiana, where conditions on the plantations were particularly harsh.
Slaves were often bought and sold on the decks of the ship they traveled on, as in this painting from the 1770s (top). Note that the ship has put up a barricade (left side of the illustration) to keep slaves separate from the rest of the ship while the selling is proceeding.
Pendant Mask from Benin

These images of mudfish alternate with those of Portuguese merchants. What might the mudfish be meant to symbolize? (Use a few key terms to find answers on the web.)

These pieces of inlaid iron represent medicine-filled incisions that were said to have given Idia metaphysical powers.

Object is hollow at the back; may have been used as a receptacle for medicines, as well as a pendant.

This exquisite sixteenth-century ivory mask, now in New York’s Metropolitan Museum of Art, graced the neck of Benin’s king during ceremonial occasions. Its subtlety and precision suggest that it was produced by Benin’s famed guild of royal ivory carvers, specifically for royalty. The object communicates a tremendous amount of visual information. The face itself is a portrait of Idia, mother of Benin’s great early-sixteenth-century leader Esigie.

A powerful political figure in her own right, Idia helped secure the throne for her son and remained an influential adviser throughout his reign. On her head and around her neck are miniature faces of Portuguese merchants who brought great wealth to Benin and enriched and empowered its leaders through the slave trade.


Thinking Critically
Why pair the mudfish and the Portuguese? Do you think that the artist conceived of the Portuguese merchants as equals? Would you expect Benin’s artistic sophistication to shape how the Portuguese regarded the kingdom?

Disembarked and landed. Often several hundred black men, women, and children were packed below-decks, squeezed onto platforms built in tiers spaced so close that sitting upright was impossible. It was difficult to know whether the days or the nights were more hellish. Slaves were taken out and forced to exercise for their health for a few hours each day; the rest of the day, the sun beat down and the heat below the decks was “so excessive,” one voyager recalled, that the doctors who went below to examine slaves “would faint away, and the candles would not burn.” At night, the slaves “were often heard making a howling melancholy kind of noise, something expressive of extreme anguish,” noted a doctor aboard another ship. When he made inquiries, he discovered it was because the slaves, in sleeping, had dreamed “they were back in their own country again, amongst their families and friends” and “when
they woke up to find themselves in reality on a slave ship they began to bay and shriek." Historians estimate that for every 85 enslaved Africans that set foot in the Americas, 15 died during the middle passage.

*Seasoning* After the numb, exhausted survivors reached American ports, they faced more challenges to staying alive. The first year in the colonies was the most deadly for new, "unseasoned" slaves. The sickle-cell genetic trait gave them a greater immunity to malaria than Europeans, but Africans were highly susceptible to respiratory infections. One-quarter of all Africans died during their first year in the Chesapeake, and among Carolina and Caribbean slaves, mortality rates were far higher. In addition to the new disease environment, Africans had to adapt to lives without freedom in a wholly unfamiliar country and culture.

Exchanging a labor system based on servitude for one based on slavery transformed the character of Chesapeake society. Most obviously, the number of Afro-Virginians rose sharply. By 1740, 40 percent of all Virginians were black, and most of those were African-born. Unlike many African men and women who had arrived earlier from the Caribbean, these new inhabitants had little familiarity with English language and culture. This larger, more distinctively African community was also locked into a slave system that was becoming more rigid and demeaning. By the late decades of the seventeenth century, new laws made it more difficult for masters to free slaves. Other legislation systematically separated the races by prohibiting free black settlers from having white servants and outlawing interracial marriages and sexual relationships. The legal code encouraged white contempt for black Virginians in a variety of other ways. While masters were prohibited from whipping their white servants on the bare back, slaves had no such protection. And "any Negro that shall presume to strike any white" was to receive 30 lashes for that rash act.

Growing Racism The new laws both reflected and encouraged racism among white colonists of all classes. Deepening racial hatred, in turn, made it unlikely that poor white planters, tenants, and servants would ever join with poor black slaves to challenge the privilege of great planters. Instead of identifying with the plight of the slaves, the Chesapeake's poorer white residents considered black Virginians their natural inferiors. They could pride themselves on sharing with wealthy white gentlemen the same skin color and on being their equals in the eyes of the law.

Opportunities for White Settlers The leaders of the Chesapeake colonies cultivated unity among white inhabitants by improving economic prospects for freed servants and lesser planters. The Virginia assembly made provisions for freed servants to get a better start as independent farmers. It lowered taxes, allowing small planters to keep more of their earnings. New laws also gave most white male Virginians a vote in elections, allowing them an outlet to express their grievances. Economic trends toward the end of the seventeenth century contributed to the greater prosperity of small planters, because tobacco prices rose slightly and then stabilized. As a result of Bacon's savage campaign against the Virginia Indians, new land on the frontier became available. Even the domestic lives of ordinary people became more secure as mortality rates declined and the numbers of men and women in the white population evened out. As a result, virtually all men were now able to marry, and families were fragmented less often by the premature deaths of spouses and parents.

After 1700 the Chesapeake evolved into a more stable society. Gone were the bands of wild, landless, young bachelors one step ahead of the law, the small body of struggling lesser planters one step ahead of ruin, and the great mass of exploited servants one step away from rebellion. Virginia and Maryland became colonies of farming families, most of them small planters who owned between 50 and 200 acres. These families held no slaves, or at most two or three. And they accepted, usually without question, the social and political leadership of their acknowledged "superior" great planters who styled themselves the "gentry."

George Booth, the son of a wealthy planter family in Gloucester County, Virginia, was being raised for mastery. The young man's self-assured stance, the bow and arrows, the dog at his feet clutching the kill, the classical busts of women flanking his figure, and his family estate in the distance all suggest the gent's concern for controlling the natural and social worlds.
The gentry’s fortunes rested in part on the cultivation of tobacco on thousands of acres by hundreds of slaves. But the leading planters made even more money by marketing the tobacco of their humbler neighbors, selling them manufactured goods, supplying them with medical and legal services, lending money, and hiring out slaves. Unlike the rough-hewn barons of the early tobacco boom, the gentry did not owe their wealth to wringing work from poor whites. Instead, they amassed great estates by wringing work from black slaves while converting their white "inferiors" into modestly prosperous small planters and paying clients. But the gentry wanted more than money; they wanted the respect of lesser whites. And they received it. On court days, gentlemen served as justices of the peace, bedecked in wigs and robes and seated on raised benches.

On Sundays, worshipers filed into the Anglican chapel in order of social rank, with gentlemen heading the procession. When the local militia trained, it did so at the head of gentlemen officers. The courthouse, the church, and the training field all served as theaters in which the new Chesapeake gentry dramatized their superiority and lesser men deferred.

Why did slavery replace servitude as the dominant labor system in Virginia and Maryland?

FROM THE CARIBBEAN TO THE CAROLINAS

Transformation of the Caribbean

During the same decade that the English invaded Powhatan’s land, they began to colonize the Caribbean, whose islands extended north and west, like beads on a string, from the Lesser Antilles toward the more substantial lands of Puerto Rico, Hispaniola, Jamaica, and Cuba (map, page 72). At their long journey’s end English sailors found what seemed a paradise: shores rimmed with white sand beaches that rose sharply to coral terraces, then to broad plateaus or mountain peaks shrouded in rain forests. The earliest arrivals came intending not to colonize but to steal from the Spanish. Even after 1604, when some English settled on the islands, few intended to stay.

Yet the English did establish permanent plantation colonies in the West Indies. By that, their Caribbean settlements became the jumping-off points for a new colony on the North American mainland—South Carolina. Because of the strong West Indian influence, South Carolina developed a social order in some ways distinct from that of the Chesapeake colonies. In other ways, however, the development paralleled Virginia and Maryland’s path. In both regions, extreme violence, high mortality, and uncertainty gave way to relative stability only over the course of many decades.

Paradise Lost

The English had traded and battled with the Spanish in the Caribbean since the 1560s. From those island bases English buccaneers conducted an illegal trade with Spanish settlements, sacked the coastal towns, and plundered silver ships bound for Seville. Weakened by decades of warfare, Spain could not hold the West Indies. The Dutch drove a wedge into Caribbean trade routes, and the French and the English began to colonize the islands.

In the 40 years after 1604, some 30,000 immigrants from the British Isles planted crude frontier outposts on St. Kitts, Barbados, Nevis, Montserrat, and Antigua. The settlers—some free, many others indentured servants, and almost all young men—devoted themselves to working as little as possible, drinking as much as possible, and returning to England as soon as possible. They cultivated for export a poor quality of tobacco, which returned just enough profit to maintain straggling settlements of small farms.

Caribbean Sugar

Then, nearly overnight, sugar cultivation transformed the Caribbean. In the 1640s Barbados planters learned from the Dutch how to process sugarcane. The Dutch also supplied African slaves to work the cane fields and marketed the sugar for high prices in the Netherlands. Sugar plantations and slave labor rapidly spread to other English and French islands as Europeans developed an insatiable sweet tooth for the once scarce commodity. Caribbean sugar made more money for England than the total volume of commodities exported by all the mainland American colonies.

Even though its great planters became the richest people in English America, they could not have confused the West Indies with paradise. Throughout the seventeenth century, disease took a fearful toll, and island populations grew only because of immigration. In the scramble for land, small farmers were pushed onto tiny plots that barely allowed them to survive.

Slavery in the Caribbean

The desperation of bound laborers posed another threat. After the Caribbean’s conversion to cultivating sugar, African slaves gradually replaced indentured servants in the cane fields. By the beginning of the eighteenth century resident Africans outnumbered English by four to one. Fear of servant mutinies and slave rebellions frayed the nerves of island masters. They tried to contain the danger by imposing harsh slave codes and inflicting brutal punishments on all laborers. But planters lived under a constant state of siege. One visitor to Barbados observed that whites fortified their homes with parapets from which they could pour scalding water on attacking servants and slaves. During the first century of settlement, seven major slave uprisings shook the English islands.
A Taste for Sugar

It is said that shortly before his death in 735 CE, the Venerable Bede, an English abbot, bequeathed a precious treasure to his brother monks: It consisted of a cache of spices, including a little stock of sugar. What separated Bede’s world, in which sugar was a costly luxury from twenty-first-century Americans’ world of over-present sweetness, was the discovery of America and the establishment of plantation economies in the Caribbean and Brazil.

Until the fourteenth century, Europe’s merchants imported only small quantities of sugar at great expense from North Africa as well as from distant Persia and India, countries that had produced sugar since 500 CE.

Throughout the Middle Ages and the early modern era, only the royal and the rich of Europe could indulge their desire for sugar, and even those classes partook sparingly. Europeans classified sugar as a spice, like the equally scarce and exotic pepper, nutmeg, ginger, and saffron. Nobility valued sugar as a medicine for sore throats, stomach disorders, and infertility. The cooks of castle kitchens seasoned food and sauces with a pinch of sugar or sprinkled it on meat, fish, fowl, and fruit to preserve freshness—or to conceal rot. Only on great occasions did the confectioners of noble families splurge, fashioning for courtly feasts great baked sugar sculptures of knights and kings, horses and apes, called “subtleties.”

For the ordinary folk of Europe, life was not as sweet. Their diets consisted of bread, pears, beans, and, to good eats, a little milk, butter, and cheese. The occasional pig, slaughtered, rabbit trapped, or fish caught supplied stray protein for the poor.

That pattern of consumption changed as Europeans turned to African slave labor to grow sugar for them. The early sugar plantations of Madeira and the Canary Islands (Chapter 2) were a foretaste of veritable sugar factories created in the Caribbean colonies of England and France.

By the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Europe’s merchant classes could imitate alike patterns of eating by pouring sugar into pastries and puddings. And by the middle of the eighteenth century, an increasingly large supply from the Caribbean was making sugar essential to the poorest Europeans. Among England’s laboring classes, another colonial import—Indian tea, laced heavily with sugar—began to accompany an otherwise cold supper of bread. Cheaper, warmer, and more stimulating than milk or beer (its prime competitors), sugared tea won the loyalty of England’s mass market and ranked as the nonalcoholic beverage of national choice. By the nineteenth century, English working families were also combining sugar and starch by pouring treacle (molasses) over porridge and spreading jams or marmalades on their bread.

Europe and America affected each other in many ways, but diet figured among the more fundamental conditions of life altered by colonization. More than coffee, chocolate, rum, or tobacco—indeed, more than any of the other “drug foods” produced by the colonies except tea—sugar provided a major addition to the diet of the English and other Europeans.

Even though sugar became a mass-marketed basic foodstuff, its association with power persisted. But it was no longer the consumption of sugar that bestowed status. Instead, after 1700 it was the production of sugar that conferred power. Planters who grew it, merchants who shipped and sold it, industrialists who refined it, and politicians who taxed it discovered in sugar sources of profit and distinction less perishable than sweetness on the tongue.

Thinking Critically

How did the growth of sugar cultivation in the Americas change European diets for different social classes?

Once harvested, sugarcane in the West Indies was crushed, as in this sugar mill. The juice was collected and channeled to the sugar works, where it was concentrated through boiling and evaporation. This neat diagrammatic picture belies the harsh conditions of labor and the high mortality that slaves experienced. Sweetness came at a steep price.
As more people, both white and black, squeezed onto the islands, some settlers looked for a way out. With all the land in use, the Caribbean no longer offered opportunity to freed servants or even planters’ sons. It was then that the West Indies started to shape the history of the American South.

The Founding of the Carolinas

The colonization of the Carolinas began with the schemes of Virginia’s royal governor, William Berkeley, and Sir John Colleton, a supporter of Charles I who had been exiled to the Caribbean at the end of England’s civil war. Colleton saw that the Caribbean had a surplus of white settlers, and Berkeley knew that Virginians needed room to expand as well. Together the two men set their sights on the area south of Virginia. Along with a number of other aristocrats, they convinced Charles II to make them joint proprietors in 1663 of a place they called the Carolinas, in honor of the king.

North Carolina

A few hardy souls from Virginia had already squatted around Albemarle Sound in the northern part of the Carolina grant. The proprietors provided them with a governor and a representative assembly. About 40 years later, in 1701, they set off North Carolina as a separate colony. The desolate region quickly proved a disappointment. Lacking good harbors and navigable rivers, the colony had no convenient way of marketing its produce. North Carolina remained a poor colony, its sparse population engaged in general farming and the production of masts, pitch, tar, and turpentine.

South Carolina

The southern portion of the Carolina grant held far more promise, especially in the eyes of one of its proprietors, Sir Anthony Ashley Cooper, Earl of Shaftesbury. In 1669 he sponsored an expedition of a few hundred English and Barbadian immigrants, who planted the first permanent settlement in South Carolina. By 1680 the colonists had established the center of economic, social, and political life at the confluence of the Ashley and Cooper Rivers, naming the site Charles Town (later Charleston) after the king. Like others before him, Cooper hoped to create an ideal society in America. His utopia was a place where a few landed aristocrats and gentlemen would rule with the consent of many smaller property holders. With his personal secretary, the renowned philosopher John Locke, Cooper drew up an intricate scheme of government, the Fundamental Constitutions. The design provided Carolina with a proprietary governor and a hereditary nobility who, as a Council of Lords, would recommend all laws to a Parliament elected by lesser landowners.

The Fundamental Constitutions met the same fate as other lordly dreams for America. Instead of peacefully observing its provisions, most of the Carolinians, emigrants from Barbados, plunged into the economic and political wrangling that had plagued Maryland’s first government. They challenged proprietary rule, protested or
ignored laws and regulations imposed on them, and rejected the proprietors’ relatively benevolent vision of Indian relations. Instead of forging genuine alliances with regional Indians, Carolina’s colonists fomented a series of Indian slave wars that would nearly destroy the colony altogether.

Carolina, Florida, and the Southeastern Slave Wars

Taking wealthy Barbados as the model, the colonists intended from the start to grow Carolina’s economy around cash crops tended by African slaves. But before they could afford to establish such a regime, the newcomers needed to raise capital through trade with Indians. Colonists gave textiles, metal goods, guns, and alcohol in exchange for hundreds of thousands of deerskins, which they then exported.

But the trade soon came to revolve around a commodity dearer still. As did most peoples throughout history, southeastern Indians sometimes made slaves of their enemies. Carolina’s traders vastly expanded this existing slave culture by turning captives into prized commodities. Convinced that local Indians were physically weaker than Africans and more likely to rebel or flee, colonial traders bought slaves from Indian allies and then exported them to other mainland colonies or to the Caribbean. They found eager native partners in this business. Contact with Europe had unleashed phenomenal changes in interior North America; epidemics ruined one people and gave advantage to another; new commercial opportunities sparked fierce wars over hunting and trading territories, and many thousands of Indian families became displaced and had to rebuild their lives somewhere new. The chaos, conflict, and movement gave enterprising Indians ample opportunity to enslave weak neighbors and stock Carolina’s slave pens.

Raided into Spanish Florida

To ensure a steady supply of slaves and maximize profits, Carolinian merchants courted a variety of Indian allies during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries and encouraged them to raid mission Indians in Spanish Florida. By 1700 Florida’s Indian peoples were in sharp decline, and Charles Town’s slave traders turned to the large and powerful Creek, Chickasaw, and Chickasaw confederacies of the interior, encouraging them to raid one another. Before long the slave wars had a momentum all their own, extending as far west as the Mississippi River. Even native peoples who deplored the violence and despised the English felt compelled to participate, lest they, too, become victims. One small Indian community elected an elder representative to travel to Charles Town and discover what his people needed to do to stay safe. The town’s traders seized the man and sold him into slavery. The trade had become central to Carolina’s growing economy, and colonists high and low sought to profit from it. In 1702 Governor James Moore, one of the colony’s chief slave traders, launched an audacious raid against Spanish St. Augustine and Florida’s missions, returning with hundreds of Indian captives. His campaign inspired still more raids, and over the next few years Creeks, Yamasees, and Englishmen laid waste to 29 Spanish missions, shattering thousands of lives and destroying Spain’s precarious system of Indian alliances in Florida. By 1706 Spanish authority was once again confined to St. Augustine and its immediate vicinity, and within another 10 years most of Florida had been depopulated of Indians.

It seemed a double victory from Charles Town’s perspective. The English had bested a European rival for the Crown and had reaped enormous profits besides. The fragmentary evidence suggests that Carolinians had purchased or captured between 50,000 and 50,000 Indian slaves before 1715. Indeed, before that date South Carolina was a net exporter of slaves: it exported more slaves than it imported from Africa or the Caribbean. But in 1715 Carolina’s merchants finally paid a price for the wars that they had cynically fomented for over 40 years.

Yamasee War

With Florida virtually exhausted of slaves, the Yamasees grew nervous. Convinced that Carolina would soon turn on them as it had on other one-time allies, the Yamasees struck first. They attacked traders, forts, and plantations on the outskirts of Charles Town, killing hundreds of colonists and dragging scores more to Florida to sell as slaves in St. Augustine. Panicked authorities turned to other Indian peoples in the region but found most had either joined the Yamasee or were too hostile and suspicious to help. Though it lasted only a few months, the Yamasee War finally put an end to the destructive regional slave trade. Animal skins again dominated regional commerce. The powerful southern confederacies grew wary of aligning too closely with any single European power and henceforth sought to play colonies and empires off each other. It was a strategy that would bring them relative peace and prosperity for generations.

White, Red, and Black: The Search for Order

As for South Carolina, the Yamasee War set it back 20 years. In its aftermath, colonists invested more and more of their resources in African slaves and in the cultivation of rice, a crop that eventually made South Carolina’s planters the richest social group in mainland North America. Unfortunately, South Carolina’s swampy coast, so perfectly suited to growing rice, was less suited for human habitation. Weakened by chronic malaria, settlers died in epic numbers from yellow fever, smallpox, and respiratory infections. The white population grew slowly, through
THE CAROLINAS AND THE CARIBBEAN

The map underscores the geographic link between West Indian and Carolina settlements. Emigrants from Barbados dominated politics in early South Carolina, while Carolinians provided foodstuffs, grain, and cattle to the West Indies. As South Carolinians began growing rice, Caribbean slave ships found it an easy sail north and west to unload their cargoes in Charles Town. The fall line is marked here and on the map of the Chesapeake region on page 61. What is the fall line? Why is it significant?
immigration rather than natural increase, and numbered only 16,000 by 1730.

Early South Carolinians had little in common but the harsh conditions of frontier existence. Most colonists lived on isolated plantations; early deaths fragmented families and neighborhoods. Immigration after 1700 further intensified the colony’s ethnic and religious diversity, adding Swiss and German Lutherans, Scots-Irish Presbyterians, Welsh Baptists, and Spanish Jews. The colony’s only courts were in Charleston; churches and clergy of any denomination were scarce. On those rare occasions when early Carolinians came together, they gathered at Charles Town to escape the pestilential air of their plantations, to sue one another for debt and haggle over prices, or to fight over religious differences and proprietary politics.

Finally, in 1729, the Crown formally established royal government; by 1730 economic recovery had done much to ease the strife. Even more important in bringing greater political stability, the white colonists of South Carolina came to realize that they must unite if they were to counter the Spanish in Florida and the French and their Indian allies on the Gulf Coast.

The growing black population gave white Carolinians another reason to maintain a united front. During the first decades of settlement, frontier conditions and the scarcity of labor had forced masters to allow enslaved Africans greater freedom within bondage. White and black laborers shared chores on small farms. On stock-raising plantations, called “cowpens,” black cowboys ranged freely over the countryside. African contributions to the defense of the colony also reinforced racial interdependence and muted white domination. Whenever threats arose—during the Yamasee War, for example—black Carolinians were enlisted in the militia.

White Carolinians depended on black labor even more after turning to rice as their cash crop. In fact, planters began to import slaves in larger numbers partly because of West African skill in rice cultivation. But whites harbored deepening fears of the black workers whose labor built planter fortunes. As early as 1708 black men and women had become a majority in the colony, and by 1730 they outnumbered white settlers by two to one. As their colony recovered and began to prosper, white Carolinians put into effect strict slave codes like those in the Caribbean that converted their colony into an armed camp and snuffed out the marginal freedoms that African settlers once enjoyed.

The Founding of Georgia

After 1730 white South Carolinians could take comfort not only in newfound prosperity and new political harmony but also in the founding of a new colony on their southern border. South Carolinians liked Georgia a great deal more than the Virginians had liked Maryland, because the colony formed a buffer between British North America and Spanish Florida in much the same way that Yamasees and Shawnees had, before the war.

James Oglethorpe

Enhancing the military security of South Carolina was only one reason for the founding of Georgia. More important to General James Oglethorpe and other idealistic English gentlemen was the aim of aiding the “worthy poor” by providing them with land, employment, and a new start. They envisioned a colony of hardworking small farmers who would produce silk and wine, sparing England the need to import those commodities. That dream seemed within reach when George II made Oglethorpe and his friends the trustees of the new colony in 1732, granting them a charter for
21 years. At the end of that time Georgia would revert to royal control.

The trustees did not, as legend has it, empty England's debtors' prisons to populate Georgia. They freed few debtors but recruited from every country in Europe paupers who seemed willing to work hard—and who professed Protestantism. Trustees paid the paupers' passage and provided each with 50 acres of land, tools, and a year's worth of supplies. Settlers who could pay their own way were encouraged to come by being granted larger tracts of land. Much to the trustees’ dismay, that generous offer was taken up not only by many hoped-for Protestants but also by several hundred Ashkenazim (German Jews) and Sephardim (Spanish and Portuguese Jews), who established a thriving community in early Savannah.

The trustees were determined to ensure that Georgia became a small farmers' utopia. Rather than selling land, the trustees gave it away, but none of the colony's settlers could own more than 500 acres. The trustees also outlawed slavery and hard liquor in order to cultivate habits of industry and sustain equality among whites. This design for a virtuous and egalitarian utopia was greeted with little enthusiasm by Georgians. They pressed for a free market in land and argued that the colony could never prosper until the trustees revoked their ban on slavery. Because the trustees had provided for no elective assembly, settlers could express their discontent only by moving to South Carolina—which many did during the early decades.

As mounting opposition threatened to depopulate the colony, the trustees caved in. They revoked their restrictions on land, slavery, and liquor a few years before the king assumed control of the colony in 1752. Under royal control, Georgia continued to develop an ethnically and religiously diverse society, akin to that of South Carolina. Similarly, its economy was based on rice cultivation and the Indian trade.

How was the colonization of Carolina both distinct from and parallel to that of the Chesapeake?
CONCLUSION

THE WORLD AT LARGE

Empire... utopia... independence.... For more than a century after the founding of Oñate's colony on
the upper Rio Grande in 1598, those dreams inspired residents of New Mexico, Florida, the Chesapeake,
the English Caribbean, the Carolinas, and Georgia.

Although South Carolina and the English West Indies were more opulent and unstable societies
than Virginia and Maryland, the colonies stretching from the Chesapeake to the Caribbean had much
in common. So did the South American sugar and coffee plantations of the Guianas and the sugar
plantations of Brazil. As Europeans put down colonies throughout the Americas, Indian farmers and
hunters were enslaved or expelled. Planters depended on a single staple crop, which brought wealth
and political power to those commanding the most land and the most labor. And the biggest planters
relied on the labor of the very people whom they most feared—enslaved African Americans. That
fear was reflected in the development of repressive slave codes and the spread of racism throughout
all classes of white society.

The dream of an expanding empire faltered for the Spanish, who discovered few riches in the Southwest
and eventually found rebellion. The dream of empire failed, too, when James I and Charles I of England
found their power checked by Parliament. And the dream foundered fatally for Indians, unable to resist
Old World diseases and land-hungry colonists.

English lords dreamed of establishing feudal utopias in America. But proprietors in Maryland and the
Carolinas were bounced by plantation owners and farmers looking for their own economic and political
power. Georgia's trustees failed to erect their utopia for the poor. And Indian resistance dimmed the
utopian dreams of Spanish Catholic missionaries in the American Southwest.

The dream of independence proved most deceptive, especially for English colonists. Almost half of
white servant emigrants to the Chesapeake died from disease or were worn down by tobacco barons.
And real independence eluded even English planters. The poorer ones depended on richer settlers for
land and leadership, while even the richest needed English and Scottish merchants to supply credit and
market their crops.

And everywhere in the American Southeast and Southwest, the dreams of Europeans depended on
the labor of the least free members of colonial America. That stubborn reality would haunt Americans of
all colors who continued to chase after freedom and independence.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

DURING THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY, SPAIN AND ENGLAND MOVED TO COLONIZE CRITICAL REGIONS OF SOUTHERN NORTH AMERICA.

Native peoples everywhere in the American South resisted colonization, despite losses from warfare, disease, and enslavement.

Spanish colonies in New Mexico and Florida grew slowly and faced a variety of threats. By the late seventeenth century, Spanish New Mexico had been lost to the Pueblo Revolt and Florida's delicate mission system was under siege from English Carolina and its Indian allies.

Thrusting monocultures were established in all of England's southern colonies—tobacco in the Chesapeake, rice in the Carolinas, and sugar in the Caribbean.

Despite a period of intense enslavement of native peoples, African slavery emerged as the dominant labor system throughout these regions.

Instability and conflict characterized both Spanish and English colonies in the South for most of the first century of their existence.
ADDITIONAL READING


The best overview of South Carolina’s development remains Robert Weir, COLONIAL SOUTH CAROLINA (1982). The complexities of Carolina’s slave wars are explored in Alan Gallay, THE INDIAN SLAVE TRADE (2002). For the topic more broadly, see Christina Snyder, SLAVERY IN INDIAN COUNTRY (2010).

For a fuller list of readings, see the Bibliography at www.nhihe.com/ehse.

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

- 1588: Chate colonizes New Mexico
- 1607: English establish Jamestown
- 1610: Founding of Santa Fe in New Mexico
- 1620s: Tobacco boom in Virginia; epidemics in New Mexico reduce Pueblo population by nearly 70 percent
- 1632: Calvert founds Maryland
- 1660: Parliament passes the first of the Navigation Acts
- 1675: Height of Spanish mission system in Florida
- 1676: Bacon’s Rebellion in Virginia
- 1680: Pueblo Revolt in New Mexico
- CA. 1702: Rice boom begins in South Carolina
- EARLY 1700s: Indian slave wars devastate much of the Southeast, especially Florida
- 1700s: Average of 60,000 enslaved Africans cross the Atlantic annually
- 1732: Chartering of Georgia

76  CHAPTER 3  COLONIZATION AND CONFLICT IN THE SOUTH
<table>
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<tr>
<th>COLONY</th>
<th>FOUNDING/SHELLEDMENT</th>
<th>CHARACTER AND DEVELOPMENT</th>
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<tr>
<td>New Mexico</td>
<td>Chate expedition 1598, Santa Fe 1610</td>
<td>Ari, few Spanish colonists, agriculture, stock raising, trade with Indians</td>
<td>2,500, including Indian slaves in 1675</td>
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<td>Florida</td>
<td>St. Augustine 1565</td>
<td>Spain uses as a buffer against English settlements to the north</td>
<td>40 Franciscan missions to c. 26,000 baptized Indians by 1675, 1,500 Spaniards in Florida by 1700</td>
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<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>Jamestown 1607</td>
<td>Tobacco boom 1620s; population of young, single, indentured servants; Bacon's Rebellion 1676; slavery replaces servitude as the prevailing labor system, 1680s</td>
<td>72,000, including 56,000 white, 16,000 black, in 1700</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>Founded by the Calverts as proprietors, 1632</td>
<td>Religious freedom for Christians; tobacco economy, Coode's Rebellion 1689</td>
<td>30,000, including 27,000 white, 3,000 black, in 1700</td>
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<td>West Indies  (British)</td>
<td>English settlements after 1604; islands of Barbados, Antigua, St. Kitts, Nevis, and Montserrat</td>
<td>Tobacco gives way to sugar boom, 1640s; African slaves become majority population on sugar islands</td>
<td>65,000, including 15,000 white, 50,000 black, in 1700</td>
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<td>Carolinas</td>
<td>Charles Town established by colonists from England and Barbados, 1669</td>
<td>Trade in hides and Indian slaves; increased stability as rice cultivation established; made royal colony in 1729; North Carolina becomes separate colony in 1701</td>
<td>South Carolina: 6,000—3,500 white, 2,500 black; North Carolina: 10,700—10,300 white, 400 black, in 1700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>Chartered in 1732</td>
<td>Refuge for debtors; slavery not allowed until shortly before it becomes a royal colony in 1752</td>
<td>5,000, including 4,000 white, 1,000 black, in 1752</td>
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By 1664, when this map of New Amsterdam was engraved, the town had grown considerably from its origins as a fort and fur-trading outpost. (Compare the engraving from 1629, on page 95.) Behind the houses in the foreground, a palisade fence still stands as a wall protecting against Indian attacks. A gallows stands in the foreground and a windmill in the distance. The English renamed the city New York when they pushed out the Dutch, in this year.
Colonization and Conflict in the North
1600-1700

CHAPTER 4

§ 6  FRANCE IN NORTH AMERICA
§ 4  THE FOUNDRING OF NEW ENGLAND
§ 7  THE PURITAN SETTLEMENT AT MASSACHUSETTS BAY
§ 5  STABILITY AND ORDER IN EARLY NEW ENGLAND
§ 4  THE MID- ATLANTIC COLONIES
§ 7  ADJUSTMENT TO EMPIRE

AN AMERICAN STORY

BEARS ON FLOATING ISLANDS

They came to her one night while she slept. Into her dreams drifted a small island, and on the island were tall trees and living creatures, one of them wearing the fur of a white rabbit. When she told of her vision, no one took her seriously, not even the wise men among her people, shamans and conjurers whose business it was to interpret dreams.

No one, that is, until two days later, when the island appeared to all, floating toward shore. On the island, as she had seen, were tall trees, and on their branches—bears. Or creatures that looked so much like bears that the men grabbed their weapons and raced to the beach, eager for the good hunt...
sent by the gods. They were disappointed. The island was not an island at all but a strange wooden ship planted with the trunks of trees. And the bears were not bears at all but a strange sort of men whose bodies were covered with hair. Strangest among them, as she had somehow known, was a man dressed all in white. He commanded great respect among the bearlike men as their "shaman," or priest.

In that way, foretold by the dreams of a young woman, the Micmac Indians in 1669 recounted their people's first encounter with Europeans more than two centuries earlier. Uncannily, the traditions of other northern tribes record similar dreams predicting the European arrival: "large canoes with great white wings like those of a giant bird," filled with pale-bearded men bearing "long black tubes.

Perhaps the dreamers gave shape in their sleep to stories heard from other peoples who had actually seen white strangers and ships. Or perhaps, long before they ever encountered the newcomers, these Indians imagined them, just as Europeans fantasized about a new world.

However, Micmacs and other northern Indians first imagined and idealized Europeans, they quickly came to see them as fully human. Traders might bring seemingly wondrous goods, goods that could transform the way labor, commerce, politics, and war functioned in native communities. And yet the traders themselves hardly seemed magical. They could be by turns generous and mischievous, brave and furtive, confident and confused, kind and cruel. Moreover, it soon became clear that these newcomers hailed from different nations, spoke different languages, and often seemed to have different goals. English colonists, it seemed, were every day more numerous and wanted nothing so much as land. The French, in contrast, were relatively few and seemed to care for nothing so much as trade—unless it was their Christian God they brought with them from across the waters. Strange to say the Europeans argued over their deity as they did over so many other things. The English, the French, and the Dutch were all rivals, and the Micmacs and others who encountered these new peoples studied them closely and began to make alliances.

As northern Indians became more and more aware of Europeans and their ways, they came also to realize that whatever their attitudes and intentions, the newcomers provoked dramatic changes everywhere they went. Thousands of English migrants coming into the land founded villages and towns that multiplied throughout the seventeenth century. They not only took up land but also brought animals and plants that changed the way Indians lived. The Dutch, Europe's most powerful commercial nation, established no more than a handful of trading settlements up and down the Hudson River, but they encouraged the Iroquois confederacy to push into rival Indian territories in a quest for furs to trade. Even the French, who styled themselves loyal allies to many Indian peoples and claimed to want little more than beaver pelts, brought with them profound, sometimes cataclysmic changes—changes that would upend the world that natives knew when Frenchmen were but bears on floating islands.

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**France in North America**

**Cartier and Champlain**

The first official expedition to the land the French would call Canada took place in 1535, when Jacques Cartier sailed through the Gulf of St. Lawrence. But not until 1605 did the French plant a permanent colony, at Port Royal in Acadia (Nova Scotia). Three years later, Samuel de Champlain established Quebec farther up the St. Lawrence valley, where he could pursue the fur trade with less competition from rival Europeans. Champlain soon aligned himself with local Montagnais, Algonquins, and, especially, the mighty Hurons—a confederacy of farmers 20,000 strong whose towns near the Georgian Bay straddled a vast trading network.
The Origins of New France

These allied peoples had reason to embrace Champlain. Like Europeans elsewhere in North America, the Frenchman came with wondrous goods, such as textiles, glass, copper, and ironware. In the early years of contact such things would have been treated as exotic commodities rather than utilitarian items. Copper kettles, for instance, might be cut into strips for jewelry. But before long, metal tools, especially, began transforming native life. Metal knives made it far easier to butcher animals; trees could be felled and buildings built far more easily with iron than stone axes; cooking became more efficient with brass kettles that could be placed directly on the fire; flint strike-a-lights eliminated the cumbersome need for transporting hot coals in bounded shells; beads, cloth, needles, and thread made possible a new level of creative and visual expression; and, because metal arrowheads traveled farther and truer than stone, they would make hunters and warriors more deadly than they had ever been.

Champlain found a warm welcome for all these reasons. But native peoples in North America seldom viewed exchange as a simple market transaction. All exchanges were bound up in complex social relations, and the Montagnais, Algonquins, and Hurons wanted assurance that Champlain would be a good friend as well as a good merchant. To satisfy his hosts, he agreed to accompany them on a campaign against their mutual enemies the Mohawks, one of the five confederated tribes of the Iroquois. The Frenchman proved his friendship, and his worth, in the spring of 1609 when he and his Indian companions confronted 200 Mohawk warriors in what is now upstate New York. According to Champlain, he strode to the front as the battle was about to begin, raised his musket, and shot dead two Mohawk chiefs. Few if any of the assembled warriors had ever seen a gun fired in combat. Champlain’s allies let out a joyous cry, so loud “one could not have heard it thunder,” attacked the astonished Mohawks, and drove the survivors from the field. It was not the last time that European newcomers would alter the balance of power in North America.

New Netherland, the Iroquois, and the Beaver Wars

If Canada was merely a comptoir, it was a profitable one. Potential revenues from the fur trade drew the attention of rival European powers, including the Dutch. By the beginning of the seventeenth century the Calvinist Dutch had finally freed their homeland from Spanish domination. Having won independence, they were equally determined to compete with Spanish merchants and to contain the spread of Spanish Catholicism. Along the Amazon River and the African coast, forts and trading posts of the Dutch West India Company protected and promoted Dutch commerce while harrying Spanish competitors.

Furthermore, by the early seventeenth century the Netherlands had the greatest manufacturing capacity in the world and had become the key economic power in Europe. Intent especially on trade, the Dutch had little desire to plant permanent colonies abroad because they enjoyed prosperity and religious freedom at home. But they did...
want to tap directly into the wealth flowing out of North America and therefore explored and laid claim to a number of sites around the Connecticut, Delaware, and Hudson Rivers (the last named for the Englishman Henry Hudson, who first explored it for the Dutch in 1609). Most of New Netherland’s few settlers would cluster in the village of New Amsterdam on Manhattan Island at the mouth of the Hudson.

More important for the geopolitics of the continent, the Dutch West India Company also established a trading outpost 150 miles upriver known as Fort Orange (present-day Albany). Initially the traders at Fort Orange hoped to obtain cheap furs by fostering competition among rival Indian customers. But by 1630 the powerful Mohawks had displaced their competitors and come to dominate the fort’s commerce. Ever since their encounter with Champlain’s musket, the Mohawks and the other four members of the Iroquois League (the Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas, and Senecas) had suffered from their lack of direct access to European goods. With Mohawk ascendancy around Fort Orange, the iroquois finally had reliable access to the tools and weapons necessary to go on the offensive against their northern enemies. They felt compelled to do so because the beaver population, always fragile, had collapsed within their own territory. To maintain their trading position, they began preying on Huron convoys on their way to Quebec and then selling the plundered pelts to the Dutch.

Just as this old rivalry revived, and soon after the aging Champlain died of a stroke, two things happened to help plunge the region into catastrophe. First, waves of disease afflicted the settlements in the Northeast in the 1630s and took a nightmarish toll on nearly all the region’s native peoples, especially agricultural communities in their densely populated towns. Between 1634 and 1640 smallpox killed more than 10,000 Hurons, reducing their total population by half and precipitating a spate of conversions to Christianity that divided the community all the more. The Iroquois likewise suffered greatly, but, unlike the Hurons, they reacted by waging war in an effort to obtain captives that could formally replace dead kin. The second transformative event was a dramatic expansion in the regional arms trade. Initially reluctant to deal in guns, by the late 1630s the Dutch at Fort Orange relaxed their policy in order to obtain more furs. Before long the Iroquois had many times more muskets than the Hurons, whom the French had traditionally refused to arm so long as they remained unconverted.

Reeling from disease and internal division, the Hurons saw their world collapsing. In 1648 well-armed Iroquois warriors destroyed three Huron towns. The attacks continued into the next year. At one town under siege the Jesuit Paul Ragueneau saw desperate Hurons seek baptism and Christian consolation. “Never was their faith more alive, nor their love for their good fathers and pastors more keenly felt.” The Hurons made the wrenching decision to burn their remaining towns and abandon their lands for good. As many as 2,000 became Iroquois, as either war captives or humble refugees. Others merged with neighboring peoples, while thousands more fled in desperation and starved to death or died of exposure in the harsh winter of 1649–1650.

The Hurons, who became infected with smallpox in the 1630s, would have experienced fevers, aches, and vomiting before the telltale spots emerged on their skin. Agonizing pustules would have soon covered them from head to toe, as in the picture here, and sometimes the pustules merged into oozing sheets that caused large sections of the victims’ skin to peel away from their bodies. This horrible disease claimed millions of lives in the Americas after 1492.
Information on Pawnee Indians on Great Plains suggests the scope of French exploration—or at least French interests—by the late seventeenth century.

"There are a number of unknown savages and villages whose names are unknown," says the mapmaker. Why don't we see similar notations elsewhere?

Carte de Louisiane, by Jean Baptiste Louis Franquelin (1684)

Maps are and always have been far more than simple representations of physical or political space. Maps should also be seen as arguments. Consider the choices made by the cartographer who made the map above. Through the inclusion of certain physical, demographic, and geopolitical details, and through the exclusion of other information, this mapmaker sought to shape perceptions about North America. Chances about where to put boundaries, the relative size and boldness of the words used to identify different regions, the names applied to natural landmarks, and whether to even mention a given place or group all had political implications. The decisions Franquelin made along these lines would surely have been contested by mapmakers from rival empires and would likely have seemed bizarre and mostly useless to the continent's native peoples, who had their own methods for representing space through images.

Thinking Critically

Locate New Spain, New France, and Louisiana. Which English colonies does the map indicate? Could maps be used as tools in intercolonial rivalries? Would Spain have agreed with France about the boundaries around Texas? Would England have agreed with France about the boundaries of New England or Virginia? What might native peoples have thought about any of these claims?
So began the Beaver Wars, a series of conflicts at least as profoundly transformative for the colonial north as the Indian slave wars were for the south. Seeking new hunting grounds and new captives to replenish their diminishing population, Iroquois raiders attacked peoples near and far. After the Hurons, they struck and scattered the nearby Petuns, Erles, and Neutral peoples—people who, like the Hurons, were all Iroquoian speakers and could thus be integrated into Iroquois communities with relative ease. Iroquois warriors next moved against non-Iroquoian groups, including Delawares and Shawnees in the Ohio valley, and even extended their raids south to the Carolinas. To the north they attacked Algonquins in the Canadian Shield, and Abenakis and others in New England.

The Lure of the Mississippi

The Beaver Wars continued in fits and starts for the rest of the seventeenth century, bringing dozens of Indian nations to grief and provoking a massive refugee crisis as families fled their traditional territories and tried to rebuild their lives in peace. The wars also very nearly led to the ruin of New France. About 300 Frenchmen were killed or captured in the wars, cutting the colony's meager population in half by 1666. The survivors saw Champlain's carefully managed trading system thrown into disarray. French authorities scrambled to find reliable new partners in the fur trade and henceforth were less reluctant to trade guns to Indian allies. More broadly, the scope of the conflict and the far-flung movement of refugees compelled the French to take a more expansive view of the continent and their place in it.

By the 1660s, French traders, priests, and officers were making inroads among diverse refugee villages in the Western Great Lakes, a region the French referred to as the pays d'en haut. These peoples sought trade, assistance against the Iroquois, and mediation of their own disputes. While the French set about building alliances in the pays d'en haut, they became aware of and began exploring the greatest watercourse in North America.

La Salle Declined the Mississippi

The Mississippi River travels nearly 2,500 miles from its source in present-day Minnesota to the Gulf of Mexico, carrying water from several other major rivers and dominating a drainage area larger than the Indian subcontinent in Asia. As the French began exploring the river in earnest in the 1670s, it dawned on them that the Mississippi valley could be the strategic key to success in North America. French officials set out courting Indian peoples along the river and its tributaries, employing their hard-won insights into native diplomatic culture along the way. The region's peoples—the Illinois, Shawnees, Quapaws, and others—expressed keen interest in French trade, as well as fear and hatred of their common Iroquois enemies. When René Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle, became the first European to descend the river to the Gulf in 1682, he encountered the Natchez, Chickasaws, and others who had not seen Europeans since de Soto and his maniacal march nearly a century and a half before. Other Frenchmen went further, erecting trading posts and simple missions, and even making contact and tentative alliances with Osages, Arkansans, Ottos, Pownees, and others west of the great river.

By the early eighteenth century New France had helped broker an uneasy peace between the Iroquois and Indian nations to the west, extended its influence over a vast area, and fortified its colonial core along the St. Lawrence. In 1700 the colony had scores of simple missions and three modest towns—Quebec, Montreal, and Trois-Rivières—containing a population of approximately 15,000. Most immigrants to New France eventually returned to Europe, and shortsighted French monarchs insisted that Canada be a Catholic colony, off limits to France's most obvious emigrants, the Protestant Huguenots. But even with its small colonial population, New France emerged as a powerful player in North America, given its strategic and economic alliances with native peoples. The French had reason to hope that their native allies could help contain the Spanish to the west and limit English expansion from the east.

The Founding of New England

At first the English regarded the northern part of North America as a place in which only the mad French could see possibility. English fisherfolk who strayed from Newfoundland to the coast of Acadia and New England carried home descriptions of the long, lonely coast, rockbound and rugged. Long winters of numbing cold melted into short summers of steamy heat. There were no minerals to mine, no crops suitable for export, no large native population available for en-slaving. The Chesapeake, with its temperate climate and long growing season, seemed a much likelier spot.

But by 1620 worsening conditions at home had instilled in some English men and women the mixture of desperation and idealism needed to settle an uninviting, unknown world. Religious differences among English Protestants became a matter of sharper controversy during the seventeenth century. Along with the religious crisis came mounting political tensions and continuing problems of unemployment and recession. Times were bad—so bad that the anticipation of worse times to come swept English men and women to the shores of New England.

The Puritan Movement

The colonization of New England started with a king who chose his enemies unwisely. James I, shortly after succeeding Elizabeth I in 1603, vowed to purge England of all radical Protestant reformers. The radicals James had in mind were the Puritans, most of whom were either Presbyterian or Congregationalists. Although both groups of Puritan reformers embraced Calvin's ideas, they differed on the best