The Jamestown Colony

Before the arrival of the English, the Spanish influence in the New World extended from the Chesapeake Bay to the tip of South America. Spanish possessions included the developing cities of Mexico, Peru, and Cuba. Along the northern edge of Spain’s land were small missions and “presidios” or fortresses that stretched from the Atlantic coast, ran along the Gulf of Mexico and extended into the plains of Texas and the Rio Grande River valley. In 1585, Sir Walter Raleigh took on one of the first English settlement attempts. He set up a colony of about 100 men on the east coast of North America, on land he named Virginia after Queen Elizabeth I, who being unmarried, was known as the “Virgin Queen.” These settlers only lasted for a year before returning home. Then, in 1587, Raleigh made a second attempt at settling a colony at Roanoke, Virginia. The supply ships sent to the colony never arrived and in 1590 when help did come, evidence of the existence of the entire colony had disappeared except for the word “Croatan” inscribed on a post.

Soon after England’s first colonization efforts, several changes took place that strengthened their ability to colonize America in the early 1600s: the Protestant Reformation, the defeat of the Spanish Armada, and the changes in the English economy.

In the early 1500s, England and Spain had a strong connection based on their dedication to the Roman Catholic Church and the marriage between Henry VIII of England and Catherine of Aragon. Then, in the 1530s when Henry VIII broke from the Roman Catholic Church so he could divorce Catherine, the efforts of English Protestant reformers gained official support and the once close relations between England and Spain broke down.

Henry VIII wanted to annul his marriage of 20 years to Catherine of Aragon because she had only provided him with female heirs. However, Catherine was the aunt to the King of Spain, Charles V, whose support was vital to the Holy Roman Empire, so the pope refused the annulment. In a political move, Henry severed the connection with Rome, declared himself head of the Church of England, named a new archbishop who granted his annulment, and remarried. Ironically, his new wife did not present him with the male heir he wanted, but instead a daughter named Elizabeth who later reigned from 1558 to 1603.

Mary Tudor, the daughter of Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon, came to the throne after her father’s death and attempted to bring England back into the Catholic fold. Following the unpopular reign of Queen Mary, Queen Elizabeth I came to power and embodied both an ambition in world affairs and a strong but pragmatic Protestantism that renewed the tensions between England and Spain. The English, quietly backed by Queen Elizabeth, began to plunder Spanish merchant ships. The most famous “sea dog” was Captain Francis Drake. He captured a Spanish treasure ship and netted profits of about 4,600 percent for his financial backers.

King Philip II of Spain was angered by the English raids on his ships and began to assemble an Armada of ships to invade England. One of his goals was to bring England back into the Catholic fold once and for all. In 1588, the Spanish Armada consisting of some 130 ships and 30,000 men sailed to the English Channel. The Dutch, who were themselves resisting Spanish rule, helped the English disrupt the Armada’s plans. The English fleet fought back with ships that were faster and more maneuverable and crushed the Armada. Then a series of storms scattered the remainder of the Spanish flotilla as it attempted to circle the British Isles, completing the destruction. This historically significant win for England ensured their naval dominance in the North Atlantic and built their confidence and their ambition to secure settlements in the New World.

Although Elizabeth produced no heirs to the throne, the influence of her reign continued in 1603, when James VI of Scotland became James I of Great Britain, uniting Scotland and England under one monarchy. This was an era of great social, economic, and political development for England. William Shakespeare produced plays for London’s Globe Theatre. The Crown’s patronage of scholars resulted in the King James translation of the Bible in 1611. Investors and companies such as the Muscovy Company and the East India Company tapped into the world’s developing trade networks. Where networks were established, the English built ties to local merchants and set up new trade routes and port facilities with the goal of building wealth for England.

Reasons England was Primed for Colonialism

Colonial expansion was fueled by a number of factors. England’s population was growing at a rapid rate. Economic recession left many without work, even skilled artisans could earn little more than enough to live. Poor crop yields added to the distress. In addition, the Industrial Revolution had created a growing textile industry, which demanded an ever-increasing supply of wool. Landlords enclosed farmlands for sheep grazing, which left the farmers without anywhere to live. The law of primogeniture (first born) stated that only the eldest son inherited an estate, which left many entrepreneurial younger sons to seek their fortunes elsewhere. Colonial expansion became an outlet for these displaced populations.

The development of joint-stock companies encouraged commercial expansion and provided the financial backing. The joint-stock company allowed several investors to pool their capital and share the risks and profits, becoming the predecessor of the modern corporation. All such activity had to take place with the approval of the monarch, who granted a charter that outlined the basic terms of the venture. When overseas, the charter reinforced the idea that those involved were extensions of England and English customs. The charter later became an important document in American history because it guaranteed the settlers the same rights as the people of England.

In 1606, King James I granted a charter to colonize Virginia, the whole area claimed by England in the New World, to a joint-stock company called the Virginia Company of London. The charter revealed the primary motivation for colonization of both King James and the company: the promise of gold. Secondary motivations included finding a sea passage through the New World to Asia and the Indies, establishing colonies and outposts to demonstrate English power and influence, and spreading Christianity and a European definition of civilization to the native people. The English assumed that the riches and native populations that the Spanish found in Mexico and Peru existed throughout the Americas.

In late 1606, the Virginia Company set sail with about 100 male settlers aboard. On May 24, 1607, their three ships landed near the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay area on the banks of the James River. Here they founded Jamestown, the first permanent English colony in the New World.

The English had been planting similar settlements in Ireland since the 1500s and so used a familiar model in the New World. As settlers, their goal was to transplant their way of life as much as possible. This made the early years of Jamestown difficult for the settlers. The land was hot, humid, and mosquito-infested, and the settlers were mostly aristocrats and artisans who did not know how to farm, fish, or hunt. Instead, they spent much of their time searching for nonexistent gold. Many of those who did not die on the trip to the New World died once they arrived from disease, malnutrition, and starvation.

The local Indians helped the colonists with food during their first hard winters and taught them how to farm and live off the land. The Powhatan leader for numerous Algonquian-speaking Indian tribes in the region took a position of cautious assistance and patient observation of the colonists. The Indians had experienced small parties of Spanish explorers and missionaries in the 1500s and wondered what these newcomers would bring. Europeans came to call these Indians the Powhatan Indians.

The directors of the Virginia Company of London failed to provide the colony with effective guidance and they continued to struggle. One colonist, John Smith, came to Jamestown after a career as a solider and provided much-needed leadership to the settlers. Smith was a fantastic soldier in Eastern Europe before he went to Jamestown. He fought many battles and triumphed in a variety of adventures, including freeing himself from his Turkish captors by killing his overseer to escape imprisonment.

The Virginia Company was impressed with Smith’s military experience and thus appointed him a member of the resident council to manage the colony in America. This proved to be a wise decision when Smith implemented a rule that “he that will not work shall not eat.” His rule kept the colonists from starving to death.

Smith bargained with the Indians so that he could explore and map the Chesapeake area. He had no reservations about taking advantage of the Indians in order to benefit the colonists. His leadership and resourcefulness saved the colonists from extinction. In 1607 Smith was kidnapped by the Powhatan Native Americans, and according to legend, rescued from death by appeal of the Indian Chief’s daughter, Pocahontas. This act of mercy enabled Pocahontas, who was only about ten years old, to preserve wavering peace and become a liaison between the Indians and the settlers.

Despite the Indian’s help and Smith’s leadership, the colony was failing. The winter of 1609-1610 was called the “starving time” when most of the settlers died of hunger and pestilence, leaving alive only 60 of the 400 who had come to Virginia by 1609. When spring arrived, the remaining colonists decided to head home to England. As they made their way down the James River they were met by a new Governor, Lord De La Warr, who sent them back to Jamestown.

The hardships continued for the colonists and the cultural clashes with the Indians increased. De La Warr’s troops raided Indian villages and took what they wanted. In 1614, a peace settlement ended the First Anglo-Powhatan War, and like many settlements of the time in Europe, was sealed with a marriage, in this case between a settler named John Rolfe and Pocahontas, who had converted to Christianity.In 1616, Pocahontas and Rolfe went to England to visit James I and John Smith, and during their trip, in 1617, Pocahontas died of disease and was buried in Gravesend, England.

The treaty with the Indians is not what saved the settlers, rather it was John Rolfe’s realization that tobacco could be sold profitably in England. This was a critical turning point for Jamestown. John Rolfe became the economic savior of the Virginia colony by importing tobacco seeds that were much smoother and milder than the local tobacco. As the profits from the cultivation of tobacco increased, the colonists no longer cared about looking for gold. Instead, they wanted to acquire large plots of land so they could grow more of the yellow leaf. By 1616, despite King James’ protests regarding his perception that tobacco could not be anything but a health risk, tobacco had become an export staple for Jamestown and finally put the colony on firm economic ground. However, these profits did not go to the London Company, because by the time tobacco became profitable most of the original colonists had served their seven years with the company. So the profits went to the planters who owned the farms, not the shareholders of the London Company.

The newly-developed tobacco plantation economy became the first commodity to save the south and provide wealth for the colonists, but it also had some negative consequences. It was the only source of fortune, and so the success of the Virginians was tied directly to the fluctuating price of tobacco. It was very hard on the soil and the vast plantation system required a large labor force. In 1619 a Dutch ship stopped in Jamestown and dropped off 20 Africans, establishing the beginning of the North American slave system. However, there were a limited number of slaves in all of the Southern colonies in the early 1600s, with only 300 blacks in Virginia by 1650. Instead, the planters had to rely on a white labor force of indentured servants.

By 1619, the London Company’s venture in Virginia had enough people to merit a form of self-government called the House of Burgesses. This allowed the settlers to choose delegates to advise the governor, and from these beginnings sprang a new pattern of representative self-government in America.

That same year, a ship arrived with 90 women aboard. These women were to be sold to likely husbands of their own choice for the cost of transportation, which was the equivalent of about 125 pounds of tobacco. The arrival of women to the colony sent a powerful message that Jamestown was there to stay.

The land-hungry settlers continued to push inland creating conflict with the Indians. The peace settlement from the First Anglo-Powhatan War had lasted only eight years. In 1622, the Indians attacked and left 347 settlers dead, including John Rolfe. The London Company embarked on a charge to decimate the Indians, spawning the Second Anglo-Powhatan War in 1644. The Indians were once again defeated. The peace treaty of 1646 banished the Chesapeake Indians from Virginia, sparking a chain reaction of westward movement of tribes, each group displacing the existing peoples, who then moved and displaced others.

In 1624, King James had appointed a commission to investigate the London Company and their management of Jamestown. The committee recommended the court dissolve the company, so the King revoked the charter, making Virginia a royal colony directly under his control. As a financial investment the London Company had been a disaster—the shareholders lost everything they invested. Although there were major financial losses, as the King took over, Virginia was firmly established and beginning to prosper in the New World.

**Plymouth Colony**

The Anglican Church became England’s official church during Queen Elizabeth’s reign from 1558 to 1603. At this time there was growing tension between Catholics and Protestants dating back to when Queen Elizabeth’s father, King Henry VII, broke from the Catholic Church in the 1530s. English Catholics wanted the Church of England to stress traditional Catholic practices while English Protestants following Calvinist ideals wanted to return to the “pure” Christianity of the New Testament and remove the Catholic additions. The church under Queen Elizabeth tried to balance between the Anglo-Catholic factions and the Protestant groups. The solution was a compromise between the Catholic and the Protestant extremes allowing for some latitude as long as the monarch was accepted as the head of the church.

However, the more radical Protestants felt that the Anglican Church was still too much like the Church of Rome. This group wanted to “purify” Anglicanism, so they were called Puritans. As a guide for what they felt Christianity should be, they embraced the ideas of the sixteenth century French religious leader, John Calvin, who felt God was all-powerful and all-good and that humans were naturally weak and wicked. Calvinism also proposed that from the beginning of time everyone was either predestined for eternal bliss or eternal torment. Calvin advocated a society of the “elect” of God who chose their own leaders and who did not need the elaborate rituals of Catholic and Anglican worship.

The Puritans wanted the Church of England completely de-Catholicized. Puritans believed that only “visible saints,” or those who could demonstrate the grace of God to fellow Puritans, should be church members. Since the Church of England continued to accept all of the royal subjects, the Puritans had to share their churches with the “damned.” Puritans were not satisfied with the slow progress of the Protestant Reformation in England and what they felt was a corrupt and worldly Church of England. A small group of extreme Puritans called Separatists broke away from the Church of England completely.

In 1603, when King James I succeeded Queen Elizabeth I, the Puritans feared that England might slide farther back to its Catholic roots. At the same time, King James began to feel that if the Puritans did not see him as their spiritual leader, they might defy him as their political leader. So James began pressuring the Puritan Separatists to conform.

Finally, in 1606, the Separatists severed all ties to the Church of England. In an age when church and state were united, dissenting from the practices of the official Church of England was seen as treason. The Separatists went into exile departing for Holland in 1608 so that they did not have to conform to the beliefs set out by the Church of England. As fellow Calvinists, the Dutch tolerated the Separatists—and many others. After living with the Dutch customs and liberal ways for 12 years, the Separatist longed for their English lifestyle. Since they could not go back to England, they decided the next best option was to transplant their customs in the New World.

These “Pilgrims” negotiated with the Virginia Company of London and secured rights to establish a settlement near the mouth of the Hudson River. King James did not promise toleration, but he agreed to leave them alone if they went to Virginia. In 1620, about 100 people boarded the Mayflower for the New World, and less than half of them were Separatists. A storm made the group miss their destination, pushing them north of the Virginia Company where they settled off the coast of New England in Plymouth Bay. Rather than brave the stormy seas and try to make it south to the Virginia Company location, they stayed where they were.

The Pilgrims believed that Plymouth Bay was outside the jurisdiction of the Virginia Company. Although they did not have the monarch’s authority to establish a government, they drew up a formal agreement called the Mayflower Compact before going ashore. This compact established the first standard in the New World for written laws and was signed by forty-one adult men on the Mayflower.

The Pilgrims who signed the compact met as the General Court in open-discussion town meetings and chose John Carver as their first governor. They also chose his council of assistants and eventually others were admitted as members, or “freemen,” but only if they were church members. In April 1621, John Carver died and William Bradford was elected governor. Bradford served many terms as governor and was largely responsible for the infant colony's success through great hardships.

Having landed on the Massachusetts shore in the middle of winter, the Pilgrims’ first months spent trying to build the settlement was very difficult. About half of the settlers died during the first winter, but when the Mayflower returned to England in the spring all of the remaining Separatists stayed in Plymouth.

That spring, the Separatists met an Indian named Squanto who spoke English. Squanto introduced the Pilgrims to Massasoit, the leader of the Wampanoag tribe. The two groups formed an alliance to help protect one another from other Indian tribes. Squanto and his fellow Indians showed the Pilgrims where to fish and how to farm. The settlers worked hard and had a bountiful harvest in the fall of 1621. To celebrate their good fortune they prepared the first Thanksgiving feast for themselves and their Indian friends.

While the Pilgrims developed an economy based on fur, fish, and lumber, the colony never grew to be very large. In 1650 there were still fewer than one thousand settlers at Plymouth, and in 1691 it merged with the Massachusetts Bay Colony because the Crown refused to grant the Plymouth Plantation a legal charter.

**Massachusetts Bay Colony**

In the early seventeenth century, the Puritan community was divided into two groups: Separatist Puritans and non-Separatist Puritans. Separatist Puritans saw themselves as different from the corrupt English society around them. Disillusioned with the Anglican Church and by the King’s challenge to their beliefs, they fled to the New World in the beginning of the seventeenth century. They established what they felt were ideal Christian communities at Plymouth, Salem, Dover, and Portsmouth.

By contrast, moderate, non-Separatist Puritans remained in England because they believed that they could still reform the church from the inside. In 1603, moderate Puritans in England hoped the new monarch, James I, would be sympathetic to their views, since he had been raised in Calvinist Scotland. Although this did not prove to be the case, the Puritans still tried to work within the religious system while he was king.

In 1629, James’ son, King Charles I, dismissed Parliament and allowed the anti-Puritan Archbishop of Canterbury, William Laud, to tighten royal control over the church. He removed ministers with Puritan tendencies and threatened church elders who harbored such ministers. With these increasing pressures from the crown, the non-Separatist Puritans no longer felt they could remain in England within the Anglican fold and decided to migrate to the New World. They remained committed to reforming the Church of England and claimed that they did not want to separate from the church, only from its impurities.

A group of non-Separatist Puritans secured a royal charter from King Charles I to form the Massachusetts Bay Company in 1629. The Massachusetts Bay Company was primarily intended to be a business venture, but the colony was also used as a refuge for Puritans. In 1630, nearly 1,000 settlers in 11 ships arrived on the rocky Massachusetts coast, becoming the largest group to immigrate to the New World at one time. In the decade that followed, between 16,000 and 20,000 settlers came to the New England region due to turmoil in Britain, a movement that came to be called “The Great Migration.”

The Massachusetts colonists did not face nearly as many hardships as the Jamestown and Plymouth settlers before them did. The colonists had taken careful steps to prepare for their venture, and they also received a constant flow of new settlers, which helped replenish supplies and helped the colony grow. Many of the immigrants were well educated and their skills helped the Bay Company succeed in various industries. Since the soil in the northeast was not favorable to farming, the Bay Company made the most of the forests and water resources by establishing mills for grain and lumber, developing the fishing industry, using the local timber for shipbuilding, and using the harbors to promote trade. The Bay Colony quickly became the largest and most influential of all of the New England colonies. The British New England colonies included Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island. While there were several large communities within the Bay Colony, the city of Boston became the capital for the group.

A typical Puritan New England town was centered around a “commons,” or a central pasture for all to use. The meeting house, which was the main religious and community building, overlooked the commons. Nearby was a tavern, which was the main social institution for the community. Although drunkenness was frowned upon, drinking itself was acceptable because beer was often safer to drink than water. Thus, early New England towns mandated that taverns be as close to the meeting house as possible so that congregants could take a break from long Sunday services to warm up before returning to worship. There were some residences in town for the artisans, such as the blacksmiths, cobblers, and those connected to shipping. The farmer’s residences extended out from the commons, with the wealthy and prosperous having more and better land than poorer families.

For several years, the Massachusetts Bay charter was used as a constitution for the Company. Governmental power in the Bay Company rested with the General Court, or the shareholders, who then elected the governor and his assistants. The right to vote and hold office was limited to male church members, called “freemen.” It was not considered democratic in the modern sense, but the system was considered a practical democracy based on the relationship between the Clergymen and the freemen who voted. At least in local affairs, the General Court developed powers and a structure similar to England’s Parliament. It had two houses: the House of Assistants, which was similar to the House of Lords, and the House of Deputies, which was similar to the House of Commons. Meanwhile, each community held town hall meetings made up of qualified male residents that managed local affairs, usually electing a moderator to officiate over meetings.

Before leaving England, the Massachusetts Bay Colony elected their first governor, John Winthrop, who was a well-off English lawyer. Winthrop believed that their venture was divinely inspired and that he had been called by God to lead the new experiment. He served as governor of the Bay Colony for over a decade. During the trip to the New World, Winthrop gave a sermon called “A Model of Christian Charity,” during which he outlined God’s purpose for the Bay Colony. "We shall be a city set on a hill," Winthrop said of Boston, where the church was the center of life. His goal was to build a holy society that would be a model for humankind. He described a harmonious Christian community whose laws and government would logically proceed from a godly and purposeful arrangement. Winthrop clearly set out the purposes of God and warned that their success or failure would depend on their dedication to the ideal of a selfless community. These common convictions did much to shape the Bay Colony community in its early years of existence.

Dissention and Conflict in the Bay Colony

In the Puritan world view, everything worked according to a plan set by God, and an orderly society of people worked and lived out that plan. The Massachusetts Bay Colony was a tight-knit group, founded on the ideal of being a harmonious community of people who agreed to work together and abide by the wishes of the larger community.

Puritan theology gave weight to the idea that if people allowed God’s will to rule and guide the community, peace, harmony and prosperity would follow. If the community did not live up to that ideal, however, God’s wrath would come down and destroy the community. The Puritan elders, therefore, felt obligated to make sure that people conformed to the ideals of the community. To not conform suggested that a person was an “impostor” who was not predestined to be saved and did not really belong in the community.

As with any group, there were differences of opinion, but the leaders of the colony made sure that such differences did not stray too far from established ideals. Harmony and faith, not tolerance, were the guiding principles. When forced to choose between the harmony of the colony and banishing or executing dissenters, Governor Winthrop and the ministers did not hesitate to act against nonconformists to preserve what they felt were the best interests of the larger community.

One dissenter, Roger Williams, was a highly educated man who held a strong belief in an individual’s freedom of worship. He arrived in Massachusetts in 1631, after a short stay in Plymouth. Even by Plymouth’s standards, Williams was a radical Separatist, who came to be known as the purest of Puritans. He was troubled by the idea that the Puritans had not made a clean break from the corrupt Church of England.

Williams was elected minister of a church in Salem in 1635, where he found a forum for advocating his ideas. One of his more extreme ideas was that the English should respect the land rights of the Native Americans, and that it was a sin to take possession of any land without first buying it from the Indians. This notion was in direct conflict with the Bay Colony’s charter and the general opinion of many Englishmen.

Another idea that Williams held was that religious groups should be supported by voluntary tithes, not taxes as demanded by the Bay Colony leaders. When Williams went on to claim that magistrates should have no voice in spiritual matters, he went too far. He wanted a complete separation of church and state, asserting that “forced religion stinks in God’s nostrils.” His views proved to be too extreme for the radical church of Salem, which finally removed him. The Bay Colony General Court found Williams guilty of disseminating dangerous opinions and banished him from the colony.

Fleeing the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1636, Williams headed southwest where he settled at Narragansett Bay and established a Baptist church. He acquired land from the Narragansett Indian Chiefs and named his settlement Providence, in thanks to God.

In 1644, Williams secured a Charter from Parliament to oversee a colony made up of Providence and the other communities of Rhode Island. Williams was ready to practice what he preached, establishing a government based on the consent of the people, tolerating all religions, and rigidly separating church and state.

His endorsement of religious tolerance made Rhode Island most liberal settlement of its time. This colony served as a refuge where all could come to worship as their conscience dictated without interference from the state. Rhode Island provided a tolerant home for Quakers and was also home to the first Jewish community. The Puritan clergy in Massachusetts viewed Rhode Island as the “sink” of New England where the “Lord’s debris” rotted.

Williams was not the only one whose views challenged the authority of the Bay Colony elders. Anne Hutchinson was one of the more famous dissenters from Massachusetts. She was an articulate, strong-willed woman whose views developed out of the Puritan tradition but soon clashed with that same tradition and the authorities who preserved Puritanism.

Hutchinson challenged the Puritan views on salvation. She believed that all one needed to be admitted into Heaven was faith and God’s saving grace and that leading a holy life was not a guarantee of salvation. This simplified view of salvation raised questions about the status of who was “elect,” which raised awkward questions about the role of the community and its leaders. The Bay Colony’s leaders accused Hutchinson of “antinomianism,” or the idea that if you were saved you did not need to obey the laws of God or man. To most Christian groups, Puritan and non-Puritan alike, this idea was a rejection of the very institutions that God put in place and implied the equally uncomfortable idea that people could question civil and religious authority.

Hutchinson began hosting meetings in her home to review the weekly sermons and discuss the Scriptures. These discussions rapidly turned into forums for Hutchinson to assert her own interpretations of religious matters, specifically the idea that there was no direct relationship between moral conduct and salvation. She firmly asserted that good behavior was not a sign of being saved or one of the “elect.” Her meetings generated a good deal of interest and a larger number of colonists came to hear her speak each week.

Hutchinson’s increasing leadership began to worry Governor John Winthrop. He felt she was a threat to the authority of the Puritan leaders. Additionally, a woman leading a religious discussion struck the Puritan leadership as a rejection of what they viewed as the natural order of things. They believed that women should be content to be submissive to their husbands and the community. Hutchinson’s subversive gatherings led Winthrop and the Puritan leaders to take action against her. She was arrested and brought to trial in 1638 for challenging the clergy and asserting her view of the "Covenant of Grace," or the belief that moral conduct and piety should not be the primary qualifications for "visible sanctification."

The General Court quoted the Bible to make their case against Hutchinson, and she responded that she had come by her beliefs through direct revelations from God. The Puritan ministers felt this was blasphemy and banished her from the Bay Colony. Hutchinson, her children, and a few followers left Massachusetts for Roger Williams’ more tolerant Rhode Island and settled south of Providence. After her husband’s death in 1643, she moved to New York where she and all but one of her children were killed by Indians. Governor Winthrop and several other leaders in the Massachusetts Bay community saw this as God’s final judgement of a sinful and unsaved person. They felt the colony had escaped being contaminated by such an evil influence.

An expanding population and increasing levels of Puritan intolerance in Massachusetts led to the founding of several new colonies throughout New England. A group led by Reverend Thomas Hooker founded Hartford, along the Connecticut River, in 1635. Hooker helped to draft the Fundamental Orders of Connecticut, a type of constitution created for the settlement in 1639. The Fundamental Orders were unique because they did not reference the King or any other government or power outside of Connecticut. They also established democratic control by all citizens and did not limit voting rights to members of the Puritan church. Connecticut was granted a royal charter in 1662.

North of the Massachusetts Bay Colony lay communities that emerged from the fishing and trading activities along the coast and eventually became Maine, New Hampshire, and Nova Scotia. The relationship between these areas and Massachusetts changed periodically during the seventeenth century. By the middle of the century Maine and New Hampshire had been absorbed into the Bay Colony. Then in 1679, the King separated New Hampshire from Massachusetts, making New Hampshire a royal colony.

Initially, the coastal Indians helped the English develop their economy in the new colonies, but as the settlers continued to spread inland it inevitably led to conflict with the natives. In 1637, the Pequot War erupted when a Massachusetts colonist accused a Pequot Indian of murdering a settler, and conflict erupted between the two groups. The English set fire to a Pequot village and as the Indians fled their huts the Puritans shot and killed them. During the war, hundreds of Pequots were indiscriminately killed, virtually eliminating the tribe.

The remaining Indians forged an alliance in hopes of resisting English encroachment on their land. Metacom, a Wampanoag Indian called King Philip by the English, led the coalition. In 1675 they attacked several English villages throughout New England, and within a year they were threatening Boston. In total, King Philip’s group attacked 52 Puritan towns and destroyed 12 of them completely. After about a year of fighting the Indians’ resistance wore down. Philip’s wife and son were sold into slavery and Philip himself was captured and beheaded. It is estimated that nearly 20,000 people were killed in this bloody war.

Those Indians who remained were drastically reduced in numbers. Many either fled to the west or were forced to settle in villages supervised by the English so they no longer posed a threat to the colonists. However, King Philip’s War did slow the westward movement of English settlers for several decades.

For a brief time in the late 1600s, the English government developed the “Dominion of New England,” which sought to bolster colonial defense in the event of war and bring the colonies under tighter royal control. King James II was becoming apprehensive about the New England colonies' increasingly independent ways, so the Dominion of New England was also designed to promote closer relations between England and its colonies. The Dominion of New England sought to stop American trade with anyone not ruled by England through Navigation Laws, therefore bringing England’s overseas possessions closer to the motherland. King James II felt that out of all of the colonies, Massachusetts was in particular need of supervision because of its expanding power in the New World

Sir Edmund Andros, the president of the new Dominion, arrived in Boston with orders to stop the northern colonies from behaving like sovereign powers. He proceeded to abolish popular assemblies, institute new taxes, suppress smuggling, and enforce religious toleration. Then, in the late 1680s England experienced their “Glorious Revolution” and enthroned a new King, William III, which led to the collapse of the Dominion. When news of these events reached Boston, a mob rose up against Andros and shipped him back to England. Although Massachusetts was rid of Andros, they did not gain as much individuality from this change as they hoped. In 1691, the King made Massachusetts a royal colony and instituted a royal governor.

Many British officials' attitudes toward the American colonies were temporarily changed when the Dominion of New England failed and the Navigation Laws were no longer enforceable. Some officials believed England would gain more from encouraging mercantilism with the colonies than from meddling in their governmental affairs. This period of disregard in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries fostered the growth of self-government in America.

The New England colonies of Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island were founded as a part utopian experiment and part commercial venture. The Puritans felt it was their opportunity to start over, to build a new society according to Calvinist ideals, and to live freely from dissention and worldly influence. Over time, the prosperous small towns, farms, and seaports brought wealth to the region. The tradition of the village meeting enabled commoners to have an unusual amount of participation in local affairs, in spite of the firm control of Puritan elders.

As the colonies developed, a number of flaws in the plan were exposed. Although the colonies were set up by people looking for religious freedom they ended up punishing those who did not conform to their beliefs. Refugees from New England ended up establishing colonies in the middle Atlantic whose reputation for relative tolerance stood in sharp contrast to New England's theocracy. The passion of the founders of Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay was hard to maintain in younger generations. By the 1700s, younger colonists maintained many of the structures of the seventeenth century society but were disillusioned with the rigidity of the old Puritan orthodoxy and with England's attempt to control a growing assortment of colonies.

**New York and New Jersey**

The primary motive for establishing the middle, or mid-Atlantic colonies of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware was to develop profitable trading centers. The Dutch were some of the first to settle in this area. In the late sixteenth century, with the help of Protestant England, the people of the Netherlands won their independence from Spain. The Netherlands evolved into a major commercial and naval power and challenged its former benefactor, England, on several occasions during the seventeenth century.

With this newfound power, the Dutch became a leading colonial presence, especially in the East Indies. Like the English, the Dutch developed colonies by authorizing joint-stock companies to go forth and establish trading outposts and commerce. The Dutch East India Company established a trading empire that was profitable for over three hundred years. Seeking greater riches and a passageway around America to China, the Dutch East India Company hired Henry Hudson, an English explorer. Hudson sailed along the upper coast of North America, and in 1609 he encountered Delaware Bay and the river named for him, the Hudson River. He filed a claim to all of this land for the Dutch.

The Dutch West India Company was also influential, but operated primarily in the Caribbean, where it was more interested in raiding than trading. By 1624, based on Hudson’s earlier claim to the Hudson Valley, the Dutch West India Company permanently settled New Netherland, in the Hudson River area, as a fur trading port. In 1626, the Dutch bought Manhattan Island from the Indians for pennies an acre, and they started trading posts at New Amsterdam, later called New York, and upriver at Fort Orange, later called Albany.

The New Netherland colony was highly aristocratic, with large feudal estates along the Hudson River. These grand estates, called patroonships, were granted to stockholders who promised to have fifty adults living on the estate within four years. This approach to colonization met with little luck because volunteers for serfdom were hard to find.

New Netherland experienced difficulties from the outset. The shareholders demanded dividends even at the expense of the colony’s welfare. The New England colonies to the north regarded them as intruders. Although not as strict as the Puritans, the Dutch Company ran the colony in the interests of the stockholders and with little tolerance for free speech, religion, or democratic government. Peter Stuyvesant, the governor sent by the Dutch West India Company, was in absolute control of the colony’s government. However, the inhabitants showed nearly total indifference to his leadership.

The relationship between Holland and England alternated from alliance against nations such as Spain, to conflict as they both sought to become the dominant trading empire. During a time when the two countries were experiencing hostilities, James, the Duke of York and brother to King Charles II, felt that the New Netherland colony could easily be conquered. Precipitating a conflict, King Charles II granted his brother a charter for the region between Maryland and Connecticut, which included New Netherland.

As was the case for the New Netherland area, many of the original thirteen colonies were settled as proprietorships. The crown granted individuals or a group of partners a charter to develop these proprietary colonies. In contrast, Virginia and the New England colonies were essentially corporate ventures, sponsored by joint-stock companies that funded the settlements as investments.

An English fleet soon set sail to seize the Dutch colony, and in 1664, they threatened to take over New Netherland. Governor Stuyvesant could not get anyone to defend the colony and the Dutch surrendered without firing a shot. New Netherland was now an English possession, but the Dutch continued to exercise an important social and economic influence on the land and language, contributing such words as cookie, crib, and Santa Claus. Their merchants also gave Manhattan much of its original bustling, commercial atmosphere having developed such places as Wall Street and Broadway.

New Amsterdam was renamed New York in honor of the Duke of York. The English now ruled a stretch of land that ran from Maine to the Carolinas. Out of all of the English colonies, the settlers in the middle colonies came from the most varied backgrounds. By 1664, the city of New York best illustrated these varied backgrounds with inhabitants that included Scots, French, Dutch, Swedes, Germans, Norwegians, Irish, Poles, Portuguese, and Italians who were the forerunners of millions to come.

Soon after the Duke of York conquered New Netherland, he granted the land between the Hudson and the Delaware Rivers to two of his friends, Sir George Carteret and Lord John Berkeley. The new territory was named New Jersey in honor of Carteret’s native island of Jersey. To attract settlers the two men offered land on easy terms and established freedom of religion and a relatively democratic government. The new colony grew rapidly. Several of the migrants were New England colonists who were leaving the already overworked soil of their own colonies.

The two proprietors split New Jersey with a diagonal line into East and West New Jersey—Carteret taking the east side. In 1674, Berkeley sold West New Jersey to a group of Quakers who were trying to escape persecution. The Quakers, a group formally known as the Religious Society of Friends, were a religious movement founded by George Fox. Dismayed by the struggles among Calvinists, Anglicans, and Catholics in England, Fox preached that spirituality was rooted in an individual’s personal relationship with God. This religious view left little room for clergy, liturgy, or hierarchy, and rejected doctrines such as predestination. Fox’s followers were called “Quakers,” which was originally meant as an insult, because they “trembled at the name of the Lord.

Quakers were deeply devoted to their beliefs. They opposed warfare and resorted to passive resistance whenever confronted. English authorities felt the Quakers were especially insulting dissenters because they believed that they could communicate directly with God. They also refused to pay taxes to support the Church of England, were unwilling to bow before any person of higher authority, and refused to surrender their right to worship as they pleased. These practices appeared treasonous and heretical to most English officials.

Quakers in England were being persecuted, killed, and imprisoned for their beliefs. As with the Puritans, however, the English government was willing to put up with colonies of Quakers in the Americas so long as they expanded the English presence on the Atlantic Coast. The Quakers eventually acquired East New Jersey in 1680 when Carteret died. The acquisition of New Jersey gave the Quakers a place where they could practice their religion in peace. Then in 1702, the crown reclaimed and combined East and West New Jersey into a single royal colony.

Pennsylvania and Delaware

The Quaker effort to colonize in the Americas continued west of New Jersey in a fertile area called Pennsylvania. This land belonged to William Penn, an athletic young gentleman who was the son of the wealthy English admiral. While a student at Oxford, Penn was attracted to the Quaker faith. He supported the belief that religion should involve a personal relationship with God and that there was no need for an established church. He also rejected the ideas of rank and hierarchy, along with the trappings of those things such as fancy dress for the wealthy or tipping the hat in deference to superiors.

When his father died, Penn inherited a large estate, including a claim for £16,000 his father had loaned the King. In 1681, King Charles II settled the claim with Penn by granting him proprietary rights to a region north of Maryland and west of the Delaware River. The King named the land Pennsylvania, meaning Penn’s Woods, in honor of Penn’s father. Penn was eager to establish a refuge for fellow Quakers in Pennsylvania.

When he assumed control of the area there were already several thousand Dutch, Swedish, and English “squatters” on the land, making it easier to populate the area. However, Penn energetically marketed the new colony so he could attract a heavy flow of immigrants. He published glowing descriptions of the colony in various languages and encouraged forward-looking individuals to come with him. Penn promised substantial land holdings and by the end of 1681 he had encouraged about 1,000 immigrants to settle in Pennsylvania, and in October he arrived himself with 100 more. Pennsylvania grew rapidly because it was the best advertised of all the colonies and no restrictions were placed on immigration to the colony.

The relationship between the Quakers and the Indians was amiable because of the Quakers’ friendliness and Penn’s policy of purchasing land from the Indians. Penn tried to protect the Indians in their dealings with settlers and traders. The relationship was so peaceful that the Quakers often used the Indians as babysitters. Penn even went so far as to learn the language of the Delaware Indians, and for nearly fifty years the two groups lived in relative harmony. However, Penn’s acceptance of all people was a double-edged sword for the Indians, because as many non-Quaker settlers came to the colony they undermined Penn’s benevolent policy.

Philadelphia, meaning the City of Brotherly Love, grew up at the junction of the Schuylkill and Delaware Rivers. It was a carefully planned city, organized on a strict grid pattern with wide tree-shaded streets, substantial brick and stone houses, and busy docks. Soon after the settlement of Philadelphia, the first migration of Germans to North America took place, creating the city of Germantown. These were the Pennsylvania “Dutch,” from the word “Deutsch,” which means “German” in the German language.

Penn’s new colony was decidedly liberal and included a representative assembly elected by the freemen, or all of the landowners of the colony. Penn guaranteed freedom of worship to all residents and there was no tax-supported church in Pennsylvania. Penn hoped to show that a government could run in harmony with Quaker principles and still maintain peace and order and that freedom of religion could thrive without an established church. Because of the Quaker’s pacifist beliefs, Penn’s government made no provisions for military defense.

A few key factors contributed to Pennsylvania’s prosperous beginnings. Penn’s combination of good salesmanship, firmness, and tolerance helped the colony succeed. The Quakers’ business skills and the rich soil enabled the colony to export grain and other foodstuffs after just a sort time. Cottage industries such as weaving, shoemaking, and cabinetmaking also helped the colony thrive. Within just a few years the colony had over 2,500 people. By 1700, only the well established colonies of Virginia and Massachusetts were larger.

In 1682, the Duke of York granted Penn the colony of Delaware, which was the area between Maryland and the Delaware River. The colony was named after Lord De La Warr, a harsh military governor who came to Virginia in 1610. Delaware was closely associated with Pennsylvania for many years, and in 1703 it was granted its own assembly. From then until the American Revolution it had its own assembly but remained under the governor of Pennsylvania.

The English middle colonies of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware shared several common features. The middle colonies tended to be urban and were linked by trade and commerce early on. Unlike Puritan New England or the Anglican South, there was no dominant religious group, resulting in relative tolerance among groups from Quakers to Lutherans, to Dutch Reformed and Catholics. The area became a refuge for a variety of dissenters and religious misfits. The English authorities were willing to tolerate the religious dissention in return for the development of profitable trading centers. The cities along the coast of the middle colonies were maritime centers with ships that brought supplies from Europe and returned to Europe filled with grains, furs, and lumber for shipbuilding.

Culturally, the settlers in the middle colonies thought of themselves as Europeans and tried as much as possible to replicate the lifestyles, social relations, and cultural traditions of their homeland. Like many first-generation migrants, they saw themselves as “expatriates” who happened to live outside of their mother country, rather than immigrants who were intent on making something different.

Colonists experienced many benefits living in the middle colonies. A great deal of social and economic democracy prevailed, desirable land was easily acquired, and there was a large degree of religious and ethnic tolerance in the middle colonies.

**Maryland, Carolina, and Georgia**

The British colonies in the American south were divided into two regions: the Chesapeake colonies, which included Maryland and Virginia, and the Southern colonies, which included Georgia and the Carolinas.

One of the first proprietary colonies, or colonies owned by an individual instead of a joint-stock company, was the Chesapeake colony of Maryland, granted by Charles I to Sir George Calvert, the first Lord Baltimore. Upon his death, the land was left to his son Cecilius Calvert, the second Lord Baltimore, who actually founded the colony. Lord Baltimore’s purpose for founding Maryland was similar to the religious motives that drove the Puritans and Quakers to settle in the New World. He sought the colony as a refuge for English Catholics who were subjected to discrimination in England.

In 1634, Baltimore planted the first settlement at St. Mary’s, just north of the Potomac on Chesapeake Bay. The charter empowered Baltimore with almost regal authority. He was able to grant huge feudal manors, hold people in serfdom, make laws, and develop his own courts.

In the beginning, the estate owners were primarily Catholic gentlemen, with Protestants working as the servants. Baltimore soon discovered that to draw more settlers he also had to offer small farms and give the colonists a say in the government. In 1635, the first legislative assembly met, and in 1650 it divided into two houses with the governor and his council sitting separately from the lower house.

In contrast to the northern and middle colonies, the southern and Chesapeake colonies, including Maryland, were predominantly rural settlements. Maryland quickly prospered because, like its neighbor, Virginia, its economy was based on tobacco.

Lord Baltimore would have preferred an exclusively Catholic colony. However, from the outset there was a mixture of Catholic and Protestant settlers in Maryland. As the colony grew the Protestant settlers began to outnumber the Catholic colonists, and the Protestant majority threatened to restrict the rights of Catholics. In 1649, Lord Baltimore agreed to the Act of Toleration, which guaranteed freedom of religion to anyone “professing to believe in Jesus Christ.” This act helped to ensure Catholic safety in Maryland. When the colonial era ended, Maryland sheltered more Roman Catholics than any other English-speaking colony.

In 1642, the English Civil War between the Calvinists and Anglican royalists broke out when the English Parliament, led by a Puritan named Oliver Cromwell, rebelled against King Charles I. They ultimately executed Charles, and Cromwell assumed control of the government until his death in 1660. After years of civil war, royalists restored the monarchy and Charles II became King. These events had major consequences for the colonies. Colonization had been interrupted during this unrest and during the reign of Charles II, called the Restoration period, the government sought to bring the colonies under tighter royal control.

Unlike the investors in the joint-stock companies who established Virginia and New England, Charles II preferred using individual “proprietors,” such as the Duke of York and Lord Calvert to establish and run colonies. These settlements eventually became Royal Colonies functioning under official governors appointed by the crown. For example, Charles II granted Carolina to eight of his allies who became Lord Proprietors of the region. The proprietors set out from London with about 100 English settlers. On their way to Carolina they stopped at the English colonies of Bermuda and Barbados to pick up more experienced settlers.

British settlements in the Caribbean, called the "West Indies," included island colonies such as Barbados, Antigua, and Jamaica that dated back to the early 1600s. The settlers’ background caused the Carolinas to develop strong economic and cultural ties to the Caribbean until the time of the American Revolution. By the 1640s, 20,000 people lived on plantations in the British Caribbean colonies, where they initially produced tobacco and later raised sugar cane.

The first settlers arrived in Carolina in 1670 with hopes of growing sugarcane and exporting non-English products like wine, silk, and olive oil. None of these plans were successful, and it was two decades before the settlers found a staple crop. Rice emerged as the principle export crop for the colony in the 1690s. Carolinian colonists began paying a premium price for West African slaves who had experience in rice cultivation. By 1710, the Africans made up a large majority of the population in Carolina.

Dense forests also brought revenue with the lumber, tar, and resin from the pine trees providing some of the best shipbuilding materials in the world. North and South Carolina also produced and exported indigo, a blue dye obtained from native plants, which was used in coloring fabric.

Charles Town, now Charleston, was founded in 1680 and became the leading port and trading center of the south. The city had a diverse cosmopolitan feel with various cultures settling there including French Protestant refugees, called Huguenots, and sons of English aristocrats.

The northern region of Carolina was neglected from the outset because the English Aristocrat proprietors tolerated the region as a refuge for the outcasts of Virginia. The Virginians created a remote center called the Albemarle district just south of the Virginia border. In contrast to the sophistication of Charleston, with its English propriety and ties to Caribbean plantations, North Carolina developed distinctive traits such as a strong resistance to authority, being hospitable to pirates, and impious behavior. Due to friction between the governors, North and South Carolina were officially separated into two colonies in 1712. Subsequently, each settlement became a royal colony.

Just south of the Carolinas, Georgia was founded in 1733 by a group of London philanthropists. This was 126 years after the first colony, Virginia, was founded and 52 years after the twelfth colony, Pennsylvania, was founded.

Georgia was set up for two primary reasons: as a military buffer against the Spaniards in Florida and as a social experiment. A group of London philanthropists were concerned with the plight of honest persons who were imprisoned for debt. Their leader, James Oglethorpe, became interested in prison reform after a friend died in debtors’ jail.

Oglethorpe had a military background and was able to successfully repel Spanish attacks. As a buffer against Florida, the colony was considered a success. However, as a philanthropic endeavor, the colony was not as successful. The founders’ goal was to populate the colony with upstanding, industrious farmers. To perpetuate this goal, land grants were limited to small plots, rum and other spirits were banned, and slavery was prohibited. However, the settlers quickly found ways to circumvent these restrictions, and Georgia developed an economy much like South Carolina’s. In 1752, the philanthropists, disillusioned, abandoned their responsibilities and the settlement became a royal colony. Georgia continued to grow very slowly and at the end of the colonial era was the least populous of the colonies.

The British southern colonies of Georgia and the Carolinas, and the Chesapeake colonies of Maryland and Virginia, shared several distinct features that also tied them to the developing British colonies of the Caribbean. The plantation lifestyle they created, in which wealthy planters owned large amounts of land with slaves or servants as labor, helped the colonies survive in the New World. The colonists developed large estates and exported agricultural products, primarily tobacco and rice. Slaves could be found throughout all of the southern colonies during this time. In contrast to the small towns of New England and the cities of the middle-Atlantic, the character of the South was rural from the outset. Outside of Charleston and a few cities on the coast, there were few urban settlements. Official business, worship, and trade often took place at isolated courthouses or churches located at the intersection of roads.

The plantation economy was the south’s greatest asset and greatest weakness. Disparities of wealth and intolerance occurred in all of the southern colonies. In the south, the plantation system created a society divided by class and race. The decentralized rural pattern allowed individual landowners to have great autonomy and influence but also hampered the region’s ability to come together in times of crisis. The agricultural crops brought great wealth but at the expense of being dependent on international markets and reliant on the import of manufactured goods. Additionally, the settlers’ over planting of tobacco resulted in a need for more land. As the colonies expanded, the settlers had to confront Native Americans, the settlements of other nations, and each other.