CHAPTER 1: EARLY AMERICA

"Heaven and Earth never agreed better to frame a place for man's habitation."

Jamestown founder John Smith, 1607

THE FIRST AMERICANS

At the height of the Ice Age, between 34,000 and 30,000 B.C., much of the world's water was locked up in vast continental ice sheets. As a result, the Bering Sea was hundreds of meters below its current level, and a land bridge, known as Beringia, emerged between Asia and North America. At its peak, Beringia is thought to have been some 1,500 kilometers wide. A moist and treeless tundra, it was covered with grasses and plant life, attracting the large animals that early humans hunted for their survival.

The first people to reach North America almost certainly did so without knowing they had crossed into a new continent. They would have been following game, as their ancestors had for thousands of years, along the Siberian coast and then across the land bridge.

Once in Alaska, it would take these first North Americans thousands of years more to work their way through the openings in great glaciers south to what is now the United States. Evidence of early life in North America continues to be found. Little of it, however, can be reliably dated before 12,000 B.C.; a recent discovery of a hunting lookout in northern Alaska, for example, may date from almost that time. So too may the finely crafted spear points and items found near Clovis, New Mexico.

Similar artifacts have been found at sites throughout North and South America, indicating that life was probably already well established in much of the Western Hemisphere by some time prior to 10,000 B.C.

Around that time the mammoth began to die out and the bison took its place as a principal source of food and hides for these early North Americans. Over time, as more and more species of large game vanished whether from overhunting or natural causes - plants, berries, and seeds became an increasingly important part of the early American diet. Gradually, foraging and the first attempts at primitive agriculture appeared. Native Americans in what is now central Mexico led the way, cultivating corn, squash, and beans, perhaps as early as 8,000 B.C. Slowly, this knowledge spread northward.

By 3,000 B.C., a primitive type of corn was being grown in the river valleys of New Mexico and Arizona. Then the first signs of irrigation began to appear, and, by 300 B.C., signs of early village life.

By the first centuries A.D., the Hohokam were living in settlements near what is now Phoenix, Arizona, where they built ball courts and pyramid-like mounds reminiscent of those found in Mexico, as well as a canal and irrigation system.

MOUND BUILDERS AND PUEBLOS

The first Native-American group to build mounds in what is now the United States often are called the Adenans. They began constructing earthen burial sites and fortifications around 600 B.C. Some mounds from that era are in the shape of birds or serpents; they probably served religious purposes not yet fully understood.

The Adenans appear to have been absorbed or displaced by various groups collectively known as Hopewellians. One of the most important centers of their culture was found in southern Ohio, where the remains of several thousand of these mounds still can be seen. Believed to be great traders, the Hopewellians used and

exchanged tools and materials across a wide region of hundreds of kilometers.

By around 500 A.D., the Hopewellians disappeared, too, gradually giving way to a broad group of tribes generally known as the Mississippians or Temple Mound culture. One city, Cahokia, near Collinsville, Illinois, is thought to have had a population of about 20,000 at its peak in the early 12th century. At the center of the city stood a huge earthen mound, flattened at the top, that was 30 meters high and 37 hectares at the base. Eighty other mounds have been found nearby.

Cities such as Cahokia depended on a combination of hunting, foraging, trading, and agriculture for their food and supplies. Influenced by the thriving societies to the south, they evolved into complex hierarchical societies that took slaves and practiced human sacrifice.

In what is now the southwest United States, the Anasazi, ancestors of the modern Hopi Indians, began building stone and adobe pueblos around the year 900. These unique and amazing apartment-like structures were often built along cliff faces; the most famous, the “cliff palace” of Mesa Verde, Colorado, had more than 200 rooms. Another site, the Pueblo Bonito ruins along New Mexico’s Chaco River, once contained more than 800 rooms.

Perhaps the most affluent of the pre-Columbian Native Americans lived in the Pacific Northwest, where the natural abundance of fish and raw materials made food supplies plentiful and permanent villages possible as early as 1,000 B.C. The opulence of their “potlatch” gatherings remains a standard for extravagance and festivity probably unmatched in early American history.

NATIVE-AMERICAN CULTURES

The America that greeted the first Europeans was, thus, far from an empty wilderness. It is now thought that as many people lived in the Western Hemisphere as in Western Europe at that time — about 40 million. Estimates of the number of Native Americans living in what is now the United States at the onset of European colonization range from two to 18 million, with most historians tending toward the lower figure. What is certain is the devastating effect that European disease had on the indigenous population practically from the time of initial contact. Smallpox, in particular, ravaged whole communities and is thought to have been a much more direct cause of the precipitous decline in the Indian population in the 1600s than the numerous wars and skirmishes with European settlers.

Indian customs and culture at the time were extraordinarily diverse, as could be expected, given the expanse of the land and the many different environments to which they had adapted. Some generalizations, however, are possible. Most tribes, particularly in the wooded eastern region and the Midwest, combined aspects of hunting, gathering, and the cultivation of maize and other products for their food supplies. In many cases, the women were responsible for farming and the distribution of food, while the men hunted and participated in war.

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of food, while the men hunted and participated in war.

Although some North American tribes developed a type of hieroglyphics to preserve certain texts, Native-American culture was primarily oral, with a high value placed on the recounting of tales and dreams. Clearly, there was a good deal of trade among various groups and strong evidence exists that neighboring tribes maintained extensive and formal relations — both friendly and hostile.

THE FIRST EUROPEANS

The first Europeans to arrive in North America — at least the first for whom there is solid evidence — were Norse, traveling west from Greenland, where Erik the Red had founded a settlement around the year 985. In 1001 his son Leif is thought to have explored the northeast coast of what is now Canada and spent at least one winter there.

While Norse sagas suggest that Viking sailors explored the Atlantic coast of North America down as far as the Bahamas, such claims remain unproven. In 1963, however, the ruins of some Norse houses dating from that era were discovered at L'Anse-aux-Meadows in northern Newfoundland, thus supporting at least some of the saga claims.

In 1497, just five years after Christopher Columbus landed in the Caribbean looking for a western route to Asia, a Venetian sailor named John Cabot arrived in Newfoundland on a mission for the British king. Although quickly forgotten, Cabot's journey was later to provide the basis for British claims to North America. It also opened the way to the rich fishing grounds off George's Banks, to which European fishermen, particularly the Portuguese, were soon making regular visits.

Columbus never saw the mainland of the future United States, but the first explorations of it were launched from the Spanish possessions that he helped establish. The first of these took place in 1513 when a group of men under Juan Ponce de León landed on the Florida coast near the present city of St. Augustine.

With the conquest of Mexico in 1522, the Spanish further solidified their position in the Western Hemisphere. The ensuing discoveries added to Europe's knowledge of what was now named America — after the Italian Amerigo Vespucci, who wrote a widely popular account of his voyages to a "New World." By 1529 reliable maps of the Atlantic coastline from Labrador to Tierra del Fuego had been drawn up, although it would take more than another century before hope of discovering a "Northwest Passage" to Asia would be completely abandoned.

Among the most significant early Spanish explorations was that of Hernando De Soto, a veteran conquistador who had accompanied Francisco Pizarro in the conquest of Peru. Leaving Havana in 1539, De Soto's expedition landed in Florida and ranged through the southeastern United States as far as the Mississippi River in search of riches.

Another Spaniard, Francisco Vázquez de Coronado, set out from Mexico in 1540 in search of the mythical Seven Cities of Cibola. Coronado's travels took him to the Grand Canyon and Kansas, but failed to reveal the gold or treasure his men sought. However, his party did leave the peoples of the region a remarkable, if unintended, gift: Enough of his horses escaped to transform life on the Great Plains. Within a few generations, the Plains Indians had become masters of horsemanship, greatly expanding the range of their activities.

While the Spanish were pushing up from the south, the northern portion of the present-day United States was slowly being revealed through the journeys of men such as Giovanni da Verrazano. A Florentine who sailed for the French, Verrazano made landfall in North Carolina in 1524, then sailed north along the Atlantic Coast past what is now New York harbor.

A decade later, the Frenchman Jacques Cartier set sail with the hope — like the other Europeans before him — of finding a sea passage to Asia. Cartier's expeditions along the St. Lawrence River laid the foundation for the French claims to North America, which were to last until 1763.

Following the collapse of their first Quebec colony in the 1540s, French Huguenots attempted to settle the northern coast of Florida two decades later. The Spanish, viewing the French as a threat to their trade route along the Gulf Stream, destroyed the colony in 1565. Ironically, the leader of the Spanish forces, Pedro Menéndez, would soon establish a town not far away — St. Augustine. It was the first permanent European settlement in what would become the United States.

The great wealth that poured into Spain from the colonies in Mexico, the Caribbean, and Peru provoked great interest on the part of the other European powers. Emerging maritime nations such as England, drawn in part by Francis Drake's successful raids on Spanish treasure ships, began to take an interest in the New World.

In 1578 Humphrey Gilbert, the author of a treatise on the search for the Northwest Passage, received a patent from Queen Elizabeth to colonize the "heathen and barbarous landes" in the New World that other European nations had not yet claimed. It would be five years before his efforts could begin. When he was lost at sea, his half-brother, Walter Raleigh, took up the mission.

In 1585 Raleigh established the first British colony in North America, on Roanoke Island off the coast of North Carolina. It was later abandoned, and a second effort two years later also proved a failure. It would be 20 years before the British would try again. This time — at Jamestown in 1607 — the colony would succeed, and North America would enter a new era.

EARLY SETTLEMENTS

The early 1600s saw the beginning of a great tide of emigration from Europe to North America. Spanning more than three centuries, this movement grew from a trickle of a few hundred English colonists to a flood of millions of newcomers. Impelled by powerful and diverse motivations, they built a new civilization on the northern part of the continent.

The first English immigrants to what is now the United States crossed the Atlantic long after thriving Spanish colonies had been established in Mexico, the West Indies, and South America. Like all early travelers to the New World, they came in small, overcrowded ships. During their six- to 12-week voyages, they lived on meager rations. Many died of disease, ships were often battered by storms, and some were lost at sea.

Most European emigrants left their homelands to escape political oppression, to seek the freedom to practice their religion, or to find opportunities denied them at home. Between 1620 and 1635, economic difficulties swept England. Many people could not find work. Even skilled artisans could earn little more than a bare living. Poor crop yields added to the distress. In addition, the Commercial Revolution had

created a burgeoning textile industry, which demanded an ever-increasing supply of wool to keep the looms running. Landlords enclosed farmlands and evicted the peasants in favor of sheep cultivation. Colonial expansion became an outlet for this displaced peasant population.

The colonists' first glimpse of the new land was a vista of dense woods. The settlers might not have survived had it not been for the help of friendly Indians, who taught them how to grow native plants — pumpkin, squash, beans, and corn. In addition, the vast, virgin forests, extending nearly 2,100 kilometers along the Eastern seaboard, proved a rich source of game and firewood. They also provided abundant raw materials used to build houses, furniture, ships, and profitable items for export.

Although the new continent was remarkably endowed by nature, trade with Europe was vital for articles the settlers could not produce. The coast served the immigrants well. The whole length of shore provided many inlets and harbors. Only two areas — North Carolina and southern New Jersey — lacked harbors for ocean-going vessels.

Majestic rivers — the Kennebec, Hudson, Delaware, Susquehanna, Potomac, and numerous others — linked lands between the coast and the Appalachian Mountains with the sea. Only one river, however, the St. Lawrence — dominated by the French in Canada — offered a water passage to the Great Lakes and the heart of the continent. Dense forests, the resistance of some Indian tribes, and the formidable barrier of the Appalachian Mountains discouraged settlement beyond the coastal plain. Only trappers and traders ventured into the wilderness. For the first hundred years the colonists built their settlements compactly along the coast.

Political considerations influenced many people to move to America. In the 1630s, arbitrary rule by England's Charles I gave impetus to the migration. The subsequent revolt and triumph of Charles' opponents under Oliver Cromwell in the 1640s led many cavaliers — "king's men" — to cast their lot in Virginia. In the German-speaking regions of Europe, the oppressive policies of various petty princes — particularly with regard to religion — and the devastation caused by a long series of wars helped swell the movement to America in the late 17th and 18th centuries.

The journey entailed careful planning and management, as well as considerable expense and risk. Settlers had to be transported nearly 5,000 kilometers across the sea. They needed utensils, clothing, seed, tools, building materials, livestock, arms, and ammunition. In contrast to the colonization policies of other countries and other periods, the emigration from England was not directly sponsored by the government but by private groups of individuals whose chief motive was profit.

JAMESTOWN

The first of the British colonies to take hold in North America was Jamestown. On the basis of a charter which King James I granted to the Virginia (or London) Company, a group of about 100 men set out for the Chesapeake Bay in 1607. Seeking to avoid conflict with the Spanish, they chose a site about 60 kilometers up the James River from the bay.

Made up of townsmen and adventurers more interested in finding gold than farming, the group was unequipped by temperament or ability to embark upon a completely new life in the wilderness. Among them, Captain John Smith emerged as the dominant figure. Despite quarrels, starvation, and Native-American attacks, his

ability to enforce discipline held the little colony together through its first year.

In 1609 Smith returned to England, and in his absence, the colony descended into anarchy. During the winter of 1609-1610, the majority of the colonists succumbed to disease. Only 60 of the original 300 settlers were still alive by May 1610. That same year, the town of Henrico (now Richmond) was established farther up the James River.

It was not long, however, before a development occurred that revolutionized Virginia's economy. In 1612 John Rolfe began cross-breeding imported tobacco seed from the West Indies with native plants and produced a new variety that was pleasing to European taste. The first shipment of this tobacco reached London in 1614. Within a decade it had become Virginia's chief source of revenue.

Prosperity did not come quickly, however, and the death rate from disease and Indian attacks remained extraordinarily high. Between 1607 and 1624 approximately 14,000 people migrated to the colony, yet only 1,132 were living there in 1624. On recommendation of a royal commission, the king dissolved the Virginia Company, and made it a royal colony that year.

MASSACHUSETTS

During the religious upheavals of the 16th century, a body of men and women called Puritans sought to reform the Established Church of England from within. Essentially, they demanded that the rituals and structures associated with Roman Catholicism be replaced by simpler Calvinist Protestant forms of faith and worship. Their reformist ideas, by destroying the unity of the state church, threatened to divide the people and to undermine royal authority.

In 1607 a small group of Separatists — a radical sect of Puritans who did not believe the Established Church could ever be reformed — departed for Leyden, Holland, where the Dutch granted them asylum. However, the Calvinist Dutch restricted them mainly to low-paid laboring jobs. Some members of the congregation grew dissatisfied with this discrimination and resolved to emigrate to the New World.

In 1620, a group of Leyden Puritans secured a land patent from the Virginia Company. Numbering 101, they set out for Virginia on the Mayflower. A storm sent them far north and they landed in New England on Cape Cod. Believing themselves outside the jurisdiction of any organized government, the men drafted a formal agreement to abide by "just and equal laws" drafted by leaders of their own choosing. This was the Mayflower Compact.

In December the Mayflower reached Plymouth harbor; the Pilgrims began to build their settlement during the winter. Nearly half the colonists died of exposure and disease, but neighboring Wampanoag Indians provided the information that would sustain them: how to grow maize. By the next fall, the Pilgrims had a plentiful crop of corn, and a growing trade based on furs and lumber.

A new wave of immigrants arrived on the shores of Massachusetts Bay in 1630 bearing a grant from King Charles I to establish a colony. Many of them were Puritans whose religious practices were increasingly prohibited in England. Their leader, John Winthrop, urged them to create a "city upon a hill" in the New World — a place where they would live in strict accordance with their religious beliefs and set an example for all of Christendom.

The Massachusetts Bay Colony was to play a significant role in the development

of the entire New England region, in part because Winthrop and his Puritan colleagues were able to bring their charter with them. Thus the authority for the colony's government resided in Massachusetts, not in England.

Under the charter's provisions, power rested with the General Court, which was made up of "freemen" required to be members of the Puritan, or Congregational, Church. This guaranteed that the Puritans would be the dominant political as well as religious force in the colony. The General Court elected the governor, who for most of the next generation would be John Winthrop.

The rigid orthodoxy of the Puritan rule was not to everyone's liking. One of the first to challenge the General Court openly was a young clergyman named Roger Williams, who objected to the colony's seizure of Indian lands and advocated separation of church and state. Another dissenter, Anne Hutchinson, challenged key doctrines of Puritan theology. Both they and their followers were banished

Williams purchased land from the Narragansett Indians in what is now Providence, Rhode Island, in 1636. In 1644, a sympathetic Puritan-controlled English Parliament gave him the charter that established Rhode Island as a distinct colony where complete separation of church and state as well as freedom of religion was practiced.

So-called heretics like Williams were not the only ones who left Massachusetts. Orthodox Puritans, seeking better lands and opportunities, soon began leaving Massachusetts Bay Colony. News of the fertility of the Connecticut River Valley, for instance, attracted the interest of farmers having a difficult time with poor land. By the early 1630s, many were ready to brave the danger of Indian attack to obtain level ground and deep, rich soil. These new communities often eliminated church membership as a prerequisite for voting, thereby extending the franchise to ever larger numbers of men.

At the same time, other settlements began cropping up along the New Hampshire and Maine coasts, as more and more immigrants sought the land and liberty the New World seemed to offer.

NEW NETHERLAND AND MARYLAND

Hired by the Dutch East India Company, Henry Hudson in 1609 explored the area around what is now New York City and the river that bears his name, to a point probably north of present-day Albany, New York. Subsequent Dutch voyages laid the basis for their claims and early settlements in the area.

As with the French to the north, the first interest of the Dutch was the fur trade. To this end, they cultivated close relations with the Five Nations of the Iroquois, who were the key to the heartland from which the furs came. In 1617 Dutch settlers built a fort at the junction of the Hudson and the Mohawk Rivers, where Albany now stands.

Settlement on the island of Manhattan began in the early 1620s. In 1624, the island was purchased from local Native Americans for the reported price of $24. It was promptly renamed New Amsterdam.

In order to attract settlers to the Hudson River region, the Dutch encouraged a type of feudal aristocracy, known as the "patroon" system. The first of these huge estates were established in 1630 along the Hudson River. Under the patroon system, any stockholder, or patroon, who could bring 50 adults to his estate over a four-year period was given a 25-kilometer river-front

plot, exclusive fishing and hunting privileges, and civil and criminal jurisdiction over his lands. In turn, he provided livestock, tools, and buildings. The tenants paid the patroon rent and gave him first option on surplus crops.

Further to the south, a Swedish trading company with ties to the Dutch attempted to set up its first settlement along the Delaware River three years later. Without the resources to consolidate its position, New Sweden was gradually absorbed into New Netherland, and later, Pennsylvania and Delaware.

In 1632 the Catholic Calvert family obtained a charter for land north of the Potomac River from King Charles I in what became known as Maryland. As the charter did not expressly prohibit the establishment of non-Protestant churches, the colony became a haven for Catholics. Maryland's first town, St. Mary's, was established in 1634 near where the Potomac River flows into the Chesapeake Bay.

While establishing a refuge for Catholics, who faced increasing persecution in Anglican England, the Calverts were also interested in creating profitable estates. To this end, and to avoid trouble with the British government, they also encouraged Protestant immigration.

Maryland's royal charter had a mixture of feudal and modern elements. On the one hand the Calvert family had the power to create manorial estates. On the other, they could only make laws with the consent of freemen (property holders). They found that in order to attract settlers — and make a profit from their holdings — they had to offer people farms, not just tenancy on manorial estates. The number of independent farms grew in consequence. Their owners demanded a voice in the affairs of the colony. Maryland's first legislature met in 1635.

COLONIAL-INDIAN RELATIONS

By 1640 the British had solid colonies established along the New England coast and the Chesapeake Bay. In between were the Dutch and the tiny Swedish community. To the west were the original Americans, then called Indians.

Sometimes friendly, sometimes hostile, the Eastern tribes were no longer strangers to the Europeans. Although Native Americans benefited from access to new technology and trade, the disease and thirst for land that the early settlers also brought posed a serious challenge to their long-established way of life.

At first, trade with the European settlers brought advantages: knives, axes, weapons, cooking utensils, fishhooks, and a host of other goods. Those Indians who traded initially had significant advantage over rivals who did not. In response to European demand, tribes such as the Iroquois began to devote more attention to fur trapping during the 17th century. Furs and pelts provided tribes the means to purchase colonial goods until late into the 18th century.

Early colonial-Native-American relations were an uneasy mix of cooperation and conflict. On the one hand, there were the exemplary relations that prevailed during the first half century of Pennsylvania's existence. On the other were a long series of setbacks, skirmishes, and wars, which almost invariably resulted in an Indian defeat and further loss of land.

The first of the important Native American uprisings occurred in Virginia in 1622, when some 347 whites were killed, including a number of missionaries who had just recently come to Jamestown.

White settlement of the Connecticut River region touched off the Pequot War in 1637. In 1675 King Philip, the son of the native chief who had made the original peace with the Pilgrims in 1621, attempted to unite the tribes of southern New England against further European encroachment of their lands. In the struggle, however, Philip lost his life and many Indians were sold into servitude

The steady influx of settlers into the backwoods regions of the Eastern colonies disrupted Native-American life. As more and more game was killed off, tribes were faced with the difficult choice of going hungry, going to war, or moving and coming into conflict with other tribes to the west.

The Iroquois, who inhabited the area below lakes Ontario and Erie in northern New York and Pennsylvania, were more successful in resisting European advances. In 1570 five tribes joined to form the most complex Native-American nation of its time, the "Ho-De-No-Sau-Nee," or League of the Iroquois. The league was run by a council made up of 50 representatives from each of the five member tribes. The council dealt with matters common to all the tribes, but it had no say in how the free and equal tribes ran their day-to-day affairs. No tribe was allowed to make war by itself. The council passed laws to deal with crimes such as murder.

The Iroquois League was a strong power in the 1600s and 1700s. It traded furs with the British and sided with them against the French in the war for the dominance of America between 1754 and 1763. The British might not have won that war otherwise.

The Iroquois League stayed strong until the American Revolution. Then, for the first time, the council could not reach a unanimous decision on whom to support. Member tribes made their own decisions, some fighting with the British, some with the colonists, some remaining neutral. As a result, everyone fought against the Iroquois. Their losses were great and the league never recovered.

SECOND GENERATION OF BRITISH COLONIES

The religious and civil conflict in England in the mid-17th century limited immigration, as well as the attention the mother country paid the fledgling American colonies.

In part to provide for the defense measures England was neglecting, the Massachusetts Bay, Plymouth, Connecticut, and New Haven colonies formed the New England Confederation in 1643. It was the European colonists' first attempt at regional unity.

The early history of the British settlers reveals a good deal of contention — religious and political — as groups vied for power and position among themselves and their neighbors. Maryland, in particular, suffered from the bitter religious rivalries that afflicted England during the era of Oliver Cromwell. One of the casualties was the state's Toleration Act, which was revoked in the 1650s. It was soon reinstated, however, along with the religious freedom it guaranteed.

With the restoration of King Charles II in 1660, the British once again turned their attention to North America. Within a brief span, the first European settlements were established in the Carolinas and the Dutch driven out of New Netherland. New proprietary colonies were established in New York, New Jersey, Delaware, and Pennsylvania.

The Dutch settlements had been ruled by autocratic governors appointed in

Europe. Over the years, the local population had become estranged from them. As a result, when the British colonists began encroaching on Dutch claims in Long Island and Manhattan, the unpopular governor was unable to rally the population to their defense. New Netherland fell in 1664. The terms of the capitulation, however, were mild: The Dutch settlers were able to retain their property and worship as they pleased.

As early as the 1650s, the Albemarle Sound region off the coast of what is now northern North Carolina was inhabited by settlers trickling down from Virginia. The first proprietary governor arrived in 1664. The first town in Albemarle, a remote area even today, was not established until the arrival of a group of French Huguenots in 1704.

In 1670 the first settlers, drawn from New England and the Caribbean island of Barbados, arrived in what is now Charleston, South Carolina. An elaborate system of government, to which the British philosopher John Locke contributed, was prepared for the new colony. One of its prominent features was a failed attempt to create a hereditary nobility. One of the colony's least appealing aspects was the early trade in Indian slaves. With time, however, timber, rice, and indigo gave the colony a worthier economic base.

In 1681 William Penn, a wealthy Quaker and friend of Charles II, received a large tract of land west of the Delaware River, which became known as Pennsylvania. To help populate it, Penn actively recruited a host of religious dissenters from England and the continent — Quakers, Mennonites, Amish, Moravians, and Baptists.

When Penn arrived the following year, there were already Dutch, Swedish, and English settlers living along the Delaware River. It was there he founded Philadelphia, the "City of Brotherly Love."

In keeping with his faith, Penn was motivated by a sense of equality not often found in other American colonies at the time. Thus, women in Pennsylvania had rights long before they did in other parts of America. Penn and his deputies also paid considerable attention to the colony's relations with the Delaware Indians, ensuring that they were paid for land on which the Europeans settled.

Georgia was settled in 1732, the last of the 13 colonies to be established. Lying close to, if not actually inside the boundaries of Spanish Florida, the region was viewed as a buffer against Spanish incursion. But it had another unique quality: The man charged with Georgia's fortifications, General James Oglethorpe, was a reformer who deliberately set out to create a refuge where the poor and former prisoners would be given new opportunities.

SETTLERS, SLAVES, AND SERVANTS

Men and women with little active interest in a new life in America were often induced to make the move to the New World by the skillful persuasion of promoters. William Penn, for example, publicized the opportunities awaiting newcomers to the Pennsylvania colony. Judges and prison authorities offered convicts a chance to migrate to colonies like Georgia instead of serving prison sentences.

But few colonists could finance the cost of passage for themselves and their families to make a start in the new land. In some cases, ships' captains received large rewards from the sale of service contracts for poor migrants, called indentured servants, and every method from extravagant promises to actual kidnapping was used to take on as many passengers as their vessels could hold.

In other cases, the expenses of transportation and maintenance were paid by colonizing agencies like the Virginia or Massachusetts Bay Companies. In return, indentured servants agreed to work for the agencies as contract laborers, usually for four to seven years. Free at the end of this term, they would be given “freedom dues,” sometimes including a small tract of land.

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There was one very important exception to this pattern: African slaves. The first black Africans were brought to Virginia in 1619, just 12 years after the founding of Jamestown. Initially, many were regarded as indentured servants who could earn their freedom. By the 1660s, however, as the demand for plantation labor in the Southern colonies grew, the institution of slavery began to harden around them, and Africans were brought to America in shackles for a lifetime of involuntary servitude.

THE ENDURING MYSTERY OF THE ANASAZI

Time-worn pueblos and dramatic cliff towns, set amid the stark, rugged mesas and canyons of Colorado and New Mexico, mark the settlements of some of the earliest inhabitants of North America, the Anasazi (a Navajo word meaning “ancient ones”).

By 500 A.D. the Anasazi had established some of the first villages in the American Southwest, where they hunted and grew crops of corn, squash, and beans. The Anasazi flourished over the centuries, developing sophisticated dams and irrigation systems; creating a masterful, distinctive pottery tradition; and carving multiroom dwellings into the sheer sides of cliffs that remain among the most striking archaeological sites in the United States today.

Yet by the year 1300, they had abandoned their settlements, leaving their pottery, implements, even clothing — as though they intended to return — and seemingly vanished into history. Their homeland remained empty of human beings for more than a century — until the arrival of new tribes, such as the Navajo and the Ute, followed by the Spanish and other European settlers.

The story of the Anasazi is tied inextricably to the beautiful but harsh environment in which they chose to live. Early settlements, consisting of simple pithouses scooped out of the ground, evolved into sunken kivas (underground rooms) that served as meeting and religious sites. Later generations developed the masonry techniques for building square, stone pueblos. But the most dramatic change in Anasazi living was the move to the cliff sides below the flat-topped mesas, where the Anasazi carved their amazing, multilevel dwellings.

The Anasazi lived in a communal society. They traded with other peoples in the region, but signs of warfare are few and isolated. And although the Anasazi certainly had religious and other leaders, as well as skilled artisans, social or class distinctions were virtually nonexistent.

Religious and social motives undoubtedly played a part in the building of the cliff communities and their final abandonment. But the struggle to raise food in an increasingly difficult environment was probably the paramount factor. As populations grew, farmers planted larger

areas on the mesas, causing some communities to farm marginal lands, while others left the mesa tops for the cliffs. But the Anasazi couldn't halt the steady loss of the land's fertility from constant use, nor withstand the region's cyclical droughts. Analysis of tree rings, for example, shows that a drought lasting 23 years, from 1276 to 1299, finally forced the last groups of Anasazi to leave permanently.

Although the Anasazi dispersed from their ancestral homeland, their legacy remains in the remarkable archaeological record that they left behind, and in the Hopi, Zuni, and other Pueblo peoples who are their descendants.

CHAPTER 2: THE COLONIAL PERIOD

"What then is the American, this new man?"

American author and agriculturist J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur, 1782

NEW PEOPLES

Most settlers who came to America in the 17th century were English, but there were also Dutch, Swedes, and Germans in the middle region, a few French Huguenots in South Carolina and elsewhere, slaves from Africa, primarily in the South, and a scattering of Spaniards, Italians, and Portuguese throughout the colonies. After 1680 England ceased to be the chief source of immigration, supplanted by Scots and "Scots-Irish" (Protestants from Northern Ireland). In addition, tens of thousands of refugees fled northwestern Europe to escape war, oppression, and absentee-landlordism. By 1690 the American population had risen to a quarter of a million. From then on, it doubled every 25 years until, in 1775, it numbered more than 2.5 million. Although families occasionally moved from one colony to another, distinctions between individual colonies were marked. They were even more so among the three regional groupings of colonies.

NEW ENGLAND

The northeastern New England colonies had generally thin, stony soil, relatively little level land, and long winters, making it difficult to make a living from farming. Turning to other pursuits, the New Englanders harnessed waterpower and established grain mills and sawmills. Good stands of timber encouraged shipbuilding. Excellent harbors promoted trade, and the sea became a source of great wealth. In Massachusetts, the cod industry alone quickly furnished a basis for prosperity.

With the bulk of the early settlers living in villages and towns around the harbors, many New Englanders carried on some kind of trade or business. Common pastureland and woodlots served the needs of townspeople, who worked small farms nearby. Compactness made possible the village school, the village church, and the village or town hall, where citizens met to discuss matters of common interest.

The Massachusetts Bay Colony continued to expand its commerce. From the middle of the 17th century onward it grew prosperous, so that Boston became one of America's greatest ports.

Oak timber for ships' hulls, tall pines for spars and masts, and pitch for the seams of ships came from the Northeastern forests. Building their own vessels and sailing them to ports all over the world, the shipmasters of Massachusetts Bay laid the foundation for a trade that was to grow steadily in importance. By the end of the colonial period, one-third of all vessels under the British flag were built in New England. Fish, ship's stores, and woodenware swelled the exports. New England merchants and shippers soon discovered that rum and slaves were profitable commodities. One of

their most enterprising — if unsavory — trading practices of the time was the "triangular trade." Traders would purchase slaves off the coast of Africa for New England rum, then sell the slaves in the West Indies where they would buy molasses to bring home for sale to the local rum producers.

THE MIDDLE COLONIES

Society in the middle colonies was far more varied, cosmopolitan, and tolerant than in New England. Under William Penn, Pennsylvania functioned smoothly and grew rapidly. By 1685, its population was almost 9,000. The heart of the colony was Philadelphia, a city of broad, tree-shaded streets, substantial brick and stone houses, and busy docks. By the end of the colonial period, nearly a century later, 30,000 people lived there, representing many languages, creeds, and trades. Their talent for successful business enterprise made the city one of the thriving centers of the British Empire.

Though the Quakers dominated in Philadelphia, elsewhere in Pennsylvania others were well represented. Germans became the colony's most skillful farmers. Important, too, were cottage industries such as weaving, shoemaking, cabinetmaking, and other crafts. Pennsylvania was also the principal gateway into the New World for the Scots-Irish, who moved into the colony in the early 18th century. "Bold and indigent strangers," as one Pennsylvania official called them, they hated the English and were suspicious of all government. The Scots-Irish tended to settle in the backcountry, where they cleared land and lived by hunting and subsistence farming.

New York best illustrated the polyglot nature of America. By 1646 the population along the Hudson River included Dutch, French, Danes, Norwegians, Swedes, English, Scots, Irish, Germans, Poles, Bohemians, Portuguese, and Italians. The Dutch continued to exercise an important social and economic influence on the New York region long after the fall of New Netherland and their integration into the British colonial system. Their sharp-stepped gable roofs became a permanent part of the city's architecture, and their merchants gave Manhattan much of its original bustling, commercial atmosphere.

THE SOUTHERN COLONIES

In contrast to New England and the middle colonies, the Southern colonies were predominantly rural settlements.

By the late 17th century, Virginia's and Maryland's economic and social structure rested on the great planters and the yeoman farmers. The planters of the Tidewater region, supported by slave labor, held most of the political power and the best land. They built great houses, adopted an aristocratic way of life, and kept in touch as best they could with the world of culture overseas.

The yeoman farmers, who worked smaller tracts, sat in popular assemblies and found their way into political office. Their outspoken independence was a constant warning to the oligarchy of planters not to encroach too far upon the rights of free men.

The settlers of the Carolinas quickly learned to combine agriculture and commerce, and the marketplace became a major source of prosperity. Dense forests brought revenue: Lumber, tar, and resin from the longleaf pine provided some of the best shipbuilding materials in the world. Not bound to a single crop as was Virginia, North and South Carolina also produced and exported rice and indigo, a blue dye obtained from native plants that was used in coloring fabric. By 1750 more than 100,000 people lived in the two colonies of North

and South Carolina. Charleston, South Carolina, was the region's leading port and trading center.

In the southernmost colonies, as everywhere else, population growth in the backcountry had special significance. German immigrants and Scots-Irish, unwilling to live in the original Tidewater settlements where English influence was strong, pushed inland. Those who could not secure fertile land along the coast, or who had exhausted the lands they held, found the hills farther west a bountiful refuge. Although their hardships were enormous, restless settlers kept coming; by the 1730s they were pouring into the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. Soon the interior was dotted with farms.

Living on the edge of Native American country, frontier families built cabins, cleared the wilderness, and cultivated maize and wheat. The men wore leather made from the skin of deer or sheep, known as buckskin; the women wore garments of cloth they spun at home. Their food consisted of venison, wild turkey, and fish. They had their own amusements: great barbecues, dances, housewarmings for newly married couples, shooting matches, and contests for making quilted blankets. Quilt-making remains an American tradition today.

SOCIETY, SCHOOLS, AND CULTURE

A significant factor deterring the emergence of a powerful aristocratic or gentry class in the colonies was the ability of anyone in an established colony to find a new home on the frontier. Time after time, dominant Tidewater figures were obliged to liberalize political policies, land-grant requirements, and religious practices by the threat of a mass exodus to the frontier.

Of equal significance for the future were the foundations of American education and culture established during the colonial period. Harvard College was founded in 1636 in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Near the end of the century, the College of William and Mary was established in Virginia. A few years later, the Collegiate School of Connecticut, later to become Yale University, was chartered.

Even more noteworthy was the growth of a school system maintained by governmental authority. The Puritan emphasis on reading directly from the Scriptures underscored the importance of literacy. In 1647 the Massachusetts Bay Colony enacted the "ye olde deluder Satan" Act, requiring every town having more than 50 families to establish a grammar school (a Latin school to prepare students for college). Shortly thereafter, all the other New England colonies, except for Rhode Island, followed its example.

The Pilgrims and Puritans had brought their own little libraries and continued to import books from London. And as early as the 1680s, Boston booksellers were doing a thriving business in works of classical literature, history, politics, philosophy, science, theology, and belles-lettres. In 1638 the first printing press in the English colonies and the second in North America was installed at Harvard College.

The first school in Pennsylvania was begun in 1683. It taught reading, writing, and keeping of accounts. Thereafter, in some fashion, every Quaker community provided for the elementary teaching of its children. More advanced training — in classical languages, history, and literature — was offered at the Friends Public School, which still operates in Philadelphia as the William Penn Charter School. The school was free to the poor, but parents were required to pay tuition if they were able.

In Philadelphia, numerous private schools with no religious affiliation taught languages, mathematics, and natural science; there were also night schools for adults. Women were not entirely overlooked, but their educational opportunities were limited to training in activities that could be conducted in the home. Private teachers instructed the daughters of prosperous Philadelphians in French, music, dancing, painting, singing, grammar, and sometimes bookkeeping.

In the 18th century, the intellectual and cultural development of Pennsylvania reflected, in large measure, the vigorous personalities of two men: James Logan and Benjamin Franklin. Logan was secretary of the colony, and it was in his fine library that young Franklin found the latest scientific works. In 1745 Logan erected a building for his collection and bequeathed both building and books to the city.

Franklin contributed even more to the intellectual activity of Philadelphia. He formed a debating club that became the embryo of the American Philosophical Society. His endeavors also led to the founding of a public academy that later developed into the University of Pennsylvania. He was a prime mover in the establishment of a subscription library, which he called "the mother of all North American subscription libraries."

In the Southern colonies, wealthy planters and merchants imported private tutors from Ireland or Scotland to teach their children. Some sent their children to school in England. Having these other opportunities, the upper classes in the Tidewater were not interested in supporting public education. In addition, the diffusion of farms and plantations made the formation of community schools difficult. There were only a few free schools in Virginia.

The desire for learning did not stop at the borders of established communities, however. On the frontier, the Scots-Irish, though living in primitive cabins, were firm devotees of scholarship, and they made great efforts to attract learned ministers to their settlements.

Literary production in the colonies was largely confined to New England. Here attention concentrated on religious subjects. Sermons were the most common products of the press. A famous Puritan minister, the Reverend Cotton Mather, wrote some 400 works. His masterpiece, Magnalia Christi Americana, presented the pageant of New England's history. The most popular single work of the day was the Reverend Michael Wigglesworth's long poem, "The Day of Doom," which described the Last Judgment in terrifying terms.

In 1704 Cambridge, Massachusetts, launched the colonies' first successful newspaper. By 1745 there were 22 newspapers being published in British North America.

In New York, an important step in establishing the principle of freedom of the press took place with the case of John Peter Zenger, whose New York Weekly Journal, begun in 1733, represented the opposition to the government. After two years of publication, the colonial governor could no longer tolerate Zenger's satirical barbs, and had him thrown into prison on a charge of seditious libel. Zenger continued to edit his paper from jail during his nine month trial, which excited intense interest throughout the colonies. Andrew Hamilton, the prominent lawyer who defended Zenger, argued that the charges printed by Zenger were true and hence not libelous. The jury returned a verdict of not guilty, and Zenger went free.

The increasing prosperity of the towns prompted fears that the devil was

luring society into pursuit of worldly gain and may have contributed to the religious reaction of the 1730s, known as the Great Awakening. Its two immediate sources were George Whitefield, a Wesleyan revivalist who arrived from England in 1739, and Jonathan Edwards, who served the Congregational Church in Northampton, Massachusetts.

Whitefield began a religious revival in Philadelphia and then moved on to New England. He enthralled audiences of up to 20,000 people at a time with histrionic displays, gestures, and emotional oratory. Religious turmoil swept throughout New England and the middle colonies as ministers left established churches to preach the revival.

Edwards was the most prominent of those influenced by Whitefield and the Great Awakening. His most memorable contribution was his 1741 sermon, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." Rejecting theatrics, he delivered his message in a quiet, thoughtful manner, arguing that the established churches sought to deprive Christianity of its function of redemption from sin. His magnum opus, Of Freedom of Will (1754), attempted to reconcile Calvinism with the Enlightenment.

The Great Awakening gave rise to evangelical denominations (those Christian churches that believe in personal conversion and the inerrancy of the Bible) and the spirit of revivalism, which continue to play significant roles in American religious and cultural life. It weakened the status of the established clergy and provoked believers to rely on their own conscience. Perhaps most important, it led to the proliferation of sects and denominations, which in turn encouraged general acceptance of the principle of religious toleration.

EMERGENCE OF COLONIAL GOVERNMENT

In the early phases of colonial development, a striking feature was the lack of controlling influence by the English government. All colonies except Georgia emerged as companies of shareholders, or as feudal proprietorships stemming from charters granted by the Crown. The fact that the king had transferred his immediate sovereignty over the New World settlements to stock companies and proprietors did not, of course, mean that the colonists in America were necessarily free of outside control. Under the terms of the Virginia Company charter, for example, full governmental authority was vested in the company itself. Nevertheless, the crown expected that the company would be resident in England. Inhabitants of Virginia, then, would have no more voice in their government than if the king himself had retained absolute rule.

Still, the colonies considered themselves chiefly as commonwealths or states, much like England itself, having only a loose association with the authorities in London. In one way or another, exclusive rule from the outside withered away. The colonists — inheritors of the long English tradition of the struggle for political liberty — incorporated concepts of freedom into Virginia's first charter. It provided that English colonists were to exercise all liberties, franchises, and immunities "as if they had been abiding and born within this our Realm of England." They were, then, to enjoy the benefits of the Magna Carta — the charter of English political and civil liberties granted by King John in 1215 — and the common law — the English system of law based on legal precedents or tradition, not statutory law. In 1618 the Virginia Company issued instructions to its appointed governor providing that free inhabitants of the

plantations should elect representatives to join with the governor and an appointive council in passing ordinances for the welfare of the colony.

These measures proved to be some of the most far-reaching in the entire colonial period. From then on, it was generally accepted that the colonists had a right to participate in their own government. In most instances, the king, in making future grants, provided in the charter that the freemen of the colony should have a voice in legislation affecting them. Thus, charters awarded to the Calverts in Maryland, William Penn in Pennsylvania, the proprietors in North and South Carolina, and the proprietors in New Jersey specified that legislation should be enacted with "the consent of the freemen."

In New England, for many years, there was even more complete self-government than in the other colonies. Aboard the Mayflower, the Pilgrims adopted an instrument for government called the "Mayflower Compact," to "combine ourselves together into a civil body politic for our better ordering and preservation ... and by virtue hereof [to] enact, constitute, and frame such just and equal laws, ordinances, acts, constitutions, and offices ... as shall be thought most meet and convenient for the general good of the colony...."

Although there was no legal basis for the Pilgrims to establish a system of self-government, the action was not contested, and, under the compact, the Plymouth settlers were able for many years to conduct their own affairs without outside interference.

A similar situation developed in the Massachusetts Bay Company, which had been given the right to govern itself. Thus, full authority rested in the hands of persons residing in the colony. At first, the dozen or so original members of the company who had come to America attempted to rule autocratically. But the other colonists soon demanded a voice in public affairs and indicated that refusal would lead to a mass migration.

The company members yielded, and control of the government passed to elected representatives. Subsequently, other New England colonies — such as Connecticut and Rhode Island — also succeeded in becoming self-governing simply by asserting that they were beyond any governmental authority, and then setting up their own political system modeled after that of the Pilgrims at Plymouth.