

Chapter 2- The Planting of English America

1500 - 1733

A. England's Imperial Stirrings

1. After Columbus's landfall, the Native American peoples had nearly been extinguished mostly from disease (only about 10% survived)
2. From Florida and New Mexico southward, most of the southern half of the New World lay firmly within the grip of imperial Spain
3. In 1600, North America remained mostly unexplored and unclaimed
 1. Three European powers planted three primitive outposts in three distant corners of the continent within three years of one another
 2. The Spanish at Santa Fe in 1610, the French at Quebec in 1608, and the English at Jamestown, Virginia, in 1607
4. England had taken little interest in establishing its own overseas colonies during the early 16th century because of religious conflict when King Henry VIII launched the English Protestant Reformation
 1. Catholics battled Protestants for years and balance of power shifted
 2. After the Protestant Elizabeth ascended to the English throne in 1558, Protestantism became dominant in England and a rivalry with Catholic Spain intensified (Ireland became early scene of rivalry)
5. The Catholic Irish sought help from Catholic Spain to overthrow the new Protestant English queen but the Spanish aid never really helped
6. Elizabeth's troops crushed the Irish and the English crown confiscated Catholic Irish lands and planted them with new Protestant landlords

B. Elizabeth Energizes England

1. English buccaneers sought to promote the twin goals of Protestantism and plunder by seizing Spanish treasure ships and raiding Spanish settlements, even though England and Spain were at peace (the most famous was Francis Drake who was knighted by Queen Elizabeth)
2. The coast of Newfoundland was the site of the first English attempt at colonization but collapsed when promoter Sir Humphrey Gilbert lost his life at sea in 1583—the dream inspired his gallant half brother

1. Sir Walter Raleigh organized a group of settlers who landed in 1585 on North Carolina's Roanoke Island, off the coast of Virginia, a region named by the Virgin Queen Elizabeth in honor of herself
2. With Raleigh busy at home, the Roanoke colony suddenly vanished
3. The English failures at colonization contrasted embarrassingly with the glories of the Spanish Empire, whose profits were enriching Spain beyond its ambitious dreams; Philip II of Spain, foe of the Protestant Reformation used his imperial gains to amass an Invincible Armada
 1. Preparing to invade England, in 1588, the lumbering Spanish flotilla arrived at the English Channel and using swifter, more maneuverable, and more able manned ships, they inflicted heavy damage on the cumbersome overladen Spanish ships
 2. The defeat of the Spanish Armada marked the beginning of the end of Spanish imperial dreams but the New World empire would last
4. When the Spanish Netherlands secured their independence, much of the Spanish Caribbean slipped from Spain's grasp to Holland; it was obvious that Spain had overreached itself, seeds of its own decline
5. England's victory over the Spanish Armada marked a red-letter day in American history; it dampened Spain's spirit and helped ensure England's naval dominance in the North Atlantic (master of oceans)
6. England now displayed many characteristics that Spain displayed on the eve of its colonizing adventure a century earlier
 1. A strong, unified national state under a popular monarch
 2. A measure of religious unity after a protracted struggle
 3. A vibrant sense of nationalism existing in the state
7. A flowering of the English national spirit bloomed in the wake of the Spanish Armada's defeat; a golden age of literature dawned
8. The English were seized with restlessness with curiosity about the unknown and everywhere a new spirit of self-confidence, of vibrant patriotism, and of boundless faith in the future
9. When England and Spain finally signed a treaty of peace in 1604, the English people were poised to plunge headlong into the planting of their own colonial empire in the New World

C. England on the Eve of Empire

1. England's population rose from some 3 million people in 1550 to about 4 million in 1600 and in the English countryside, landlords were "enclosing" croplands for sheep grazing, forcing many farmers to leave

2. It was no accident that the woolen districts of eastern and western England supplied many of the earliest immigrants to America
 1. The economic depression hit the woolen trade in the late 1500s and as a result, thousands of footloose farmers took to the road
 2. The farmers were unemployed and drifted about England; the remarkably mobile population alarmed many contemporaries whom concluded that England was burdened with a surplus population
3. At the same time, laws of primogeniture decreed that only eldest sons were eligible to inherit landed estates and younger sons were forced to seek their fortunes elsewhere; bad luck plagued their early enterprises
4. In the early 1600s the joint-stock company forerunner of the modern corporation was perfected and allowed a number of investors, called adventurers to pool their capital together for adventures
5. Peace with Spain provided the opportunity for English colonization; population growth provided workers, and unemployment, with a thirst for adventure, for markets, and for religious freedom, provided motives
6. Joint-stock companies provided the financial means

D. England Plants the Jamestown Seedling

1. In 1606, a joint-stock company, the Virginia Company of London, received a charter from King James I for a settlement in the New World
 1. The main attraction was the promise of gold, combined with a strong desire to find a passage through America to the Indies
 2. Like most joint-stock companies, it was intended to last for only a few years, after which its owners hoped to liquidate it for profit
 3. The arrangement put severe pressure on the colonists, who were threatened with abandonment if they did not quickly strike it rich on the company's behalf; few investors touch in terms of long-term
2. The charter of the Virginia Company is a significant document in American history because it guaranteed to the settlers the same rights of Englishmen that they would have enjoyed if they had stayed home
3. Setting sail in late 1606, the Virginia Company's three ships landed near the mouth of Chesapeake Bay, where Indians attacked them
 1. Pushing on up the bay, the colonists eventually chose a location on the banks of the James River, named in honor of King James I

2. The site was easy to defend, but mosquito-infested and severely unhealthy; on May 24, 1607, about a hundred English settlers, all of them men, landed and called the place Jamestown
4. The early years of Jamestown were not encouraging, colonists perished during voyages, expeditions were shipwrecked, and once ashore in Virginia, the settlers died from disease, malnutrition, and starvation
5. Instead of collecting food many spent time looking for nonexistent gold
6. Virginia was saved from collapse by the leadership and resourcefulness of a young adventurer, Captain John Smith who took over in 1608
 1. He whipped the gold-hungry colonists into line with the rule
 2. He had been kidnapped in December 1607 and subjected to a mock execution by the Indian chieftain Powhatan whose daughter, Pocahontas, “saved” him but the symbolism of this ritual was intended to show Smith Powhatan’s power and peaceful intentions
 3. Pocahontas became an intermediary between the Indians and the settlers helping to preserve a shaky peace and to provide supplies
7. Of the four hundred settlers who managed to make it to Virginia, by 1609, only sixty survived the “Starving time” winter of 1609-1610
8. Diseased and despairing, the colonists dragged themselves on homeward-bound ships only to be met on the James River by the relief party headed by a new governor, Lord De La Warr; he ordered the settlers back to Jamestown and imposed a harsh military regime
9. By 1625 Virginia contained only some twelve hundred survivors of the nearly 8,000 adventurers who had tried to start life anew in the colony

E. Cultural Clash in the Chesapeake

1. In 1607, the chieftain Powhatan dominated the James River area
 1. Powhatan asserted supremacy over a few dozen small tribes loosely affiliated in what came to be called Powhatan’s Confederacy
 2. The English colonists dubbed all the local Indians Powhatans
 3. Powhatan considered the English potential allies at first in extending his power over the other Indians but relations between the Indians and the English remained tense, especially as the starving colonists took to raiding Indian food supplies
2. After Lord De La Warr arrived in 1610, he carried orders from the Virginia Company that amounted to a declaration of war against the Indians in the Jamestown region (De La Warr introduced Irish tactics)

1. His troops raided Indian villages, burned houses, confiscated provisions, and torched cornfields; a peace settlement ended this First Anglo-Powhatan War in 1614 sealed by the marriage of Pocahontas to the colonist John Rolfe—the first interracial union
 2. A fragile peace followed, which endured eight years but the Indians pressed by the whites and ravaged by European diseases, stuck back
 3. In 1622, a series of Indian attacks left 347 settlers dead, including John Rolfe and in response the Virginia Company issued new orders calling for a perpetual war without peace or truce
 4. In the Second Anglo-Powhatan War in 1644, the Indians were once again defeated and the peace treaty of 1646 banished the Chesapeake Indians from their ancestral lands and separated lands
 5. By 1669 an official census revealed that only about two thousand Indian remained in Virginia (about 10 percent of original settlers) and by 1685, the English considered the Powhatan peoples extinct
3. It had been the Powhatan people's tragic misfortune to fall victim to the three Ds: disease, disorganization, and disposability
 1. The native peoples were extremely susceptible to European-imported maladies (epidemics of smallpox and measles spread)
 2. The Powhatans lacked the unity to make effective opposition to the relatively well-organized and militarily disciplined whites
 3. The Powhatans served no economic function for the Virginia colonists; they provided no reliable labor source and had no valuable commodities to offer in commerce (agriculture)
 4. The Indians presence frustrated the colonists' desire for a local commodity the Europeans desperately wanted: land

F. Virginia: Child of Tobacco

1. John Rolfe became father of the tobacco industry and an economic savior of the Virginia colony; by 1616 he had perfected methods of raising and curing the pungent weed, eliminating much bitter taste
2. Soon the European demand for tobacco was nearly insatiable
 1. A tobacco rush swept Virginia as colonists who had once hungered for food now hungered for land on which to plant more tobacco
 2. Relentlessly they pressed the frontier of settlement up the river valleys to the west, further crowding the Indians
3. Virginia's prosperity was finally built on tobacco smoke

1. This weed played a vital role in putting the colony on firm foundations and in setting an example for other successful experiments
2. “King Nicotine” was ruinous to the soil when greedily planted in successive years and it enchaind the prosperity of Virginia to the fluctuating price of a single crop; tobacco also promoted broad-acred plantation system and with it a brisk demand for fresh labor
4. In 1619, a Dutch warship appeared off Jamestown and sold some twenty black Africans but blacks were too costly for most of the white colonists to acquire and for decades, few were brought to Virginia
5. In 1650 Virginia counted three hundred blacks; by 1700, blacks, most of them enslaved, made up approximately 14 percent of the population
6. Representative self-government was also born in primitive Virginia, the same cradle with slavery and in the same year—1619
 1. The London Company authorized the settlers to summon an assembly known as the House of Burgesses; this assemblage was the first of many miniature parliaments to begin in America
 2. James I grew increasingly hostile to Virginia because he detested tobacco and he distrusted the representative House of Burgesses
 3. In 1624, he revoked the charter of the bankrupt and beleaguered Virginia Company, thus making Virginia a royal colony under him

G. Maryland: Catholic Haven

1. Maryland, the second plantation but fourth English colony was founded in 1634 by Lord Baltimore, of a prominent English Catholic family; at this time, Protestant England was still persecuting Roman Catholics
2. Absentee proprietor Lord Baltimore hoped that the two hundred settlers who founded Maryland at St. Marys would be the front line of a vast new feudal domain; huge estates were to be awarded to his relatives
 1. The haughty land barons, mostly Catholic, were surrounded by resentful country planters (people were willing to come for land)
 2. Resentment flared into open rebellion near the end of the century, and the Baltimore family for a time lost its proprietary rights
3. Maryland prospered despite these tensions and like Virginia, it blossomed forth in acres of tobacco and also like Virginia, it depended for labor on white indentured servants; penniless persons who bound themselves to work for a number of years to pay their passage

4. In both colonies it was only in the later years of the seventeenth century that black slaves began to be imported in large numbers to the colonies
5. Lord Baltimore permitted unusual freedom of worship at the outset
 1. The heavy tide of Protestants threatened to submerge the Catholics and place severe restrictions on them, as what happened in England
 2. The Catholics of Maryland threw their support behind the famed Act of Toleration, which was passed in 1649 by the local representative assembly; it guaranteed toleration to all Christians
 3. But, it decreed the death penalty for those who denied the divinity of Jesus; the law thus sanctioned less toleration than previously
 4. One result was that when the colonial era ended, Maryland probably sheltered more Roman Catholics than any other English speaking colony in the New World

H. The West Indies: Way Station to Mainland America

1. Spain, weakened by military overextensions and distracted by its rebellious Dutch provinces, relaxed its grip on much of the Caribbean in the early 1600s; by the mid-seventeenth century, England had claimed several West Indian islands, including Jamaica in 1655
2. Sugar formed the foundation of the West Indian economy
 1. Tobacco was a poor man's crop because it could be planted easily, it produced commercially marketable leaves within a year, and required only simple processing; sugarcane was a rich man's crop
 2. Sugarcane had to be planted extensively to yield commercially viable quantities of sugar; extensive planting required extensive and arduous land clearing and canestalks yielded sugar only after an elaborate process of refining in sugar mill (capital-intense business)
3. The sugar lords extended their dominion over the West Indies
 1. To work their sprawling plantations, they imported enormous numbers of African slaves (more than a quarter million in 50 years)
 2. By 1700, black slaves outnumbered white settlers in the English West Indies by nearly four to one—West Indians were among the children of the African Diaspora, the vast scattering of African people throughout the New World follow Columbus's discovery
4. To control this large population of slaves, English authorities devised formal "codes" that defined the slaves' legal status and masters' rights; the Barbados slave code of 1661 denied even the most fundamental rights to slaves and gave masters virtually complete control over them, including the right to inflict vicious punishments for slight infractions

5. The sugar-plantation system soon crowded out Caribbean agriculture
 1. The West Indies increasingly depended on the North American mainland for foodstuffs and other basic supplies
 2. Smaller English farmers began to migrate to the newly founded southern mainland colonies; a group of displaced English settlers from Barbados arrived in Carolina in 1670 and brought the slave code with them, which inspired statutes governing slavery
 3. The mainland colonies would soon take up this slave code and in 1696, Carolina officially adopted a version of the Barbados code

I. Colonizing the Carolinas

1. Civil wars convulsed England in the 1640s as the King Charles I dismissed Parliament in 1629, Oliver Cromwell had Charles beheaded in 1649 and after Cromwell had ruled England for nearly a decade, Charles II, son of the king, was restored to the throne in 1660
2. Colonization had been interrupted during this period of bloody unrest and now in the Restoration period, empire building resumed
 1. Carolina, named in honor of the restored king, was formally created in 1670, after Charles II granted to eight of his court favorites, the Lords Proprietors, an expanse of wilderness ribboning across the continent to the Pacific; they hoped to grow food for Barbados and to export non-English products like wine, silk, and olive oil
 2. Carolina prospered by developing close economic ties with the flourishing sugar islands of the English West Indies; many Carolina settlers had emigrated from Barbados and established a slave trade
 3. Enlisting the aid of the coastal Savannah Indians, they ventured in search of captives; although the Lords Proprietors protested, manacled Indians soon were among the young colony's major exports (as many as ten thousand Indians were dispatched)
3. In 1707 the Savannah Indian decided to end their alliance with the Carolinians and to migrate to the backcountry of Maryland and Pennsylvania, where a new colony founded by Quakers under William Penn promised better relations between whites and Indians
4. After a series of bloody raids, by 1710 the Indian tribes of coastal Carolina were all but extinct after the Carolinians turned against them
5. After much experimentation, rice emerged as the principal export crop in Carolina; rice was then an exotic food in England, but rice was grown in Africa and the Carolinians were paying premium prices for West African slaves experienced in rice cultivation
 1. The Africans' agricultural skill and relative immunity to malaria made them ideal laborers on the hot and swampy rice plantations
 2. By 1710 they constituted a majority of Carolinians

6. Charlestown rapidly became the busiest seaport in the South; many high-spirited sons of English landed families came to the Charleston area and gave it a rich aristocratic flavor (diverse community, to which French Protestant refugees were attracted by religious toleration)
7. In Florida, the Catholic Spaniards bitterly resented the intrusion of these Protestant heretics and Carolina's frontier was often aflame of Spanish-incited Indians and armor-clad warriors of Spain brandished their weapons during the successive Anglo-Spanish wars

J. The Emergence of North Carolina

1. The wild northern expanse of the huge Carolina grant bordered on Virginia where a group of outcasts and religious dissenters drifted
 1. Many of them had been repelled by the rarefied atmosphere of Virginia dominated as it was by big-plantation aristocrats belonging to the Church of England (quintessence of Virginia's discontent)
 2. The newcomers, "squatters" without legal right to the soil, raised their tobacco and other crops on small farms, without slaves
2. Distinctive traits developed rapidly in North Carolina
 1. The poor but sturdy inhabitants earned a reputation for being irreligious and hospitable to pirates; isolated from neighbors by raw wilderness and Cape Hatteras, "graveyard of Atlantic," the North Carolinians developed a strong spirit of resistance to authority
 2. Following much friction with governors, North Carolina was officially separated from South Carolina in 1712 (royal colonies)
3. North Carolina shares with Rhode Island several distinctions; these two outposts were the most democratic, the most independent-minded, and the least aristocratic of the original thirteen English colonies
4. Although northern Carolina did not at first import large numbers of African slaves, both regions shared in the ongoing tragedy of bloody relations between Indians and Europeans
 1. The North Carolinians aided by the south, retaliated by crushing the Tuscaroras in battle in 1711 after they fell upon Newbern, selling hundreds into slavery and leaving the survivors to wander northward to seek the protection of the Iroquois natives
 2. The Tuscaroras became Sixth Nation of the Iroquois Confederacy
 3. In another encounter four years later, the South Carolinians defeated and scattered the Yamasee Indians; virtually all the coastal Indian tribes in the South had been utterly devastated by about 1720

5. But in the interior of the Appalachian Mountains, the powerful Cherokees, Creeks, and Iroquois remained; stronger and more numerous, they managed for 50 years more to contain British settlement to the coastal plain east of the mountains

K. Late-Coming Georgia: The Buffer Colony

1. Georgia, with the harbor of Savannah nourishing its chief settlement, was formally founded in 1733 (it long after most of the other colonies)
2. Georgia was valued by the English crown chiefly as a buffer
 1. It would serve to protect the more valuable Carolinas from vengeful Spaniards from Florida and by the hostile French from Louisiana
 2. Georgia suffered much buffeting, especially when wars broke out between Spain and England; a vital link in imperial defense, the exposed colony received monetary subsidies from the British government at the outset (the only one of the original thirteen)
3. Named in honor of George II of England, Georgia was launched by a high-minded group of philanthropists; aside from producing silk and wine and strengthening the empire, they were determined to create a haven for wretched souls imprisoned for debt
4. The ablest of the founders was the dynamic James Oglethorpe, who was interested in prison reform, as the leader, repelled Spanish attacks; as an imperialist and a philanthropist, he saved "the Charity Colony" by his energetic leadership and by heavily mortgaging his personal fortune
5. The hamlet of Savannah was a melting pot community; German Lutherans and Scots Highlanders added color to the pattern
6. All Christian worshipers except Catholics enjoyed religious toleration (many Bible-toting missionaries arrived in Savannah to work among debtors and Indians, including John Wesley of the later Methodists)
7. Georgia grew with painful slowness and at the end of the colonial era was perhaps the least populous of the colonies; prosperity through a large plantation economy was thwarted by an unhealthy climate, by early restrictions on black slavery, and by demoralizing Spanish attacks

L. The Plantation Colonies

1. Certain distinctive features were shared by England's southern mainland colonies: Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia
 1. Board-acred, this outposts were dominated by a plantation economy
 2. Profitable staple crops were the rule, notably tobacco and rice

3. Slavery was found in all the plantation colonies, though only after 1750 in reform-minded Georgia (strong aristocratic atmosphere was wide, except in North Carolina and to some extent in Georgia)
 4. The wide scattering of plantations and farms, made the establishment of churches and schools both difficult and expensive
 5. All the plantation colonies permitted some religious toleration; the tax-supported Church of England became the dominant faith though weakest of all in nonconformist North Carolina
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2. The colonies were in some degree expansionary; “soil butchery” by excessive tobacco growing drove settlers westward and the long, lazy rivers invited penetration of the continent—and the continuing confrontation with Native Americans