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The British Atlantic World 1660–1750

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For two weeks in June 1744, the town of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, hosted more than 250 Iroquois men, women, and children for a diplomatic conference with representatives from Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia. Crowds of curious observers thronged Lancaster's streets and courthouse. The conference grew out of a diplomatic system between the colonies and the Iroquois designed to air grievances and resolve conflict: the Covenant Chain. Participants welcomed each other, exchanged speeches, and negotiated agreements in public ceremonies whose minutes became part of the official record of the colonies.

At Lancaster, the colonies had much to ask of their Iroquois allies. For one thing, they wanted them to confirm a land agreement. The Iroquois often began such conferences by resisting land deals; as the Cayuga orator Gachradodon said, "You know very well, when the White people came first here they were poor; but now they have got our Lands, and are by them become rich, and we are now poor; what little we have had for the Land goes soon away, but the Land lasts forever." In the end, however, they had little choice but to accept merchandise in exchange for land, since colonial officials were unwilling to take no for an answer. The colonists also announced that Britain was once again going to war with France, and they requested military support from their Iroquois allies. Canassatego—a tall, commanding Onondaga orator, about sixty years old, renowned for his eloquence—replied, "We shall never forget that you and we have but one Heart, one Head, one Eye, one Ear, and one Hand. We shall have all your Country under our Eye, and take all the Care we can to prevent any Enemy from coming into it."



To see a longer excerpt of the Canassatego document, along with other primary sources from this period, see *Sources for America's History*.

The Lancaster conference—and dozens of others like it that occurred between 1660 and 1750—demonstrates that the British colonies, like those of France and Spain, relied ever more heavily on alliances with Native Americans as they sought to extend their power in North America. Indian nations remade themselves in these same years, creating political structures—called "tribes" by Europeans—that allowed them to regroup in the face of population decline and function more effectively alongside neighboring colonies. The colonies, meanwhile, were drawn together into an integrated economic sphere—the South Atlantic System—that brought prosperity to British North America, while they achieved a measure of political autonomy that became essential to their understanding of what it meant to be British subjects.

IDENTIFY THE BIG IDEA

How did the South Atlantic System create an interconnected Atlantic World, and how did this system impact development in the British colonies?



English Tobacco Label, c. 1700 This label, which was used to advertise Virginia tobacco to London consumers, illustrates the growth of plantation economies in North America. Three well-to-do planters, bewigged and dressed in fashionable, colorful coats, take their ease with pipes of tobacco and glasses of liquor while slaves labor for them in the fields. The product's name—London's Virginia—highlights the relationship between production on colonial plantations and consumption in the English metropolis. The Granger Collection, New York.

Colonies to Empire, 1660–1713

Before 1660, England governed its New England and Chesapeake colonies haphazardly. Taking advantage of that laxness and the English civil war, local “big men” (Puritan magistrates and tobacco planters) ran their societies as they wished. Following the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, royal bureaucrats tried to impose order on the unruly settlements and, enlisting the aid of Indian allies, warred with rival European powers.

The Restoration Colonies and Imperial Expansion

Charles II (r. 1660–1685) expanded English power in Asia and America. In 1662, he married the Portuguese princess Catherine of Braganza, whose dowry included the islands of Bombay (present-day Mumbai). Then, in 1663, Charles initiated new outposts in America by authorizing eight loyal noblemen to settle Carolina, an area that had long been claimed by Spain and populated by thousands of Indians. The following year, he awarded the just-conquered Dutch colony of New Netherland to his brother James, the Duke of York, who renamed the colony New York and then re-granted a portion of it, called New Jersey, to another group of proprietors. Finally, in 1681, Charles granted a vast tract to William Penn: Pennsylvania, or “Penn’s Woods.” In a great land grab, England had ousted the Dutch from North America, intruded into Spain’s northern empire, and claimed all the land in between.

The Carolinas In 1660, English settlement was concentrated in New England and the Chesapeake. Five corporate colonies coexisted in New England: Massachusetts Bay, Plymouth, Connecticut, New Haven, and Rhode Island. (Connecticut absorbed New Haven in 1662, while Massachusetts Bay became a royal colony and absorbed Plymouth in 1692.) In the Chesapeake, Virginia was controlled by the crown while Maryland was in the hands of a Lord Proprietor. Like Lord Baltimore’s Maryland, the new settlements in Carolina, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania—the Restoration Colonies, as historians call them—were **proprietorships**: the Carolina and Jersey grantees, the Duke of York, and William Penn owned all the land in their new colonies and could rule them as they wished, provided that their laws conformed broadly to those of England (Table 3.1). Indeed, in New York, James II refused to allow an elective assembly and ruled by decree. The Carolina proprietors envisioned a

traditional European society; there the Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina (1669) legally established the Church of England and prescribed a manorial system, with a mass of serfs governed by a handful of powerful nobles.

The manorial system proved a fantasy. The first North Carolina settlers were a mixture of poor families and runaway servants from Virginia and English Quakers, an equality-minded Protestant sect (also known as the Society of Friends). Quakers “think there is no difference between a Gentleman and a labourer,” complained an Anglican clergyman. Refusing to work on large manors, the settlers raised corn, hogs, and tobacco on modest family farms. Inspired by Bacon’s Rebellion, they rebelled in 1677 against taxes on tobacco and again in 1708 against taxes to support the Anglican Church. Through their stubborn independence, residents forced the proprietors to abandon their dreams of a feudal society.

In South Carolina, the colonists also went their own way. The leading white settlers there were migrants from overcrowded Barbados. Hoping to re-create that island’s hierarchical slave society, they used enslaved workers—both Africans and Native Americans—to raise cattle and food crops for export to the West Indies. Carolina merchants opened a lucrative trade in deer-skins and Indian slaves with neighboring peoples. Then, around 1700, South Carolina planters hit upon rice cultivation. The swampy estuaries of the coastal low country could be modified with sluices, floodgates, and check dams to create ideal rice-growing conditions, and slaves could do the backbreaking work. By 1708, white Carolinians relied upon a few thousand slaves to work their coastal plantations; thereafter, the African population exploded. Blacks outnumbered whites by 1710 and constituted two-thirds of the population by 1740.

William Penn and Pennsylvania In contrast to the Carolinas, which languished for decades with proprietors and colonists at odds, William Penn’s colony was marked by unity of purpose: all who came hoped to create a prosperous neo-European settlement that approximated the social and economic systems they knew at home. In 1681, Charles II bestowed Pennsylvania (which included present-day Delaware) on William Penn as payment for a large debt owed to Penn’s father. The younger Penn, though born to wealth—he owned substantial estates in Ireland and England and lived lavishly—joined the **Quakers**, who condemned extravagance. Penn designed Pennsylvania as a refuge for his fellow Quakers, who were persecuted in England because they refused to serve in the military or pay taxes to support the Church of England. Penn

TABLE 3.1

English Colonies Established in North America, 1660–1750

| Colony | Date | Original Colony Type | Religion | Status in 1775 | Chief Export/ Economic Activity |
|--|------|----------------------|-------------------|----------------|--|
| Carolina | 1663 | Proprietary | Church of England | Royal | |
| North | 1691 | | | | Farming, naval stores |
| South | 1691 | | | | Rice, indigo |
| New Jersey | 1664 | Proprietary | Church of England | Royal | Wheat |
| New York | 1664 | Proprietary | Church of England | Royal | Wheat |
| Pennsylvania | 1681 | Proprietary | Quaker | Proprietary | Wheat |
| Georgia | 1732 | Trustees | Church of England | Royal | Rice |
| New Hampshire (separated from Massachusetts) | 1741 | Royal | Congregationalist | Royal | Mixed farming, lumber, naval stores |
| Nova Scotia | 1749 | Royal | Church of England | Royal | Fishing, mixed farming, naval stores |

himself had spent more than two years in jail in England for preaching his beliefs.

Like the Puritans, the Quakers sought to restore Christianity to its early simple spirituality. But they rejected the Puritans' pessimistic Calvinist doctrines, which restricted salvation to a small elect. The Quakers followed the teachings of two English visionaries, George Fox and Margaret Fell, who argued that God had imbued all men—and women—with an “inner light” of grace or understanding. Reflecting the sect's emphasis on gender equality, 350 Quaker women would serve as ministers in the colonies.

Mindful of the catastrophic history of Indian relations in the Chesapeake and New England, Penn exhorted colonists to “sit downe Lovingly” alongside the Native American inhabitants of the Delaware and Susquehanna valleys. He wrote a letter to the leaders of the Iroquois Confederacy alerting them to his intention to settle a colony, and in 1682 he arranged a public treaty with the Delaware Indians to purchase the lands that Philadelphia and the surrounding settlements would soon occupy.

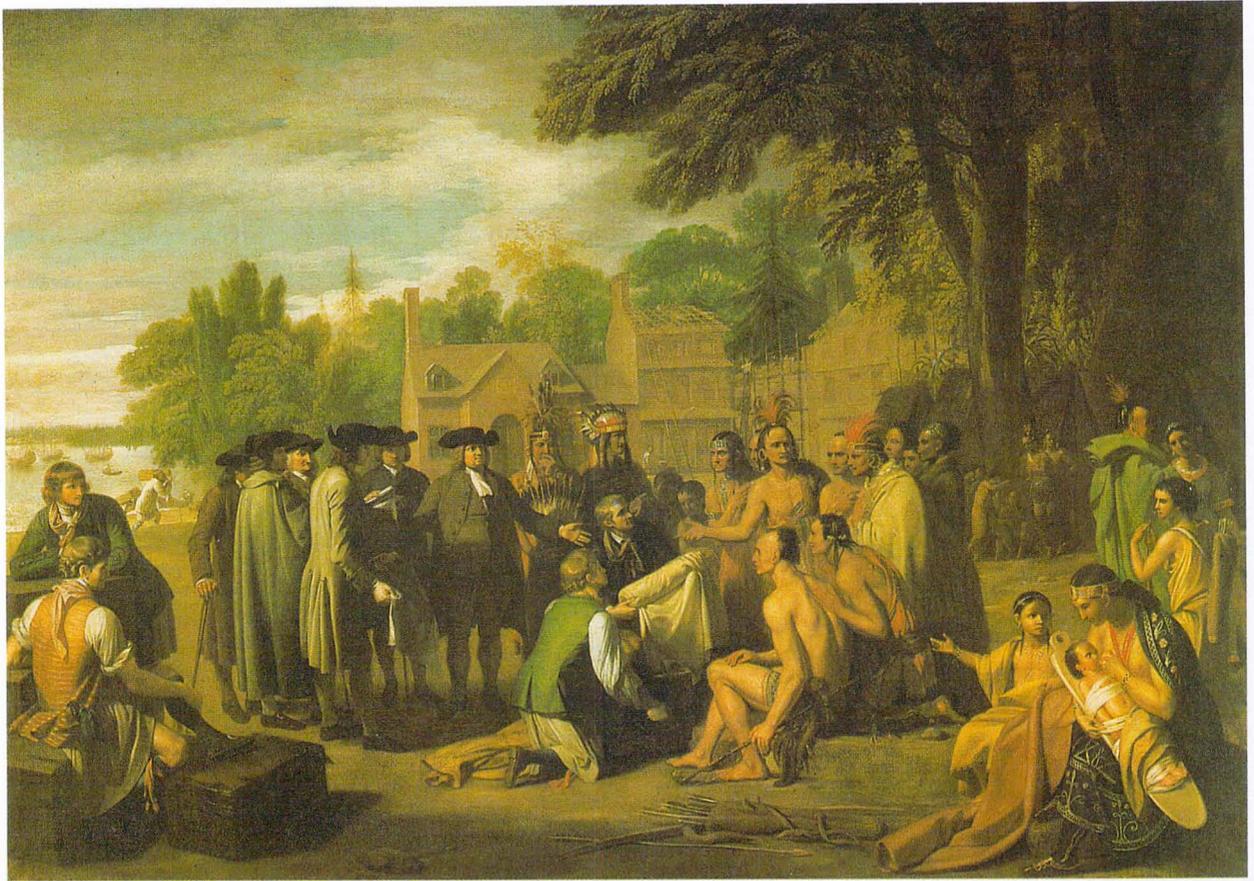
Penn's Frame of Government (1681) applied the Quakers' radical beliefs to politics. It ensured religious freedom by prohibiting a legally established church, and it promoted political equality by allowing all property-owning men to vote and hold office.

Cheered by these provisions, thousands of Quakers, mostly yeoman families from the northwest Midland region of England, flocked to Pennsylvania. To attract European Protestants, Penn published pamphlets in Germany promising cheap land and religious toleration. In 1683, migrants from Saxony founded Germantown (just outside Philadelphia), and thousands of other Germans soon followed. Ethnic diversity, pacifism, and freedom of conscience made Pennsylvania the most open and democratic of the Restoration Colonies.

From Mercantilism to Imperial Dominion

As Charles II distributed American land, his ministers devised policies to keep colonial trade in English hands. Since the 1560s, the English crown had pursued mercantilist policies, using government subsidies and charters to stimulate English manufacturing and foreign trade. Now it extended these mercantilist strategies to the American settlements through the **Navigation Acts** (Table 3.2).

The Navigation Acts Believing they had to control trade with the colonies to reap their economic benefits, English ministers wanted agricultural goods and raw materials to be carried to English ports in English



William Penn's Treaty with the Indians, 1771

Benjamin West executed this famous picture of William Penn's 1683 meeting with the Lenni-Lenapes, who called themselves the Common People. A Quaker pacifist, Penn refused to seize Indian lands by force and negotiated their purchase. But his son, Thomas Penn, probably had a political purpose when he commissioned the painting in 1771. By evoking a peaceful past, West's work reinforced the Penn family's proprietary claims, which were under strong attack by the Pennsylvania assembly. Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, USA / The Bridgeman Art Library.

vessels. In reality, Dutch and French shippers were often buying sugar and other colonial products from English colonies and carrying them directly into foreign markets. To counter this practice, the Navigation Act of 1651 required that goods be carried on ships owned by English or colonial merchants. New parliamentary acts in 1660 and 1663 strengthened the ban on foreign traders: colonists could export sugar and tobacco only to England and import European goods only through England; moreover, three-quarters of

the crew on English vessels had to be English. To pay the customs officials who enforced these laws, the Revenue Act of 1673 imposed a "plantation duty" on American exports of sugar and tobacco.

The English government backed these policies with military force. In three wars between 1652 and 1674, the English navy drove the Dutch from New Netherland and contested Holland's control of the Atlantic slave trade by attacking Dutch forts and ships along the West African coast. Meanwhile, English merchants expanded their fleets, which increased in capacity from 150,000 tons in 1640 to 340,000 tons in 1690. This growth occurred on both sides of the Atlantic; by 1702, only London and Bristol had more ships registered in port than did the town of Boston.

Though colonial ports benefitted from the growth of English shipping, many colonists violated the Navigation Acts. Planters continued to trade with Dutch shippers, and New England merchants imported sugar and molasses from the French West Indies. The Massachusetts Bay assembly boldly declared: "The laws of

PLACE EVENTS IN CONTEXT

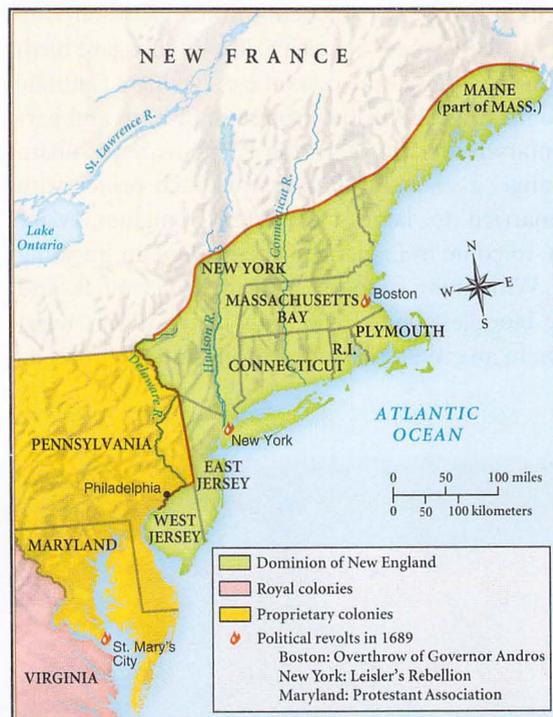
How did the ambitions of Charles II and James II remake English North America?

TABLE 3.2

| Navigation Acts, 1651–1751 | | |
|----------------------------|---|----------------------|
| | Purpose | Compliance |
| Act of 1651 | Cut Dutch trade | Mostly ignored |
| Act of 1660 | Ban foreign shipping; enumerate goods that go only to England | Partially obeyed |
| Act of 1663 | Allow European imports only through England | Partially obeyed |
| Staple Act (1673) | Ensure enumerated goods go only to England | Mostly obeyed |
| Act of 1696 | Prevent frauds; create vice-admiralty courts | Mostly obeyed |
| Woolen Act (1699) | Prevent export or intercolonial sale of textiles | Partially obeyed |
| Hat Act (1732) | Prevent export or intercolonial sale of hats | Partially obeyed |
| Molasses Act (1733) | Cut American imports of molasses from French West Indies | Extensively violated |
| Iron Act (1750) | Prevent manufacture of finished iron products | Extensively violated |
| Currency Act (1751) | End use of paper currency as legal tender in New England | Mostly obeyed |

England are bounded within the seas [surrounding it] and do not reach America.” Outraged by this insolence, customs official Edward Randolph called for troops to “reduce Massachusetts to obedience.” Instead, the Lords of Trade—the administrative body charged with colonial affairs—chose a less violent, but no less confrontational, strategy. In 1679, it denied the claim of Massachusetts Bay to New Hampshire and eventually established a separate royal colony there. Then, in 1684, the Lords of Trade persuaded an English court to annul the Massachusetts Bay charter by charging the Puritan government with violating the Navigation Acts and virtually outlawing the Church of England.

The Dominion of New England The Puritans’ troubles had only begun, thanks to the accession of King James II (r. 1685–1688), an aggressive and inflexible ruler. During the reign of Oliver Cromwell, James had grown up in exile in France, and he admired its authoritarian king, Louis XIV. James wanted stricter control over the colonies and targeted New England for his reforms. In 1686, the Lords of Trade revoked the charters of Connecticut and Rhode Island and merged them with Massachusetts Bay and Plymouth to form a new royal province, the **Dominion of New England**. As governor of the Dominion, James II appointed Sir Edmund Andros, a hard-edged former military officer. Two years later, James II added New York and New Jersey to the Dominion, creating a vast colony that stretched from Maine to Pennsylvania (Map 3.1).



MAP 3.1

The Dominion of New England, 1686–1689

In the Dominion, James II created a vast royal colony that stretched nearly 500 miles along the Atlantic coast. During the Glorious Revolution in England, politicians and ministers in Boston and New York City led revolts that ousted Dominion officials and repudiated their authority. King William and Queen Mary replaced the Dominion with governments that balanced the power held by imperial authorities and local political institutions.

The Dominion extended to America the authoritarian model of colonial rule that the English government had imposed on Catholic Ireland. James II ordered Governor Andros to abolish the existing legislative assemblies. In Massachusetts, Andros banned town meetings, angering villagers who prized local self-rule, and advocated public worship in the Church of England, offending Puritan Congregationalists. Even worse, from the colonists' perspective, the governor invalidated all land titles granted under the original Massachusetts Bay charter. Andros offered to provide new deeds, but only if the colonists would pay an annual fee.

The Glorious Revolution in England and America

Fortunately for the colonists, James II angered English political leaders as much as Andros alienated colonists. The king revoked the charters of English towns, rejected the advice of Parliament, and aroused popular opposition by openly practicing Roman Catholicism. Then, in 1688, James's Spanish Catholic wife gave birth to a son. To forestall the outcome of having a Catholic heir to the English throne, Protestant bishops and parliamentary leaders in the Whig Party invited William of Orange, a staunchly Protestant Dutch prince who was married to James's Protestant daughter, Mary Stuart, to come to England at the head of an invading army. With their support, William led a quick and nearly bloodless coup, and King James II was overthrown in an event dubbed the **Glorious Revolution** by

its supporters. Whig politicians forced King William and Queen Mary to accept the Declaration of Rights, creating a constitutional monarchy that enhanced the powers of the House of Commons at the expense of the crown. The Whigs wanted political power, especially the power to levy taxes, to reside in the hands of the gentry, merchants, and other substantial property owners.

To justify their coup, the members of Parliament relied on political philosopher John Locke. In his *Two Treatises on Government* (1690), Locke rejected the divine-right monarchy celebrated by James II, arguing that the legitimacy of government rests on the consent of the governed and that individuals have inalienable natural rights to life, liberty, and property. Locke's celebration of individual rights and representative government had a lasting influence in America, where many political leaders wanted to expand the powers of the colonial assemblies.

Rebellions in America The Glorious Revolution sparked rebellions by Protestant colonists in Massachusetts, Maryland, and New York. When news of the coup reached Boston in April 1689, Puritan leaders and 2,000 militiamen seized Governor Andros and shipped him back to England. Heeding American complaints of authoritarian rule, the new monarchs broke up the Dominion of New England. However, they refused to restore the old Puritan-dominated government of Massachusetts Bay, instead creating in 1692 a new royal colony (which included Plymouth and Maine). The new charter empowered the king to



The Leviathan Absolutist State

This detail from the title-page engraving of Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan* (1651) conveys Hobbes's belief that peace and security required submission to a powerful sovereign. In this image, a giant king looms over his domain, his staff and sword symbolizing his civil and religious powers. He is the head of a body made up of the multitudes of his faceless and voiceless subjects, as they carry out his commands. What Hobbes celebrated, a majority of English politicians and people rejected. Fearing the claims of absolute power by Stuart kings, they revolted twice, executing Charles I in 1649 and deposing James II in 1688. Title page from the first edition of Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan*, published in 1651.

appoint the governor and customs officials, gave the vote to all male property owners (not just Puritan church members), and eliminated Puritan restrictions on the Church of England.

In Maryland, the uprising had economic as well as religious causes. Since 1660, falling tobacco prices had hurt poorer farmers, who were overwhelmingly Protestant, while taxes and fees paid to mostly Catholic proprietary officials continued to rise. When Parliament ousted James II, a Protestant association mustered 700 men and forcibly removed the Catholic governor. The Lords of Trade supported this Protestant initiative: they suspended Lord Baltimore's proprietorship, imposed royal government, and made the Church of England the legal religion in the colony. This arrangement lasted until 1715, when Benedict Calvert, the fourth Lord Baltimore, converted to the Anglican faith and the king restored the proprietorship to the Calvert family.

In New York, a Dutchman named Jacob Leisler led the rebellion against the Dominion of New England.

Initially he enjoyed broad support, but he soon alienated many English-speaking New Yorkers and well-to-do Dutch residents. Leisler's heavy-handed tactics made him vulnerable; when William and Mary appointed Henry Sloughter as governor in 1691, Leisler was indicted for treason, hanged, and decapitated—an act of ethnic vengeance that corrupted New York politics for a generation.

The Glorious Revolution of 1688–1689 began a new era in the politics of both England and its American colonies. In England, William and Mary ruled as **constitutional monarchs**; overseas, they promoted an empire based on commerce. They accepted the overthrow of James's disastrous Dominion of New England and allowed Massachusetts (under its new charter) and New York to resume self-government. In 1696, Parliament created a new body, the Board of Trade, to oversee

EXPLAIN CONSEQUENCES

How did the Glorious Revolution affect relations between England and its colonies?

King William III and Mary II

Rejecting Hobbes's vision of Leviathan and James II's attempts to impose absolutism, a group of England's most powerful politicians invited William of Orange—a prince of the Dutch Republic—to invade England, depose James II, and occupy the throne jointly with his wife Mary. William's army quickly overthrew James in the so-called Glorious Revolution of 1688, an event that reverberated across the Atlantic in rebellions in Massachusetts, Maryland, and New York. This portrait, from the Guild Book of the Barber Surgeons of York, was probably painted to celebrate the coronation of William and Mary in 1689.

HIP/Art Resource, NY.



colonial affairs. While the Board of Trade continued to pursue the mercantilist policies that made the colonies economically beneficial, otherwise it permitted local elites to maintain a strong hand in colonial affairs. As England plunged into a new era of European warfare, its leaders had little choice but to allow its colonies substantial autonomy.

Imperial Wars and Native Peoples

The price that England paid for bringing William of Orange to the throne was a new commitment to warfare on the continent. England wanted William because of his unambiguous Protestant commitments; William wanted England because of the resources it could bring to bear in European wars. Beginning with the War of the League of Augsburg in 1689, England embarked on an era sometimes called the **Second Hundred Years' War**, which lasted until the defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo in 1815. In that time, England (Britain after 1707) fought in seven major wars; the longest era of peace lasted only twenty-six years (Table 3.3).

Imperial wars transformed North America. Prior to 1689, American affairs were distant from those of Europe, but the recurrent wars of the eighteenth century spilled over repeatedly into the colonies. Governments were forced to arm themselves and create new

alliances with neighboring Native Americans, who tried to turn the fighting to their own advantage. Although war brought money to the American colonies in the form of war contracts, it also placed new demands on colonial governments to support the increasingly militant British Empire. To win wars in Western Europe, the Caribbean, and far-flung oceans, British leaders created a powerful central state that spent three-quarters of its revenue on military and naval expenses.

Tribalization

For Native Americans, the rise of war intersected with a process scholars have called **tribalization**: the adaptation of stateless peoples to the demands imposed on them by neighboring states. In North America, tribalization occurred in catastrophic circumstances. Eurasian diseases rapidly killed off broad swaths of native communities, disproportionately victimizing the old and the very young. In oral cultures, old people were irreplaceable repositories of knowledge, while the young were quite literally the future. With populations in free fall, many polities disappeared altogether. By the eighteenth century, the groups that survived had all been transformed. Many were polyglot peoples: Some new tribes, like the Catawbas, had not existed before and were pieced together from remnants of formerly large groups. Other nations, like the Iroquois, declined in numbers but sustained themselves by adopting many

TABLE 3.3

English Wars, 1650–1750

| War | Date | Purpose | Result |
|----------------|-----------|---|--|
| Anglo-Dutch | 1652–1654 | Control markets and African slave trade | Stalemate |
| Anglo-Dutch | 1664 | Markets; conquest | England takes New Amsterdam |
| Anglo-Dutch | 1673 | Commercial markets | England makes maritime gains |
| King William's | 1689–1697 | Maintain European balance of power | Stalemate in North America |
| Queen Anne's | 1702–1713 | Maintain European balance of power | British acquire Hudson Bay and Nova Scotia |
| Jenkins's Ear | 1739–1741 | Expand markets in Spanish America | English merchants expand influence |
| King George's | 1740–1748 | Maintain European balance of power | Capture and return of Louisbourg |

war captives. In the Carolina borderlands, a large number of Muskogean-speaking communities came together as a nation known to the British as the “Creek” Indians, so named because some of them lived on Ochese Creek. Similarly, the Cherokees, the Delawares, and other groups that were culturally linked but politically fragmented became coherent “tribes” to deal more effectively with their European neighbors.

The rise of imperial warfare exposed Native American communities to danger, but it also gave them newfound leverage. The Iroquois were radically endangered by imperial conflict: a promised English alliance failed them, and in 1693 a combined force of French soldiers, militiamen, and their Indian allies burned all three Mohawk villages to the ground. Thereafter, the Iroquois devised a strategy for playing French and English interests off against each other. In 1701, they made alliances with both empires, declaring their intention to remain neutral in future conflicts between

them. This did not mean that the Iroquois stayed on the sideline: Iroquois warriors often participated in raids during wartime, and Iroquois spokesmen met regularly with representatives of New York and New France to affirm their alliances and receive diplomatic gifts that included guns, powder, lead, clothing, and rum (from the British) or brandy (from the French). Their neutrality, paradoxically, made them more sought after as allies. For example, their alliance with New York, known as the **Covenant Chain**, soon became a model for relations between the British Empire and other Native American peoples.

Imperial warfare also reshaped Indian relations in the Southeast. During the War of the Spanish Succession (1702–1713), which pitted Britain against France and Spain, English settlers in the Carolinas armed the Creeks, whose 15,000 members farmed the fertile lands along the present-day border of Georgia and Alabama. A joint English-Creek expedition attacked Spanish

The “Four Indian Kings” in London, 1710

After a failed invasion of Canada in 1709, a colonial delegation went to London to ask the queen to try again. They brought four Indians with them—three Mohawks and a Mahican—and presented them in London as the “Four Indian Kings” of the Iroquois. The four kings met Queen Anne, dined with nobility, attended the theater, and toured the sites. They sat for several portraits, which were engraved for prints like this one. The queen agreed to make another try for Canada, but the 1711 invasion failed again. Albany Institute of History and Art, Gift of the Estate of Cornelia Cogswell (Mrs. Henry M. Sage) 1972.65.7.



Florida, burning the town of St. Augustine but failing to capture the fort. To protect Havana in nearby Cuba, the Spanish reinforced St. Augustine and unsuccessfully attacked Charleston, South Carolina.

Indian Goals

The Creeks had their own agenda: to become the dominant tribe in the region, they needed to vanquish their longtime enemies, the pro-French Choctaws to the west and the Spanish-allied Apalachees to the south. Beginning in 1704, a force of Creek and Yamasee warriors destroyed the remaining Franciscan missions in northern Florida, attacked the Spanish settlement at Pensacola, and captured a thousand Apalachees, whom they sold to South Carolinian slave traders for sale in the West Indies. Simultaneously, a Carolina-supported Creek expedition attacked the Iroquois-speaking Tuscarora people of North Carolina, killing hundreds, executing 160 male captives, and sending 400 women and children into slavery. The surviving Tuscaroras joined the Iroquois in New York (who now became the Six Nations of the Iroquois). The Carolinians, having used the Creeks to kill Spaniards, now died at the hands of their former allies: when English traders demanded payment for trade debts in 1715, the Creeks and Yamasees revolted, killing 400 colonists before being overwhelmed by the Carolinians and their new Indian allies, the Cherokees.

UNDERSTAND POINTS OF VIEW

What did Native Americans have to gain by participating in imperial wars?

Native Americans also joined in the warfare between French Catholics in Canada and English Protestants in New England. With French aid, Catholic Mohawk and Abenaki warriors took revenge on their Puritan enemies. They destroyed English settlements in Maine and, in 1704, attacked the western Massachusetts town of Deerfield, where they killed 48 residents and carried 112 into captivity. In response, New England militia attacked French settlements and, in 1710, joined with British naval forces to seize Port Royal in French Acadia (Nova Scotia). However, a major British–New England expedition against the French stronghold at Quebec, inspired in part by the visit of four Indian “kings” to London, failed miserably.

Stalemated militarily in America, Britain won major territorial and commercial concessions through its victories in Europe. In the Treaty of Utrecht (1713), Britain obtained Newfoundland, Acadia, and the Hudson Bay region of northern Canada from France, as well as access through Albany to the western Indian trade. From Spain, Britain acquired the strategic fortress

of Gibraltar at the entrance to the Mediterranean and a thirty-year contract to supply slaves to Spanish America. These gains advanced Britain’s quest for commercial supremacy and brought peace to eastern North America for a generation (Map 3.2).

The Imperial Slave Economy

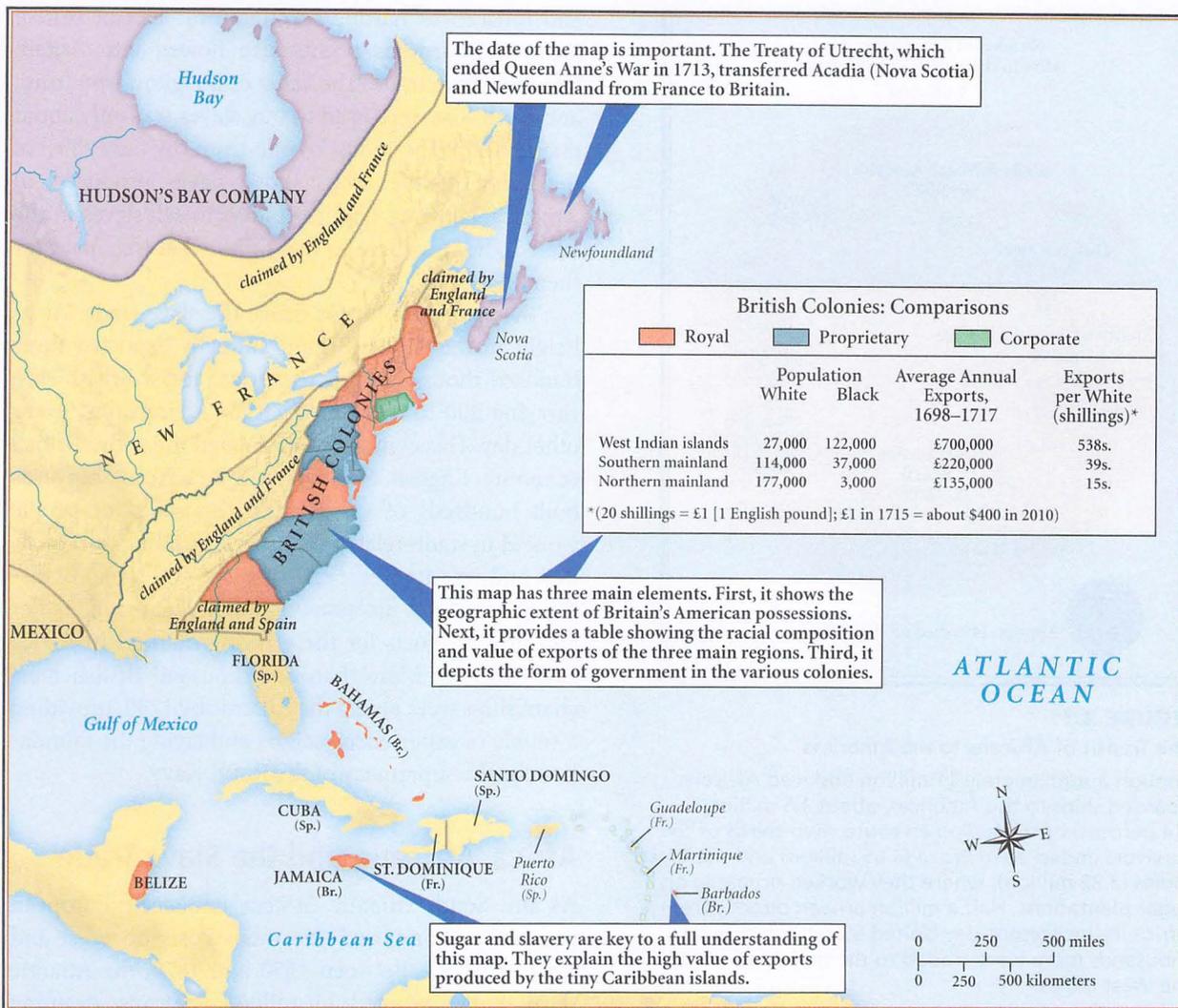
Britain’s focus on America reflected the growth of a new agricultural and commercial order — the **South Atlantic System** — that produced sugar, tobacco, rice, and other tropical and subtropical products for an international market. Its plantation societies were ruled by European planter-merchants and worked by hundreds of thousands of enslaved Africans (Figure 3.1).

The South Atlantic System

The South Atlantic System had its center in Brazil and the West Indies, and sugar was its primary product. Before 1500, there were few sweet foods in Europe — mostly honey and fruits — so when European planters developed vast sugarcane plantations in America, they found a ready market for their crop. (The craving for the potent new sweet food was so intense that, by 1900, sugar accounted for an astonishing 20 percent of the calories consumed by the world’s people.)

European merchants, investors, and planters garnered the profits of the South Atlantic System. Following mercantilist principles, they provided the plantations with tools and equipment to grow and process the sugarcane and ships to carry it to Europe. But it was the Atlantic slave trade that made the system run. Between 1520 and 1650, Portuguese traders carried about 820,000 Africans across the Atlantic — about 4,000 slaves a year before 1600 and 10,000 annually thereafter. Over the next half century, the Dutch dominated the Atlantic slave trade; then, between 1700 and 1800, the British transported about 2.5 million of the total of 6.1 million Africans carried to the Americas.

England and the West Indies England was a late-comer to the plantation economy, but from the beginning the prospect of a lucrative cash crop drew large numbers of migrants. On St. Kitts, Nevis, Montserrat, and Barbados, most early settlers were small-scale English farmers (and their indentured servants) who exported tobacco and livestock hides; on this basis, they created small but thriving colonies. In 1650, there were more English residents in the West Indies (some 44,000) than in the Chesapeake (20,000) and New England (23,000) colonies combined.



MAP 3.2
Britain's American Empire, 1713

Many of Britain's possessions in the West Indies were tiny islands, mere dots on the Caribbean Sea. However, in 1713, these small pieces of land were by far the most valuable parts of the empire. Their sugar crops brought wealth to English merchants, commerce to the northern colonies, and a brutal life and early death to the hundreds of thousands of African slaves working on the plantations.

After 1650, sugar transformed Barbados and the other islands into slave-based plantation societies, a change facilitated by English capital combined with the knowledge and experience of Dutch merchants. By 1680, an elite group of 175 planters, described by one antislavery writer of the time as “inhumane and barbarous,” dominated Barbados's economy; they owned more than half of the island, thousands of indentured servants, and half of its more than 50,000 slaves. In 1692, exploited Irish servants and island-born African slaves staged a major uprising, which was brutally suppressed. The “leading principle” in a slave society, declared one West Indian planter, was to instill “fear”

among workers and a commitment to “absolute coercive” force among masters. As social inequality and racial conflict increased, hundreds of English farmers fled to South Carolina and the large island of Jamaica. But the days of Caribbean smallholders were numbered. English sugar merchants soon invested heavily in Jamaica; by 1750, it had seven hundred large sugar plantations, worked by more than 105,000 slaves, and had become the wealthiest British colony.

Sugar was a rich man's crop because it could be produced most efficiently on large plantations. Scores of slaves planted and cut the sugarcane, which was then processed by expensive equipment—crushing mills,

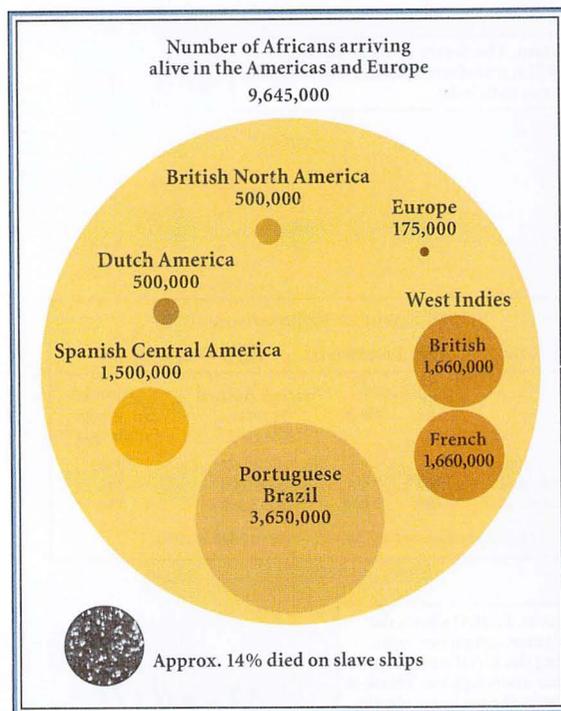


FIGURE 3.1

The Transit of Africans to the Americas

Though approximately 11 million enslaved Africans boarded ships to the Americas, about 1.5 million (14 percent) of them died en route. Two-thirds of the survivors ended up in Brazil (3.65 million) and the West Indies (3.32 million), where they worked primarily on sugar plantations. Half a million arrived directly from Africa in the present-day United States, while many thousands more were traded to the mainland from the West Indies.

boiling houses, distilling apparatus—into raw sugar, molasses, and rum. The affluent planter-merchants who controlled the sugar industry drew annual profits of more than 10 percent on their investment. As Scottish economist Adam Smith noted in his famous treatise *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), sugar was the most profitable crop grown in America or Europe.

The Impact on Britain The South Atlantic System brought wealth to the entire British and European economy and helped Europeans achieve world economic leadership. Most British West Indian plantations belonged to absentee owners who lived in England, where they spent their profits and formed

a powerful sugar lobby. The Navigation Acts kept the British sugar trade in the hands of British merchants, who exported it to foreign markets, and by 1750 reshipments of American sugar

and tobacco to Europe accounted for half of British exports. Enormous profits also flowed into Britain from the slave trade. The value of the guns, iron, rum, and cloth that were used to buy slaves was only about one-tenth (in the 1680s) to one-third (by the 1780s) of the value of the crops those slaves produced in America, allowing English traders to sell slaves in the West Indies for three to five times what they paid for them in Africa.

These massive profits drove the slave trade. At its height in the 1790s, Britain annually exported three hundred thousand guns to Africa, and a British ship carrying 300 to 350 slaves left an African port every other day. This commerce stimulated the entire British economy. English, Scottish, and American shipyards built hundreds of vessels, and thousands of people worked in trade-related industries: building port facilities and warehouses, refining sugar and tobacco, distilling rum from molasses, and manufacturing textiles and iron products for the growing markets in Africa and America. More than one thousand British merchant ships were plying the Atlantic by 1750, providing a supply of experienced sailors and laying the foundation for the supremacy of the Royal Navy.

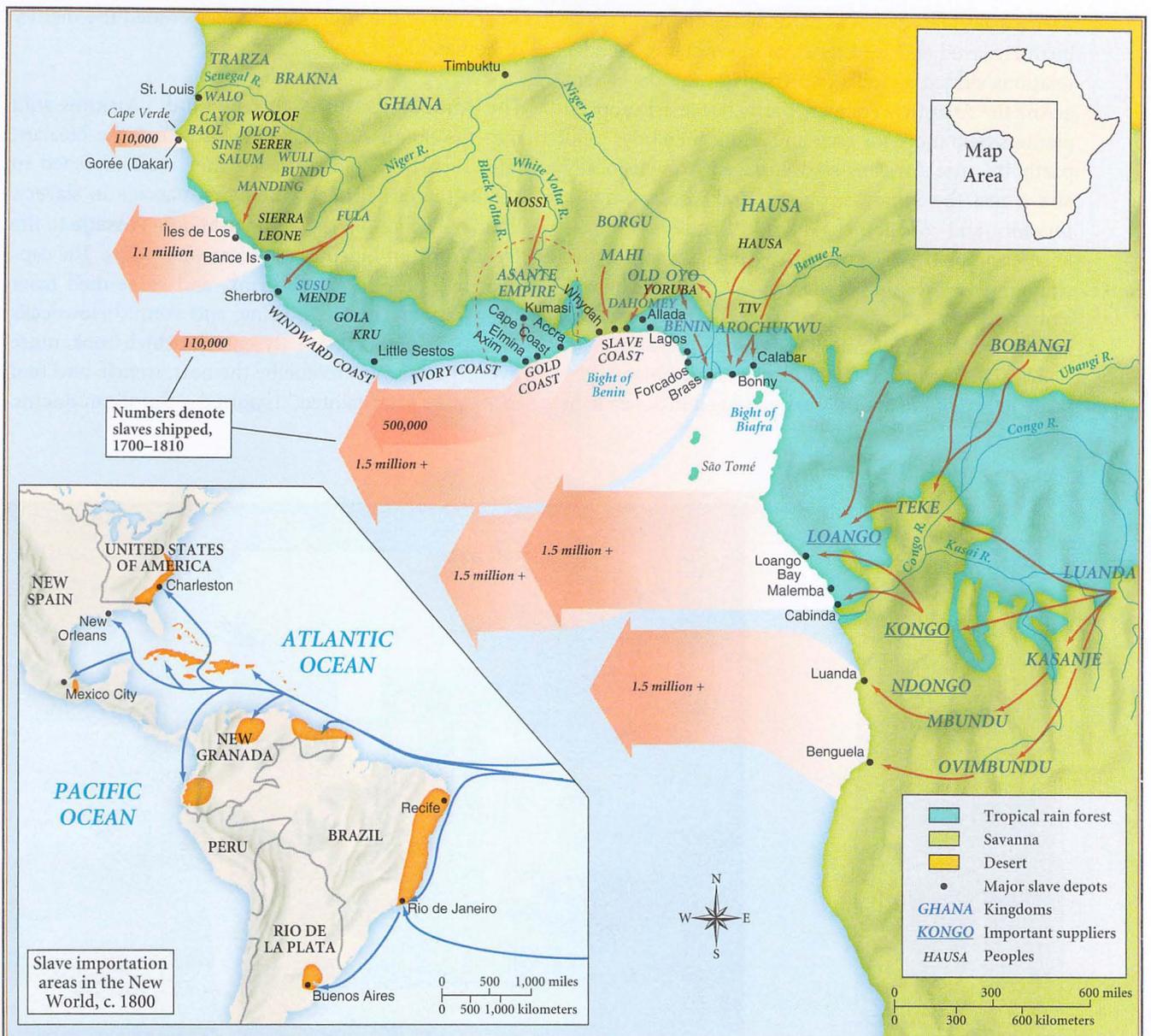
Africa, Africans, and the Slave Trade

As the South Atlantic System enhanced European prosperity, it imposed enormous costs on West and Central Africa. Between 1550 and 1870, the Atlantic slave trade uprooted 11 million Africans, draining lands south of the Sahara of people and wealth and changing African society (Map 3.3). By directing commerce away from the savannas and the Islamic world on the other side of the Sahara, the Atlantic slave trade changed the economic and religious dynamics of the African interior. It also fostered militaristic, centralized states in the coastal areas.

Africans and the Slave Trade Warfare and slaving had been part of African life for centuries, but the South Atlantic System made slaving a favorite tactic of ambitious kings and plundering warlords. “Whenever the King of Barsally wants Goods or Brandy,” an observer noted, “the King goes and ransacks some of his enemies’ towns, seizing the people and selling them.” Supplying slaves became a way of life in the West African state of Dahomey, where the royal house monopolized the sale of slaves and used European guns to create a military despotism. Dahomey’s army, which included a contingent of 5,000 women, raided the interior for captives; between 1680 and 1730, Dahomey annually exported 20,000 slaves from the

EXPLAIN CONSEQUENCES

How did the South Atlantic System affect the British economy?



MAP 3.3

Africa and the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1700–1810

The tropical rain forest of West Africa was home to scores of peoples and dozens of kingdoms. With the rise of the slave trade, some of these kingdoms became aggressive slavers. Dahomey's army, for example, seized tens of thousands of captives in wars with neighboring peoples and sold them to European traders. About 14 percent of the captives died during the grueling Middle Passage, the transatlantic voyage between Africa and the Americas. Most of the survivors labored on sugar plantations in Brazil and the British and French West Indies.

ports of Allada and Whydah. The Asante kings likewise used slaving to conquer states along the Gold Coast as well as Muslim kingdoms in the savanna. By the 1720s, they had created a prosperous empire of 3 to 5 million people. Yet participation in the transatlantic slave trade remained a choice for Africans, not a necessity. The powerful kingdom of Benin, famous for its cast bronzes

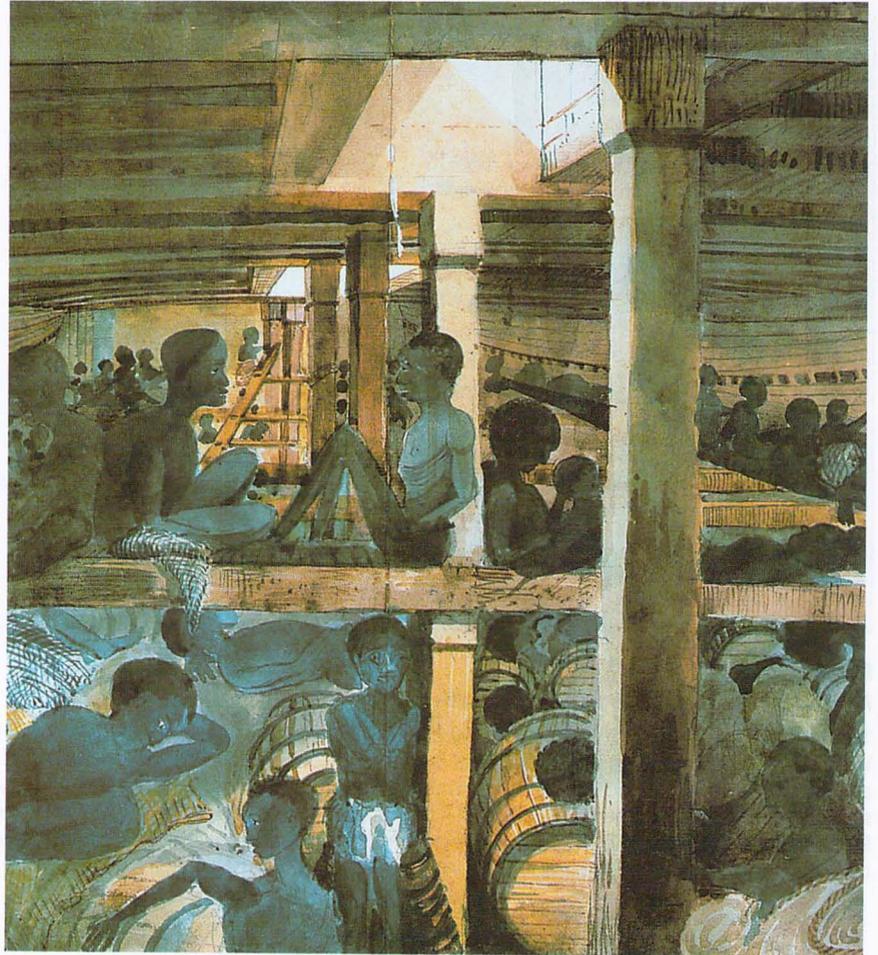
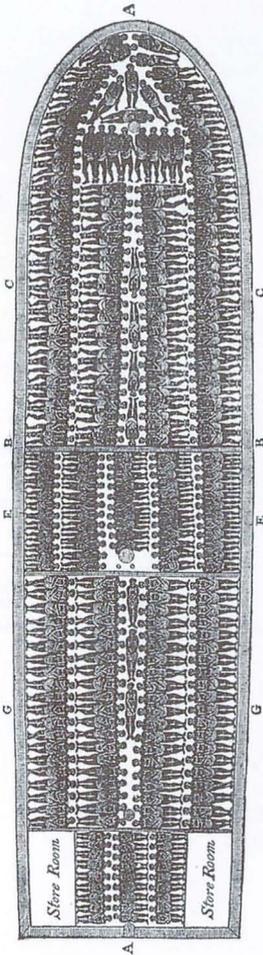
and carved ivory, prohibited for decades the export of all slaves, male and female. Other Africans atoned for their guilt for selling neighbors into slavery by building hidden shrines, often in the household granary.

The trade in humans produced untold misery. Hundreds of thousands of young Africans died, and millions more endured a brutal life in the Americas. In

Africa itself, class divisions hardened as people of noble birth enslaved and sold those of lesser status. Gender relations shifted as well. Two-thirds of the slaves sent across the Atlantic were men, partly because European planters paid more for men and “stout men boys” and partly because Africans sold enslaved women locally and across the Sahara as agricultural workers, house servants, and concubines. The resulting sexual imbalance prompted African men to take several wives, changing the meaning of marriage. Finally, the expansion of the Atlantic slave trade increased the extent of slavery in Africa. Sultan Mawlay Ismail of Morocco (r. 1672–1727) owned 150,000 black slaves, obtained by trade in Timbuktu and in wars he waged in Senegal. In

Africa, as in the Americas, slavery eroded the dignity of human life.

The Middle Passage and Beyond Africans sold into the South Atlantic System suffered the bleakest fate. Torn from their villages, they were marched in chains to coastal ports, their first passage in slavery. Then they endured the perilous **Middle Passage** to the New World in hideously overcrowded ships. The captives had little to eat or drink, and some died from dehydration. The feces, urine, and vomit belowdecks prompted outbreaks of dysentery, which took more lives. “I was so overcome by the heat, stench, and foul air that I nearly fainted,” reported a European doctor.



Two Views of the Middle Passage

An 1846 watercolor (on the right) shows the cargo hold of a slave ship en route to Brazil, which imported large numbers of African slaves until the 1860s. Painted by a ship's officer, the work minimizes the brutality of the Middle Passage—none of the slaves are in chains—and captures the Africans' humanity and dignity. The illustration on the left, which was printed by England's Abolitionist Society, shows the plan of a Liverpool slave ship designed to hold 482 Africans, packed in with no more respect than that given to hogsheads of sugar and tobacco. Records indicate that the ship actually carried as many as 609 Africans at once. Private Collection/© Michael Graham-Stewart/The Bridgeman Art Library / © National Maritime Museum, London.

Olaudah Equiano: The Brutal “Middle Passage”

Olaudah Equiano claimed to have been born in Igboland (present-day southern Nigeria). But Vincent Carretta of the University of Maryland has discovered strong evidence that Equiano was born in South Carolina. He suggests that Equiano drew on conversations with African-born slaves to create a fictitious account of his kidnapping at the age of eleven and a traumatic passage across the Atlantic. After being purchased by an English sea captain, Equiano bought his freedom in 1766. In London, he became an antislavery activist, and in 1789 he published the memoir from which the following selections are drawn.

My father, besides many slaves, had a numerous family. . . . I was trained up from my earliest years in the art of war, . . . and my mother adorned me with emblems after the manner of our greatest warriors. One day, when all our people were gone out to their works as usual and only I and my dear sister were left to mind the house, two men and a woman got over our walls, and in a moment seized us both. . . .

I was . . . sold and carried through a number of places till . . . at the end of six or seven months after I had been kidnapped I arrived at the sea coast.

. . . I now saw myself deprived of all chance of returning to my native country. . . . I was soon put down under the decks, and there I received such a salutation in my nostrils as I had never experienced in my life; so that with the loathsomeness of the stench and crying together, I became so sick and low that I was not able to eat, nor had I the least desire to taste anything. I now wished for the last friend, death, to relieve me; but soon, to my grief, two of the white men offered me eatables, and on my refusing to eat, one of them held me fast by the hands and . . . tied my feet while the other flogged me severely. I had never experienced anything of this kind before, and . . . could I have got over the nettings, I would have jumped over

the side. . . . One day, when we had a smooth sea and moderate wind, two of my wearied countrymen who were chained together . . . , preferring death to such a life of misery, somehow made it through the nettings and jumped into the sea. . . .

At last we came in sight of the island of Barbados; the white people got some old slaves from the land to pacify us. They told us we were not to be eaten but to work, and were soon to go on land where we should see many of our country people. This report eased us much; and sure enough soon after we were landed there came to us Africans of all languages.

Source: *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African, Written by Himself* (London, 1789), 15, 22–23, 28–29.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

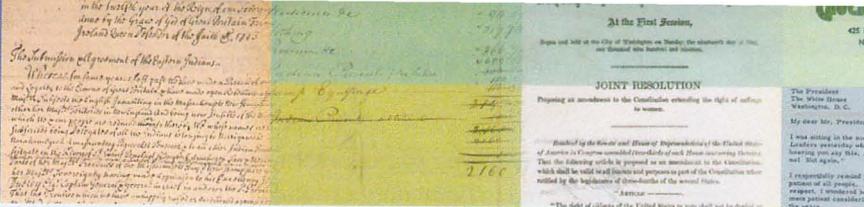
1. What elements of Equiano's account might explain the average slave mortality rate of about 14 percent during the Atlantic crossing?
2. Assuming that Carretta is correct, and Equiano was not born in Africa, why do you think he composed this fictitious narrative of his childhood instead of describing his own childhood in slavery?

Some slaves jumped overboard to drown rather than endure more suffering. Others staged violent shipboard revolts. Slave uprisings occurred on two thousand voyages, roughly one of every ten Atlantic passages. Nearly 100,000 slaves died in these insurrections, and nearly 1.5 million others—about 14 percent of those who were transported—died of disease or illness on the month-long journey (America Compared, above).

For those who survived the Atlantic crossing, things only got worse as they passed into endless slavery. Life on the sugar plantations of northwestern Brazil and the West Indies was one of relentless

exploitation. Slaves worked ten hours a day under the hot tropical sun; slept in flimsy huts; and lived on a starchy diet of corn, yams, and dried fish. They were subjected to brutal discipline: “The fear of punishment is the principle [we use] . . . to keep them in awe and order,” one planter declared. When punishments came, they were brutal. Flogging was commonplace; some planters rubbed salt, lemon juice, or urine into the resulting wounds.

Planters often took advantage of their power by raping enslaved women. Sexual exploitation was a largely unacknowledged but ubiquitous feature of



master-slave relations: something that many slave masters considered to be an unquestioned privilege of their position. “It was almost a constant practice with our clerks, and other whites,” Olaudah Equiano wrote, “to commit violent depredations on the chastity of the female slaves.” Thomas Thistlewood was a Jamaica planter who kept an unusually detailed journal in which he noted every act of sexual exploitation he committed. In thirty-seven years as a Jamaica planter, Thistlewood recorded 3,852 sex acts with 138 enslaved women.

With sugar prices high and the cost of slaves low, many planters simply worked their slaves to death and then bought more. Between 1708 and 1735, British planters on Barbados imported about 85,000 Africans; however, in that same time the island’s black population increased by only 4,000 (from 42,000 to 46,000). The constant influx of new slaves kept the population thoroughly “African” in its languages, religions, and culture. “Here,” wrote a Jamaican observer, “each different nation of Africa meet and dance after the manner of their own country . . . [and] retain most of their native customs.”

Slavery in the Chesapeake and South Carolina

West Indian-style slavery came to Virginia and Maryland following Bacon’s Rebellion. Taking advantage of the expansion of the British slave trade (following the end of the Royal African Company’s monopoly in 1698), elite planter-politicians led a “tobacco revolution” and bought more Africans, putting these slaves to work on ever-larger plantations. By 1720, Africans made up 20 percent of the Chesapeake population; by 1740, nearly 40 percent. Slavery had become a core institution, no longer just one of several forms of unfree labor. Moreover, slavery was now defined in racial terms. Virginia legislators prohibited sexual intercourse between English and Africans and defined virtually all resident Africans as slaves: “All servants imported or brought into this country by sea or land who were not Christians in their native country shall be accounted and be slaves.”

On the mainland as in the islands, slavery was a system of brutal exploitation. Violence was common, and the threat of violence always hung over master-slave relationships. In 1669, Virginia’s House of Burgesses decreed that a master who killed a slave in the process of “correcting” him could not be charged with a felony, since it would be irrational to destroy his own property. From that point forward, even the most extreme punishments were permitted by law. Slaves

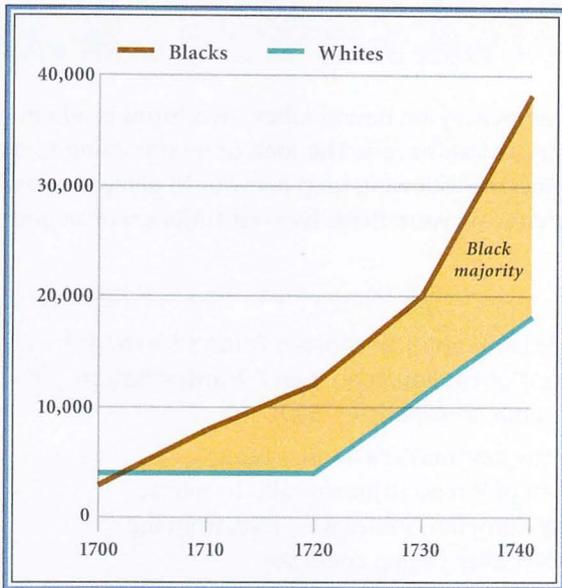
could not carry weapons or gather in large numbers. Slaveholders were especially concerned to discourage slaves from running away. Punishments for runaways commonly included not only brutal whipping but also branding or scarring to make recalcitrant slaves easier to identify. Virginia laws spelled out the procedures for capturing and returning runaway slaves in detail. If a runaway slave was killed in the process of recapturing him, the county would reimburse the slave’s owner for his full value. In some cases, slave owners could choose to put runaway slaves up for trial; if they were found guilty and executed, the owner would be compensated for his loss (*Thinking Like a Historian*, p. 98).

Despite the inherent brutality of the institution, slaves in Virginia and Maryland worked under better conditions than those in the West Indies. Many lived relatively long lives. Unlike sugar and rice, which were “killer crops” that demanded strenuous labor in a tropical climate, tobacco cultivation required steadier and less demanding labor in a more temperate environment. Workers planted young tobacco seedlings in spring, hoed and weeded the crop in summer, and in fall picked and hung the leaves to cure over the winter. Nor did diseases spread as easily in the Chesapeake, because plantation quarters were less crowded and more dispersed than those in the West Indies. Finally, because tobacco profits were lower than those from sugar, planters treated their slaves less harshly than West Indian planters did.

Many tobacco planters increased their workforce by buying female slaves and encouraging them to have children. In 1720, women made up more than one-third of the Africans in Maryland, and the black population had begun to increase naturally. “Be kind and indulgent to the breeding wenches,” one slave owner told his overseer, “[and do not] force them when with child upon any service or hardship that will be injurious to them.” By midcentury, more than three-quarters of the enslaved workers in the Chesapeake were American-born.

Slaves in South Carolina labored under much more oppressive conditions. The colony grew slowly until 1700, when planters began to plant and export rice to southern Europe, where it was in great demand. Between 1720 and 1750, rice production increased fivefold. To expand production, planters imported thousands of Africans, some of them from rice-growing societies. By 1710, Africans formed a majority of the total population, eventually rising to 80 percent in rice-growing areas (Figure 3.2).

Most rice plantations lay in inland swamps, and the work was dangerous and exhausting. Slaves planted, weeded, and harvested the rice in ankle-deep mud.

**FIGURE 3.2****A Black Majority Emerges in South Carolina, 1700–1740**

Between disease and the toll taken by the Indian wars, South Carolina's white population hardly grew at all between 1690 and 1720. But white planters imported thousands of enslaved Africans to grow rice, an extremely profitable plantation crop. As early as 1705, the colony had a black majority, which allowed the development among slaves of a strongly African-influenced language and culture.

Pools of stagnant water bred mosquitoes, which transmitted diseases that claimed hundreds of African lives. Other slaves, forced to move tons of dirt to build irrigation works, died from exhaustion. “The labour required [for growing rice] is only fit for slaves,” a Scottish traveler remarked, “and I think the hardest work I have seen them engaged in.” In South Carolina, as in the West Indies and Brazil, there were many slave deaths and few births, and the arrival of new slaves continually “re-Africanized” the black population.

An African American Community Emerges

Slaves came from many peoples in West Africa and the Central African regions of Kongo and Angola. White planters welcomed ethnic diversity to deter slave revolts. “The safety of the Plantations,” declared a widely read English pamphlet, “depends upon having Negroes from all parts of Guiny, who do not understand each other's languages and Customs and cannot agree to Rebel.” By accident or design, most plantations drew laborers of many languages, including Kwa, Mande, and Kikongo. Among Africans imported after

1730 into the upper James River region of Virginia, 41 percent came from ethnic groups in present-day Nigeria, and another 25 percent from West-Central Africa. The rest hailed from the Windward and Gold coasts, Senegambia, and Sierra Leone. In South Carolina, plantation owners preferred laborers from the Gold Coast and Gambia, who had a reputation as hardworking farmers. But as African sources of slaves shifted southward after 1730, more than 30 percent of the colony's workers later came from Kongo and Angola.

Initially, the slaves did not think of themselves as Africans or blacks but as members of a specific family, clan, or people—Wolof, Hausa, Ibo, Yoruba, Teke, Ngola—and they sought out those who shared their language and customs. In the upper James River region, Ibo men and women arrived in equal numbers, married each other, and maintained their Ibo culture. In most places, though, this was impossible. Slaves from varying backgrounds were thrown together and only gradually discovered common ground.

Building Community Through painful trial and error, slaves eventually discovered what limited freedoms their owners would allow them. Those who were not too rebellious or too recalcitrant were able to carve out precarious family lives—though they were always in danger of being disrupted by sale or life-threatening punishment—and build the rudiments of a slave community.

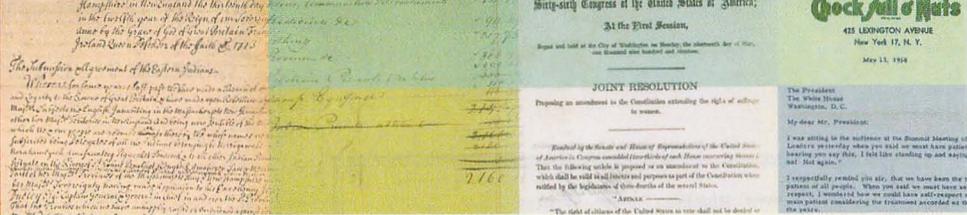
One key to the development of families and communities was a more or less balanced sex ratio that encouraged marriage and family formation. In South Carolina, the high death rate among slaves undermined ties of family and kinship; but in the Chesapeake, after 1725 some slaves, especially on larger plantations, were able to create strong nuclear families and extended kin relations. On one of Charles Carroll's estates in Maryland, 98 of the 128 slaves were members of two extended families. These African American kin groups passed on family names, traditions, and knowledge to the next generation, and thus a distinct culture gradually developed. As one observer suggested, blacks had created a separate world, “a Nation within a Nation.”

As the slaves forged a new identity, they carried on certain African practices but let others go. Many Africans arrived in America with ritual scars that white planters called “country markings”; these signs of ethnic identity fell into disuse on culturally diverse plantations. (Ironically, on some plantations these African markings were replaced by

COMPARE AND CONTRAST

How did the experiences of slaves in the Chesapeake differ from their experiences in South Carolina?

THINKING LIKE A HISTORIAN



Servitude and Slavery

Britain's American colonies relied heavily on bound labor. Two forms predominated: indentured servitude and African slavery. The idea of being bound to a master is alien to most of us today; the following texts allow us to glimpse some aspects of the experience. In what ways were these two institutions similar, and how did they differ?

1. Slave advertisement from Charlestown, Virginia, July 24, 1769.

Charlestown, July 24th, 1769.

TO BE SOLD,
On THURSDAY the third Day
of AUGUST next,
A CARGO
OF
NINETY-FOUR
PRIME, HEALTHY
NEGROES,
CONSISTING OF
Thirty-nine MEN, Fifteen BOYS,
Twenty-four WOMEN, and
Sixteen GIRLS.
JUST ARRIVED,
In the Brigantine *DEMBIA*, *Francis Bare*, Master, from SIERRA-
LEON, by
DAVID & JOHN DEAS.

Source: Courtesy American Antiquarian Society.

A Poor Unhappy Transported Felon's Sorrowful Account of His Fourteen Years' Transportation at Virginia, in America (1680).

At last to my new master's house I came,
At the town of Wicoc[c]moco call'd by name,
Where my European clothes were took from me,
Which never after I again could see.

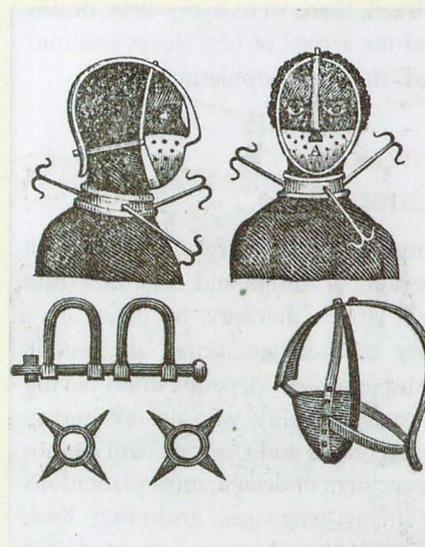
A canvas shirt and trowsers then they gave,
With a hop-sack frock in which I was to slave:
No shoes nor stockings had I for to wear,
Nor hat, nor cap, both head and feet were bare.

Thus dress'd into the Field I nex[t] must go,
Amongst tobacco plants all day to hoe,
At day break in the morn our work began,
And so held to the setting of the Sun.

My fellow slaves were just five Transports more,
With eighteen Negroes, which is twenty four . . .

We and the Negroes both alike did fare,
Of work and food we had an equal share.

4. Mechanisms used to control slaves, from Thomas Branagan, *The Penitential Tyrant; or, slave trader reformed*, 1807. The shackles and spurs (lower left) were intended to prevent escape; the faceguard with spiked collar (top and lower right) kept its wearer from either eating or lying down.



Source: Library of Congress.

2. Indentured servant advertisement from the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 1770. This advertisement offers to sell the remainder of a servant girl's indenture.

TO BE SOLD, A HEALTHY servant GIRL'S Time, about 17 Years old, who has between 3 and 4 years to serve. She is sold for no other Reason, only there being more Servants than are needful in the family where she is.

N. B. She has had the Small pox, can wash, and do all Sorts of Housework. Enquire of the Printers.

3. Poem by James Revel, c. 1680. James Revel was an Englishman convicted of theft and transported to Virginia, where he served fourteen years as an indentured servant. Upon returning he published

5. Court deposition of Joseph Mulders, July 31, 1649.

In a court case in Lower Norfolk County, Virginia indentured servant Joseph Mulders testified that his mistress, Deborah Fernehaugh, brutally beat her maidservant, Charity Dallen.

[Mulders testified] That Deborah Fernehaugh, the Mistress of this deponent, did beate her mayd Sarvant in the quartering house before the dresser more Liken a dogge then a Christian, and that at a Certaine time, I felt her head, which was beaten as soft as a sponge, in one place, and that as there shee was a weeding, shee complained and sayd, her backe bone as shee thought was broken with beating, and that I did see the mayds arme naked which was full of blacke and blew bruises and pinches, and her necke Likewise and that after wards, I tould my Mistress of it and said, that two or three blowes, could not make her in such a Case, and after this my speeches shee Chidge [i.e., chided] the said mayd, for shewing her body to the men, and very often afterwards she [the maid] would have shoen mee, how shee had been beaten, but I refused to have seene it, saying it concernes me not, I will doe my worke and if my Mistress abuse you; you may complaine, and about 8 dayes since, being about the time shee last went to Complaine, I knew of her goeing, but would not tell my mistress of it, although shee asked mee, and sayd I could not chuse but know of it.

6. Runaway slave advertisement, Chestertown, Maryland, March 12, 1755. *Absconding from their masters was a common method of resistance for both slaves and servants, and masters frequently posted runaway advertisements in local newspapers.*

Chestertown, Maryland, March 12, 1755. TEN PISTOLES Reward. RAN away last night, from James Ringgold, of Eastern Neck, in Kent county, in the province of Maryland, the two following servant men; one named James Francis, an indented servant for five years, a middle siz'd young fellow, about 26 years of age, of a smooth fair complexion, his hair cut off, is an Englishman, and speaks a little in the west country dialect; was brought up to farming and husbandry: Had on, a country kersey jacket and breeches, blue fearnought jacket, and an old dark colour'd coat. The other a lusty young Mulatto fellow, named Toby, a slave about the same age, he is a well set, clean limb'd, stout fellow neither a very bright or very dark Mulatto, has large nostrils, is a likely fellow, and when he talks drawls his words out in a very slow manner, is no other way remarkable; he had on the same sort of clothes with

the other servant, and one of them has a check or striped green and red everlasting jacket on or with them; and perhaps the Mulatto may set up for a cooper or carpenter, having work at both those business, and also understands plantation affairs. Whoever takes up and secures the above persons, and gives notice, so as their master gets them again, shall have Four Pistoles reward for the white servant, and Six Pistoles for the Mulatto. . . . That this slave should runaway, and attempt getting his liberty, is very alarming, as he has always been too kindly used, if any thing by his master, and one in whom his master has put great confidence, and depended on him to overlook the rest of his slaves, and he had no kind of provocation to go off. It seems to be the interest at least of every gentleman that has slaves, to be active in the beginning of these attempts . . . THOMAS RINGGOLD.

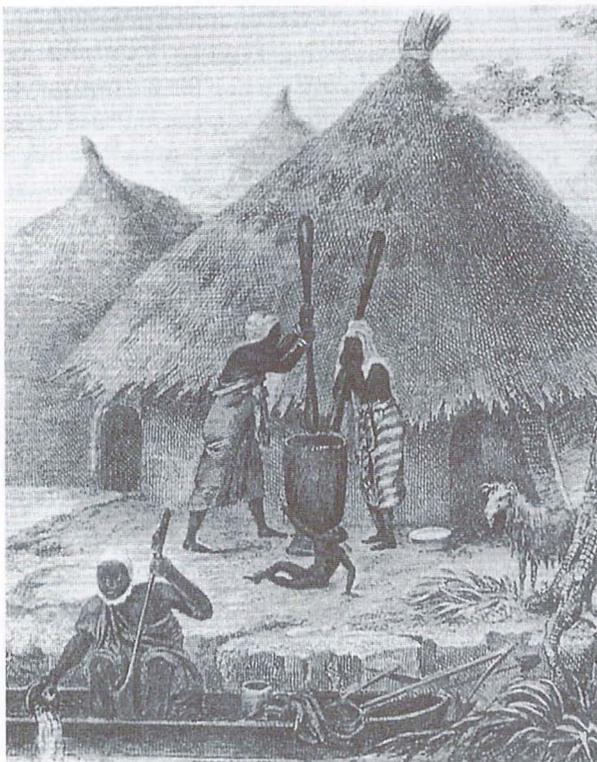
Sources: (2) *Pennsylvania Gazette*, May 3, 1770; (3) John Melville Jennings, ed., *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 56 (April 1948), 187–194; (5) *Second to None: A Documentary History of American Women*, Vol. 1 (University of Nebraska Press, 1993), 67–68; (6) *Pennsylvania Gazette*, March 12, 1755.

ANALYZING THE EVIDENCE

1. What information do the traders in sources 1 and 2 want to convey to prospective buyers, and why? What similarities and differences do you see in the way sellers might choose to market servants and slaves?
2. What aspects of servitude did James Revel object to (source 3)? How did he compare the experiences of servants and slaves?
3. Source 4 appeared in an abolitionist work published in New York in 1807. How does that fact influence your interpretation of the images?
4. How does Mulders grapple with his position as a fellow servant as he testifies against his mistress (source 5)? Based on Mulders's testimony, the court removed Dallen from Fernehaugh's household. How might things have worked differently if either Mulders or Dallen had been a slave?
5. In source 6, what characteristics of each man does the ad emphasize? How does Ringgold view himself as a master, and what does his special plea to other slaveholders tell us about slaveholding culture?

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Using the sources above, along with what you learned in class and in Chapter 3, write a short essay that compares servitude and slavery. In what ways did African slavery in the British colonies grow out of servitude and bear close similarities to it, and in what ways were slaves set apart and treated fundamentally differently than their servant counterparts?



Hulling Rice in West Africa and Georgia

Cultural practices often extend over time and space. The eighteenth-century engraving on the left shows West African women using huge wooden mortars and pestles to strip the tough outer hull from rice kernels. In the photo on the right, taken a century and a half later, African American women in Georgia use similar tools to prepare rice for their families. Library of Congress. / Courtesy Georgia Vanishing Archives Collection, sap093.

brands or scars that identified them with their owners.) But other tangible markers of African heritage persisted, including hairstyles, motifs used in wood carvings and pottery, the large wooden mortars and pestles used to hull rice, and the design of houses, in which rooms were arranged from front to back in a distinctive “I” pattern, not side by side as was common in English dwellings. Musical instruments—especially drums, gourd rattles, and a stringed instrument called a “molo,” forerunner to the banjo—helped Africans preserve cultural traditions and, eventually, shape American musical styles.

African values also persisted. Some slaves passed down Muslim beliefs, and many more told their children of the spiritual powers of conjurers, called *obeah* or *ifa*, who knew the ways of the African gods. Enslaved Yorubas consulted Orunmila, the god of fate, and other Africans (a Jamaican planter noted) relied on *obeah* “to revenge injuries and insults, discover and punish thieves and adulterers; [and] to predict the future.”

Resistance and Accommodation Slaves’ freedom of action was always dramatically circumscribed. It became illegal to teach slaves to read and write, and most slaves owned no property of their own. Because the institution of slavery rested on fear, planters had to learn a ferocious form of cruelty. Slaves might be whipped, restrained, or maimed for any infraction, large or small. A female cook in a Virginia household “was cruelly loaded with various kinds of iron machines; she had one particularly on her head, which locked her mouth so fast that she could scarcely speak; and could not eat nor drink.” Thomas Jefferson, who witnessed such punishments on his father’s Virginia plantation, noted that each generation of whites was “nursed, educated, and daily exercised in tyranny,” and he concluded that the relationship “between master and slave is a perpetual exercise of the most unremitting despotism on the one part, and degrading submission on the other.” A fellow Virginian, planter George Mason, agreed: “Every Master is born a petty tyrant.”

Virginian Luxuries, c. 1810

This painting by an unknown artist depicts the brutality and sexual exploitation inherent in a slave society. On the right, an owner chastises a male slave by beating him with a cane; on the left, a white master asserts his sexual prerogative with a female slave. Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Museum, Williamsburg, VA.



The extent of white violence often depended on the size and density of the slave population. As Virginia planter William Byrd II complained of his slaves in 1736, “Numbers make them insolent.” In the northern colonies, where slaves were few, white violence was sporadic. But plantation owners and overseers in the sugar- and rice-growing areas, where Africans outnumbered Europeans eight or more to one, routinely whipped assertive slaves. They also prohibited their workers from leaving the plantation without special passes and called on their poor white neighbors to patrol the countryside at night.

Despite the constant threat of violence, some slaves ran away, a very small number of them successfully. In some parts of the Americas—for example, in Jamaica—runaway slaves were able to form large, independent Maroon communities. But on the mainland, planters had the resources necessary to reclaim runaways, and such communities were unusual and precarious. More often, slaves who spoke English and possessed artisanal skills fled to colonial towns, where they tried to pass as free; occasionally they succeeded. Slaves who did not run away were engaged in a constant tug-of-war with their owners over the terms of their enslavement. Some blacks bartered extra work for better food and clothes; others seized a small privilege and dared the master to revoke it. In this way, Sundays gradually became a day of rest—asserted as a right, rather than granted as a privilege. When bargaining failed, slaves protested silently by working slowly or stealing.

Slave owners’ greatest fear was that their regime of terror would fail and slaves would rise up to murder them in their beds. Occasionally that fear was realized. In the 1760s, in Amherst County, Virginia, a slave killed four whites; in Elizabeth City County, eight slaves strangled their master in bed. But the circumstances of slavery made any larger-scale uprising all but impossible. To rebel against their masters, slaves would have to be able to communicate secretly but effectively across long distances; choose leaders they could trust; formulate and disseminate strategy; accumulate large numbers of weapons; and ensure that no one betrayed their plans. This was all but impossible: in plantation slavery, the preponderance of force was on the side of the slave owners, and blacks who chose to rise up did so at their peril.

TRACE CHANGE OVER TIME

How much autonomy could slaves attain, and what did slave owners do to control them?

The Stono Rebellion The largest slave uprising in the mainland colonies, South Carolina’s **Stono Rebellion** of 1739, illustrates the impossibility of success. The Catholic governor of Spanish Florida instigated the revolt by promising freedom to fugitive slaves. By February 1739, at least 69 slaves had escaped to St. Augustine, and rumors circulated “that a Conspiracy was formed by Negroes in Carolina to rise and make their way out of the province.” When war between England and Spain broke out in September, 75 Africans rose in revolt and killed a number of whites near the

Stono River. According to one account, some of the rebels were Portuguese-speaking Catholics from the Kingdom of Kongo who hoped to escape to Florida. Displaying their skills as soldiers—decades of brutal slave raiding in Kongo had militarized the society there—the rebels marched toward Florida “with Colours displayed and two Drums beating.”

Though their numbers and organization were impressive, the Stono rebels were soon met by a well-armed, mounted force of South Carolina militia. In the ensuing battle, 44 slaves were killed and the rebellion was suppressed, preventing any general uprising. In response, frightened South Carolinians cut slave imports and tightened plantation discipline.

The Rise of the Southern Gentry

As the southern colonies became full-fledged slave societies, life changed for whites as well as for blacks. Consider the career of William Byrd II (1674–1744). Byrd’s father, a successful planter-merchant in Virginia, hoped to marry his children into the English gentry. To smooth his son’s entry into landed society, Byrd sent him to England for his education. But his status-conscious classmates shunned young Byrd, calling him a “colonial,” a first bitter taste of the gradations of rank in English society.

IDENTIFY CAUSES

How did the planter elite maintain alliances with their smallholder neighbors?

Other English rejections followed. Lacking aristocratic connections, Byrd was denied a post with the Board of Trade, passed over three times for the royal governorship of Virginia, and rejected as a suitor by a rich

Englishwoman. In 1726, at age fifty-two, Byrd finally gave up and moved back to Virginia, where he sometimes felt he was “being buried alive.” Accepting his lesser destiny as a member of the colony’s elite, Byrd built an elegant brick mansion on the family’s estate at Westover, sat in “the best pew in the church,” and won an appointment to the governor’s council.

William Byrd II’s experience mirrored that of many planter-merchants, trapped in Virginia and South Carolina by their inferior colonial status. They used their wealth to rule over white yeomen families and tenant farmers and relied on violence to exploit enslaved blacks. Planters used Africans to grow food, as well as tobacco; to build houses, wagons, and tobacco casks; and to make shoes and clothes. By making their plantations self-sufficient, the Chesapeake elite survived the depressed tobacco market between 1670 and 1720.

White Identity and Equality To prevent uprisings like Bacon’s Rebellion, the Chesapeake gentry found ways to assist middling and poor whites. They gradually lowered taxes; in Virginia, for example, the annual head tax (on each adult man) fell from 45 pounds of tobacco in 1675 to just 5 pounds in 1750. They also encouraged smallholders to improve their economic lot by using slave labor, and many did so. By 1770, 60 percent of English families in the Chesapeake owned at least one slave. On the political front, planters now allowed poor yeomen and some tenants to vote. The strategy of the leading families—the Carters, Lees, Randolphs, and Robinsons—was to bribe these voters with rum, money, and the promise of minor offices in county governments. In return, they expected the yeomen and tenants to elect them to office and defer to their rule. This horse-trading solidified the authority of the planter elite, which used its control of the House of Burgesses to limit the power of the royal governor. Hundreds of yeomen farmers benefitted as well, tasting political power and garnering substantial fees and salaries as deputy sheriffs, road surveyors, estate appraisers, and grand jurymen.

Even as wealthy Chesapeake gentlemen formed political ties with smallholders, they took measures to set themselves apart culturally. As late as the 1720s, leading planters were boisterous, aggressive men who lived much like the common folk—hunting, drinking, gambling on horse races, and demonstrating their manly prowess by forcing themselves on female servants and slaves. As time passed, however, the planters began, like William Byrd II, to model themselves on the English aristocracy, remaining sexual predators but learning from advice books how to act like gentlemen in other regards: “I must not sit in others’ places; Nor sneeze, nor cough in people’s faces. Nor with my fingers pick my nose, Nor wipe my hands upon my clothes.” Cultivating **gentility**—a refined but elaborate lifestyle—they replaced their modest wooden houses with mansions of brick and mortar. Planters educated their sons in London as lawyers and gentlemen. But unlike Byrd’s father, they expected them to return to America, marry local heiresses, and assume their fathers’ roles: managing plantations, socializing with fellow gentry, and running the political system.

Wealthy Chesapeake and South Carolina women likewise emulated the English elite. They read English newspapers and fashionable magazines, wore the finest English clothes, and dined in the English fashion, including an elaborate afternoon tea. To enhance their daughters’ gentility (and improve their marriage prospects), parents hired English tutors. Once married,

planter women deferred to their husbands, reared pious children, and maintained elaborate social networks, in time creating a new ideal: the southern gentlewoman. Using the profits generated by enslaved Africans in the South Atlantic System of commerce, wealthy planters formed an increasingly well-educated, refined, and stable ruling class.

The Northern Maritime Economy

The South Atlantic System had a broad geographical reach. As early as the 1640s, New England farmers supplied the sugar islands with bread, lumber, fish, and meat. As a West Indian explained, planters “had rather buy foode at very deare rates than produce it by labour, soe infinite is the profitt of sugar works.” By 1700, the economies of the West Indies and New England were closely interwoven. Soon farmers and merchants in New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania were also shipping wheat, corn, and bread to the Caribbean. By the 1750s, about two-thirds of New England’s exports and half of those from the Middle Atlantic colonies went to the British and French sugar islands.

The sugar economy linked Britain’s entire Atlantic empire. In return for the sugar they sent to England, West Indian planters received credit, in the form of bills of exchange, from London merchants. The planters used these bills to buy slaves from Africa and to pay North American farmers and merchants for their provisions and shipping services. The mainland colonists then exchanged the bills for British manufactures, primarily textiles and iron goods.

The Urban Economy

The West Indian trade created the first American merchant fortunes and the first urban industries. Merchants in Boston, Newport, Providence, Philadelphia, and New York invested their profits in new ships; some set up manufacturing enterprises, including twenty-six refineries that processed raw sugar into finished loaves. Mainland distilleries turned West Indian molasses into rum, producing more than 2.5 million gallons in Massachusetts alone by the 1770s. Merchants in Salem, Marblehead, and smaller New England ports built a major fishing industry by selling salted mackerel and cod to the sugar islands and to southern Europe. Baltimore merchants transformed their town into a major

port by developing a bustling export business in wheat, while traders in Charleston shipped deerskins, indigo, and rice to European markets (Map 3.4).

As transatlantic commerce expanded—from five hundred voyages a year in the 1680s to fifteen hundred annually in the 1730s—American port cities grew in size and complexity. By 1750, the populations of Newport and Charleston were nearly 10,000; Boston had 15,000 residents; and New York had almost 18,000. The largest port was Philadelphia, whose population by 1776 had reached 30,000, the size of a large European provincial city. Smaller coastal towns emerged as centers of the lumber and shipbuilding industries. Seventy sawmills lined the Piscataqua River in New Hampshire, providing low-cost wood for homes, warehouses, and especially shipbuilding. Hundreds of shipwrights turned out oceangoing vessels, while other artisans made ropes, sails, and metal fittings for the new fleet. By the 1770s, colonial-built ships made up one-third of the British merchant fleet.

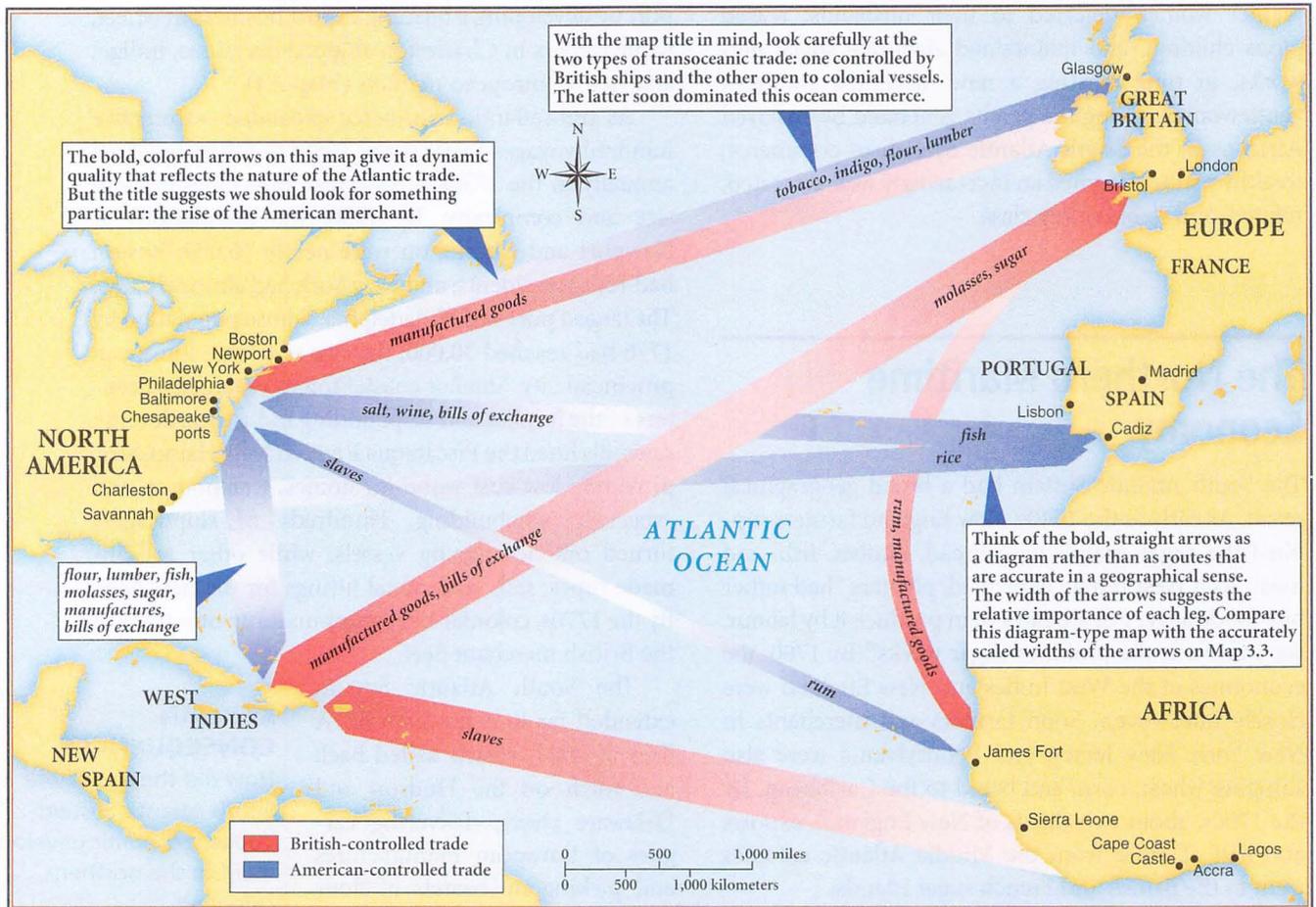
The South Atlantic System extended far into the interior. A fleet of small vessels sailed back and forth on the Hudson and Delaware rivers, delivering cargoes of European manufactures and picking up barrels of flour and wheat to carry to New York and Philadelphia for export to the West Indies and Europe. By the 1750s, hundreds of professional teamsters in Maryland were transporting 370,000 bushels of wheat and corn and 16,000 barrels of flour to urban markets each year—more than 10,000 wagon trips. To service this traffic, entrepreneurs and artisans set up taverns, horse stables, and barrel-making shops in towns along the wagon roads. Lancaster (the town that hosted the Iroquois conference described in the chapter opening), in a prosperous wheat-growing area of Pennsylvania, boasted more than 200 German and English artisans and a dozen merchants.

Urban Society

Wealthy merchants dominated the social life of seaport cities. In 1750, about 40 merchants controlled more than 50 percent of Philadelphia’s trade. Like the Chesapeake gentry, urban merchants imitated the British upper classes, importing architectural design books from England and building Georgian-style mansions to display their wealth. Their wives strove to create a genteel culture by buying fine furniture and entertaining guests at elegant dinners.

EXPLAIN CONSEQUENCES

How did the rise of the South Atlantic System impact economic development in the northern colonies?



MAP 3.4

The Growing Power of American Merchants, 1750

Throughout the colonial era, British merchant houses dominated the transatlantic trade in manufactures, sugar, tobacco, and slaves. However, by 1750, American-born merchants in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia had seized control of the commerce between the mainland and the West Indies. In addition, Newport traders played a small role in the slave trade from Africa, and Boston and Charleston merchants grew rich carrying fish and rice to southern Europe.

Artisan and shopkeeper families, the middle ranks of seaport society, made up nearly half the population. Innkeepers, butchers, seamstresses, shoemakers, weavers, bakers, carpenters, masons, and dozens of other skilled workers toiled to gain an income sufficient to maintain their families in modest comfort. Wives and husbands often worked as a team and taught the “mysteries of the craft” to their children. Some artisans aspired to wealth and status, an entrepreneurial ethic that prompted them to hire apprentices and expand production. However, most artisans were not well-to-do. During his working life, a tailor was lucky to accumulate £30 worth of property, far less than the £2,000 owned at death by an ordinary merchant or the £300 listed in the probate inventory of a successful blacksmith.

Laboring men and women formed the lowest ranks of urban society. Merchants needed hundreds of dockworkers to unload manufactured goods and molasses from inbound ships and reload them with barrels of wheat, fish, and rice. For these demanding jobs, merchants used enslaved blacks and indentured servants, who together made up 30 percent of the workforce in Philadelphia and New York City until the 1750s; otherwise, they hired unskilled wageworkers. Poor white and black women eked out a living by washing clothes, spinning wool, or working as servants or prostitutes. To make ends meet, laboring families sent their children out to work.

Periods of stagnant commerce threatened the financial security of merchants and artisans alike. For laborers, seamen, and seamstresses—whose

The Greenwood-Lee Family, 1747

Born in Massachusetts and apprenticed as an engraver, John Greenwood (1727–1792) painted dozens of commissioned works there before moving to Surinam in 1752. He painted this scene of his own family at the age of twenty. Group portraits with so many people were rare in the colonies, and it is a technically impressive composition. Greenwood himself is at the right rear, wigless (he wears a velvet cap to keep his head warm) and holding a palette and brushes. The table displays a basket of needlework and a volume of *The Spectator*, the popular London periodical published by Joseph Addison and Richard Steele.

Photograph © 2014 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Bequest of Henry Lee Shattuck in memory of the late Morris Gray, 1983.34.



household budgets left no margin for sickness or unemployment—depressed trade meant hunger, dependence on public charity, and (for the most desperate) petty thievery or prostitution. The sugar- and slave-based South Atlantic System, and cycles of imperial warfare, brought economic uncertainty as well as opportunity to the people of the northern colonies.

The New Politics of Empire, 1713–1750

The South Atlantic System also changed the politics of empire. British ministers, pleased with the wealth produced by the trade in slaves, sugar, rice, and tobacco, ruled the colonies with a gentle hand. The colonists took advantage of that leniency to strengthen their political institutions and eventually to challenge the rules of the mercantilist system.

The Rise of Colonial Assemblies

After the Glorious Revolution, representative assemblies in America copied the English Whigs and limited the powers of crown officials. In Massachusetts during the 1720s, the assembly repeatedly ignored the king's instructions to provide the royal governor with a permanent salary, and legislatures in North Carolina,

New Jersey, and Pennsylvania did the same. Using such tactics, the legislatures gradually took control of taxation and appointments, angering imperial bureaucrats and absentee proprietors. “The people in power in America,” complained William Penn during a struggle with the Pennsylvania assembly, “think nothing taller than themselves but the Trees.”

Leading the increasingly powerful assemblies were members of the colonial elite. Although most property-owning white men had the right to vote, only men of wealth and status stood for election. In New Jersey in 1750, 90 percent of assemblymen came from influential political families (Figure 3.3). In Virginia, seven members of the wealthy Lee family sat in the House of Burgesses and, along with other powerful families, dominated its major committees. In New England, affluent descendants of the original Puritans formed a core of political leaders. “Go into every village in New England,” John Adams wrote in 1765, “and you will find that the office of justice of the peace, and even the place of representative, have generally descended from generation to generation, in three or four families at most.”

However, neither elitist assemblies nor wealthy property owners could impose unpopular edicts on the people. Purposeful crowd actions were a fact of colonial life. An uprising of ordinary citizens overthrew the

IDENTIFY CAUSES

What explains the increasing political autonomy of the colonies in the eighteenth century?

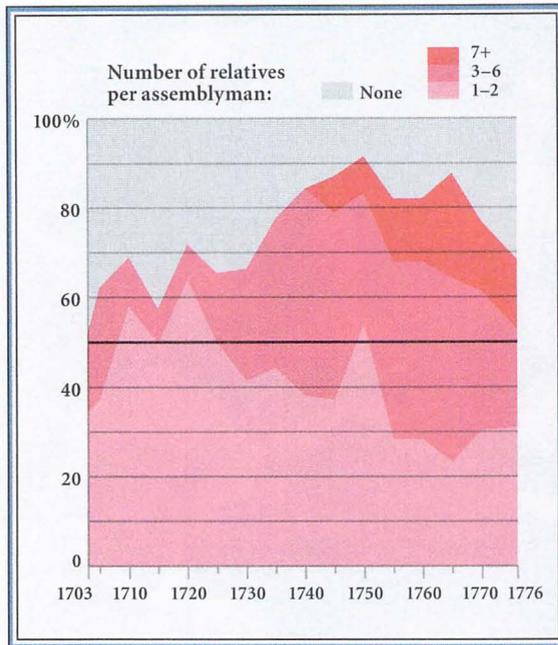


FIGURE 3.3
Family Connections and Political Power, New Jersey, 1700–1776

As early as 1700, more than 50 percent of the members of the New Jersey assembly came from families with a history of political leadership. By 1750, the percentage whose fathers or other relatives had served in the assembly reached 90 percent; indeed, some members had seven relatives who were (or had been) political leaders, clear testimony of the emergence of powerful political families and an experienced governing elite. However, as the conflict with Britain increased after 1765, voters in New Jersey and elsewhere ousted luke-warm patriots, and new families entered the political ranks.

Dominion of New England in 1689. In New York, mobs closed houses of prostitution; in Salem, Massachusetts, they ran people with infectious diseases out of town; and in New Jersey in the 1730s and 1740s, mobs of farmers battled with proprietors who were forcing tenants off disputed lands. When officials in Boston restricted the sale of farm produce to a single public market, a crowd destroyed the building, and its members defied the authorities to arrest them. “If you touch One you shall touch All,” an anonymous letter warned the sheriff, “and we will show you a Hundred Men where you can show one.” These expressions of popular discontent, combined with the growing authority of the assemblies, created a political system that was broadly responsive to popular pressure and increasingly resistant to British control.

Salutary Neglect

British colonial policy during the reigns of George I (r. 1714–1727) and George II (r. 1727–1760) allowed for this rise of American self-government as royal bureaucrats, pleased by growing trade and import duties, relaxed their supervision of internal colonial affairs. In 1775, British political philosopher Edmund Burke would praise this strategy as **salutary neglect**.

Salutary neglect was a by-product of the political system developed by Sir Robert Walpole, the Whig leader in the House of Commons from 1720 to 1742. By providing supporters with appointments and pensions, Walpole won parliamentary approval for his policies. However, his patronage appointments filled the British government, including the Board of Trade and the colonial bureaucracy, with do-nothing political hacks. When Governor Gabriel Johnson arrived in North Carolina in the 1730s, he vowed to curb the powers of the assembly and “make a mighty change in the face of affairs.” Receiving little support from the Board of Trade, Johnson renounced reform and decided “to do nothing which can be reasonably blamed, and leave the rest to time, and a new set of inhabitants.”

Walpole’s tactics also weakened the empire by undermining the legitimacy of the political system. Radical Whigs protested that Walpole had betrayed the Glorious Revolution by using **patronage**—the practice of giving offices and salaries to political allies—and bribery to create a strong Court (or Kingly) Party. The Country Party, whose members were landed gentlemen, likewise warned that Walpole’s policies of high taxes and a bloated royal bureaucracy threatened British liberties. Heeding these arguments, colonial legislators complained that royal governors abused their patronage powers. To preserve American liberty, the colonists strengthened the powers of the representative assemblies, unintentionally laying the foundation for the American independence movement (American Voices, p. 108).

Protecting the Mercantile System

In 1732, Walpole provided a parliamentary subsidy for the new colony of Georgia. While Georgia’s reform-minded trustees envisioned the colony as a refuge for Britain’s poor, Walpole had little interest in social reform; he subsidized Georgia to protect the valuable rice-growing colony of South Carolina. The subsidy, however, did exactly the opposite. Britain’s expansion into Georgia outraged Spanish officials, who were



Sir Robert Walpole, the King's Minister

All eyes are on the secretary of the Treasury, Sir Robert Walpole (left), as he offers advice to the Speaker of the House of Commons. A brilliant politician, Walpole used patronage to command a majority in the Commons and also won the confidence of George I and George II, the German-speaking monarchs from the duchy of Hanover. Walpole's personal motto, "Let sleeping dogs lie," helps explain his colonial policy of salutary neglect. Clandon Park, Surrey, UK/National Trust Photographic Library/Hawksley Studios/The Bridgeman Art Library.

already angry about the rising tide of smuggled British manufactures in New Spain. To counter Britain's commercial imperialism, Spanish naval forces stepped up their seizure of illegal traders, in the process mutilating an English sea captain, Robert Jenkins.

Yielding to parliamentary pressure, Walpole declared war on Spain in 1739. The so-called War of Jenkins's Ear (1739–1741) was a fiasco for Britain. In 1740, British regulars failed to capture St. Augustine because South Carolina whites, still shaken by the Stono Rebellion, refused to commit militia units to the expedition. A year later, an assault on the prosperous seaport of Cartagena (in present-day Colombia) also failed; 20,000 British sailors and soldiers and 2,500 colonial troops died in the attack, mostly from tropical diseases.

The War of Jenkins's Ear quickly became part of a general European conflict, the War of the Austrian

Succession (1740–1748). Massive French armies battled British-subsidized German forces in Europe, and French naval forces roamed the West Indies, vainly trying to conquer a British sugar island. Three thousand New England militiamen, supported by a British naval squadron, in 1745 captured Louisbourg, the French fort guarding the entrance to the St. Lawrence River. To the dismay of New England Puritans, who feared invasion from Catholic Quebec, the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle (1748) returned Louisbourg to France. The treaty made it clear to colonial leaders that England would act in its own interests, not theirs.

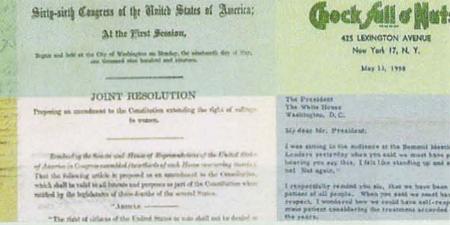
Mercantilism and the American Colonies

Though Parliament prohibited Americans from manufacturing textiles (Woolen Act, 1699), hats (Hat Act, 1732), and iron products such as plows, axes, and skillets (Iron Act, 1750), it could not prevent the colonies from maturing economically. American merchants soon controlled over 75 percent of the transatlantic trade in manufactures and 95 percent of the commerce between the mainland and the British West Indies (see Map 3.4, p. 104).

Moreover, by the 1720s, the British sugar islands could not absorb all the flour, fish, and meat produced by mainland settlers. So, ignoring Britain's intense rivalry with France, colonial merchants sold their produce to the French sugar islands. When American rum distillers began to buy cheap molasses from the French islands, the West Indian sugar lobby in London persuaded Parliament to pass the Molasses Act of 1733. The act placed a high tariff on French molasses, so high that it would no longer be profitable for American merchants to import it. Colonists protested that the Molasses Act would cripple the distilling industry; cut farm exports; and, by slashing colonial income, reduce the mainland's purchases of British goods. When Parliament ignored these arguments, American merchants smuggled in French molasses by bribing customs officials.

The lack of currency in the colonies prompted another conflict with British officials. To pay for British manufactures, American merchants used the bills of exchange and the gold and silver coins earned in the West Indian trade. These payments drained the colonial economy of money, making it difficult for Americans to borrow funds or to buy and sell goods among themselves. To remedy the problem, ten colonial assemblies established public **land banks**, which lent paper money

AMERICAN VOICES



The Rise of Colonial Self-Government

Between 1700 and 1760, members of the representative assemblies in British North America gradually expanded their authority and power. Their success was the result of greater popular participation in politics and their own political skills. However, the shift in power from imperial appointees to colonial legislators occurred in a piecemeal fashion, as the almost unconscious product of a series of small, seemingly inconsequential struggles. As you read the following correspondence among legislators, governors, and British officials, look closely at the character of the disputes and how they were resolved.

Alexander Spotswood Confronting the House of Burgesses

As a reward for his military service fighting the forces of Louis XIV of France, Alexander Spotswood became governor of Virginia in 1710. A contentious man, Spotswood was a controversial governor. He told the House of Burgesses to its face that the voters had mistakenly chosen “a set of representatives whom heaven has not generally endowed with the ordinary [intellectual or social] qualifications requisite to legislators.” Spotswood set out to reform the voting system that, in his judgment, produced such mediocre representatives. His efforts to oust popular members of the gentry from the House of Burgesses created few friends; in 1722, his enemies in Virginia used their influence in London to have him removed from office.

To ye Council of Trade, Virginia, October 15, 1712
MY LORDS:

... The Indians continue their Incursions in North Carolina, and the Death of Colo. Hyde, their Gov'r, which happened the beginning of last Month, increases the misery of that province. . . .

This Unhappy State of her Maj'ts Subjects in my Neighbourhood is ye more Affecting to me because I have very little hopes of being enabled to relieve them by our Assembly, which I have called to meet next Week; for the Mob of this Country, having tried their Strength in the late Election and finding themselves able to carry whom they please, have generally chosen representatives of their own Class, who as their principal Recommendation have declared their resolution to raise no Tax on the people, let the occasion be what it will. This is owing to a defect in the Constitution, which allows to every one, tho' but just out of the Condition of a Servant, and that can but purchase half an acre of Land, an equal Vote with the Man of the best Estate in the Country.

The Militia of this Colony is perfectly useless without Arms or ammunition, and by an unaccountable infatuation, no arguments I have used can prevail on these

people to make their Militia more Serviceable, or to fall into any other measures for the Defence of their Country. [From the Journal of the Virginia Council] December the 17th, 1714

The Governor this day laying before the Council a letter from the Right Honorable the Lords Commissioners for Trade dated the 23d of April 1713 directing him to advise with the Council & to recommend to the Generall Assembly to pass a law for qualifying the Electors & the persons Elected Burgesses to serve in the Generall Assembly of this Colony in a more just & equal manner than the Laws now in force do direct. . . . The Council declare that they cannot advise the Governor to move for any alteration in the present method of Electing of Burgesses, some being of opinion that this is not a proper time, & others that the present manner of electing of Burgesses & the qualifications of the elected is sufficiently provided for by the Laws now in force.

To Mr. Secretary James Stanhope, July 15, 1715

... I cannot forbear regretting yt I must always have to do with ye Representatives of ye Vulgar People, and mostly with such members as are of their Stamp and Understanding, for so long as half an Acre of Land (which is of small value in this Country) qualifys a man to be an Elector, the meaner sort of People will ever carry ye Elections, and the humour generally runs to choose such men as are their most familiar Companions, who very eagerly seek to be Burgesses merely for the lucre of the Salary, and who, for fear of not being chosen again, dare in Assembly do nothing that may be disrelished [disapproved] out of the House by ye Common People. Hence it often happens yt what appears prudent and feasible to his Majesty's Governors and Council here will not pass with the House of Burgesses, upon whom they must depend for the means of putting their designs in Execution.

To the Lords Commissioners of Trade, May 23, 1716

... The behaviour of this Gentleman [Philip Ludwell Jr., the colony's Auditor] in constantly opposing whatever I have offered for ye due collecting the Quitt rents [annual

feudal dues on land] and regulating the Acc'ts; his stirring up ye humours of the people before the last election of Burgesses; tampering with the most mutinous of that house, and betraying to them the measures resolved on in Council for his Majesty's Service, would have made me likewise suspend him from ye Council, but I find by the late Instructions I have received from his Majesty that Power is taken from ye Governor and transferred upon the majority of that Board [of Councilors], and while there are no less than seven of his Relations there, it is impossible to get a Majority to consent to the Suspension of him.

Sources: R. A. Brock, ed., *The Official Letters of Alexander Spotswood* (Richmond: Virginia Historical Society, 1885), 2: 1–2, 124, 154–155; H. R. Maclwaine, ed., *Executive Journals of the Council of Colonial Virginia* (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1928), 3: 392.

George Clinton A Plea for Assistance

George Clinton served as governor of New York from 1744 to 1752. Like many governors during the era of salutary neglect, Clinton owed his appointment to political connections in England. As the second son of the seventh Earl of Lincoln, he would inherit neither the family's estate nor his father's position in the House of Lords; those went to his elder brother. To provide an income for Clinton, his family traded its votes in Parliament for patronage appointments. However, once Clinton was installed as governor of New York, he found himself dependent on the assembly for the payment of his salary—and the salaries of all members of his administration.

My Lords,

I have in my former letters inform'd Your Lordships what Incroachments the Assemblys of this province have from time to time made on His Majesty's Prerogative & Authority in this Province in drawing an absolute dependence of all the Officers upon them for their Saleries & Reward of their services, & by their taking in effect the Nomination to all Officers. . . .

Istly, That the Assembly refuse to admit of any amendment to any money bill, in any part of the Bill; so

that the Bill must pass as it comes from the Assembly, or all the Supplies granted for the support of Government, & the most urgent services must be lost.

2ndly, It appears that they take the Payment of the [military] Forces, passing of Muster Rolls into their own hands by naming the Commissaries for those purposes in the Act.

3rdly, They by granting the Saleries to the Officers personally by name & not to the Officer for the time being, intimate that if any person be appointed to any Office his Salery must depend upon their approbation of the Appointment. . . .

I must now refer it to Your Lordships' consideration whether it be not high time to put a stop to these usurpations of the Assembly on His Majesty's Authority in this Province and for that purpose may it not be proper that His Majesty signify his Disallowance of the Act at least for the payment of Saleries.

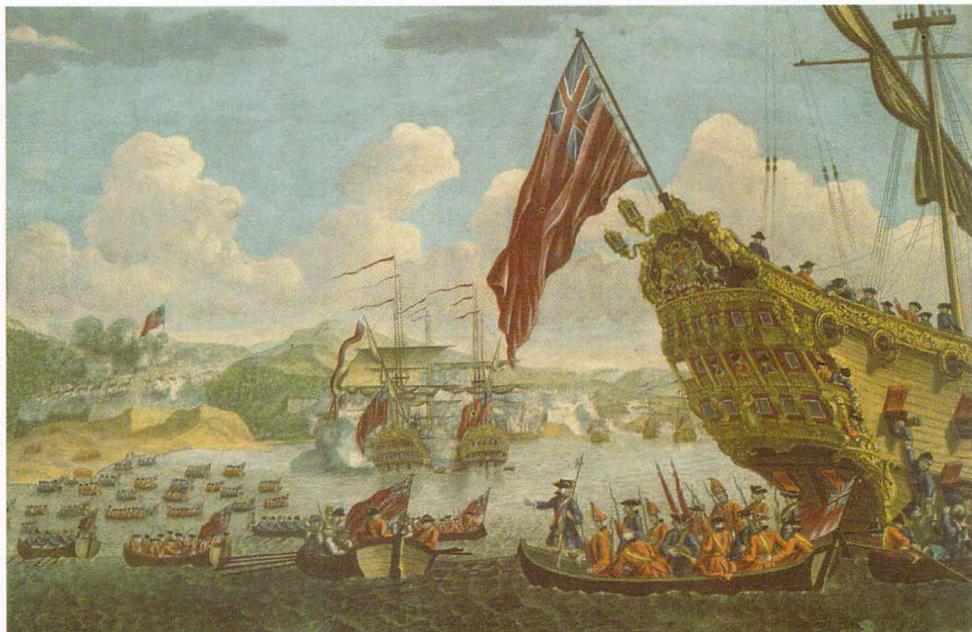
Source: E. B. O'Callaghan, ed., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York* (Albany, 1860 on), 2: 211.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What policies does Spotswood wish to pursue? Why can't he persuade the House of Burgesses to implement them? According to Spotswood, what is wrong with Virginia's political system? How does he propose to reform it?
2. Unlike the House of Burgesses, which was elected by qualified voters, the members of the Governor's Council in Virginia were appointed by the king, usually on the governor's recommendation. What is the council's response to the plan to reform the political system? Given Spotswood's description of the incident involving Philip Ludwell, where did the political sympathies of the council lie?
3. What were Clinton's complaints about the actions of the New York assembly? Did these actions represent a more or less serious threat to imperial power than the activities of the Virginia Burgesses? Based on their correspondence with the Board of Trade, which governor—Spotswood or Clinton—was the stronger representative of the interests of the crown?

The Siege and Capture of Louisbourg, 1745

In 1760, as British and colonial troops moved toward victory in the French and Indian War (1754–1763), the London artist J. Stevens sought to bolster imperial pride by celebrating an earlier Anglo-American triumph. In 1745, a British naval squadron led a flotilla of colonial ships and thousands of New England militiamen in an attack on the French fort at Louisbourg, on Cape Breton Island, near the mouth of the St. Lawrence River. After a siege of forty days, the Anglo-American force captured the fort, long considered impregnable. The victory was bittersweet because the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle (1748) returned the island to France. Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University Library.



to farmers who pledged their land as collateral for the loans. Farmers used the currency to buy tools or livestock or to pay creditors, thereby stimulating trade. However, some assemblies, particularly the legislature in Rhode Island, issued huge quantities of paper money (which consequently decreased in value) and required merchants to accept it as legal tender. English merchants and other creditors rightly complained about being forced to accept devalued money. So in 1751, Parliament passed the Currency Act, which barred the New England colonies from establishing new land banks and prohibited the use of publicly issued paper money to pay private debts.

These conflicts over trade and paper money angered a new generation of English political leaders. In 1749, Charles Townshend of the Board of Trade charged that the American assemblies had assumed many of the “ancient and established prerogatives wisely preserved in the Crown,” and he vowed to replace salutary neglect with more rigorous imperial control.

The wheel of empire had come full circle. In the 1650s, England had set out to create a centrally managed Atlantic empire and, over the course of a century, achieved the military and economic aspects of that goal. Mercantilist legislation, maritime warfare, commercial expansion, and the forced labor of a million African slaves brought prosperity to Britain. However, internal unrest (the Glorious Revolution) and a policy of salutary neglect had weakened Britain’s political

authority over its American colonies. Recognizing the threat self-government posed to the empire, British officials in the late 1740s vowed to reassert their power in America — an initiative with disastrous results.

SUMMARY

In this chapter, we examined processes of change in politics and society. The political story began in the 1660s as Britain imposed controls on its American possessions. Parliament passed the Acts of Trade and Navigation to keep colonial products and trade in English hands. Then King James II abolished representative institutions in the northern colonies and created the authoritarian Dominion of New England. Following the Glorious Revolution, the Navigation Acts remained in place and tied the American economy to that of Britain. But the uprisings of 1688–1689 overturned James II’s policy of strict imperial control, restored colonial self-government, and ushered in an era of salutary political neglect. It also initiated a long era of imperial warfare, in which Native American peoples allied themselves to the colonies and often served as proxy warriors against French- and Spanish-allied peoples, pursuing their own goals in the process.

The social story centers on the development of the South Atlantic System of production and trade, which

involved an enormous expansion in African slave raiding; the Atlantic slave trade; and the cultivation of sugar, rice, and tobacco in America. This complex system created an exploited African American labor force in the southern mainland and West Indian colonies, while it allowed European American farmers,

merchants, and artisans on the North American mainland to prosper. How would the two stories play out? In 1750, slavery and the South Atlantic System seemed firmly entrenched, but the days of salutary neglect appeared numbered.

CHAPTER REVIEW

MAKE IT STICK Go to **LearningCurve** to retain what you've read.



TERMS TO KNOW Identify and explain the significance of each term below.

Key Concepts and Events

proprietorship (p. 82)
Quakers (p. 82)
Navigation Acts (p. 83)
Dominion of New England
 (p. 85)
Glorious Revolution (p. 86)
constitutional monarchy (p. 87)
Second Hundred Years' War
 (p. 88)

tribalization (p. 88)
Covenant Chain (p. 89)
South Atlantic System (p. 90)
Middle Passage (p. 94)
Stono Rebellion (p. 101)
gentility (p. 102)
salutary neglect (p. 106)
patronage (p. 106)
land banks (p. 110)

Key People

William Penn (p. 82)
Edmund Andros (p. 85)
William of Orange (p. 86)
John Locke (p. 86)
Jacob Leisler (p. 87)
William Byrd II (p. 102)
Robert Walpole (p. 106)

REVIEW QUESTIONS Answer these questions to demonstrate your understanding of the chapter's main ideas.

1. What strategies did Charles II and James II employ to try to gain more centralized control over England's American colonies? What did James hope to accomplish by creating the Dominion of New England?
2. How did the long era of imperial warfare beginning in 1689 affect the colonies, Native Americans, and relations between them?
3. What was the South Atlantic System, and how did it shape colonial society?
4. How did the institution of slavery develop, and why did it develop differently in the Chesapeake, the Carolina low country, and the West Indies?
5. **THEMATIC UNDERSTANDING** Trace the developments outlined in the section entitled "Politics and Power" from 1660 to 1750 on the thematic timeline on page 79. What pattern of political evolution do you see in colonial interactions with Britain?

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Recognize the larger developments and continuities within and across chapters by answering these questions.

- 1. ACROSS TIME AND PLACE** In Chapter 2, we traced the emergence of three distinct colonial types in the Americas during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: tribute, plantation, and neo-European colonies. In Chapter 3, we have seen how Britain's plantation and neo-European colonies became more closely interconnected after 1700. What developments caused them to become more closely tied to each other? How did they benefit from these ties? Can you see any disadvantages to the colonies in a more fully integrated Atlantic system?
- 2. VISUAL EVIDENCE** Consider the illustrations of women hulling rice in West Africa and Georgia on page 100. Historians have long debated the role Africans played in developing rice cultivation in the South Carolina and Georgia low country. These debates have focused primarily on methods of cultivation: Did Africans who had prior experience with rice teach English planters how to grow it? How can these two images contribute to the debate and expand our perspective on the question of African influences in American rice production?

MORE TO EXPLORE

Start here to learn more about the events discussed in this chapter.

Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone* (2000). Explores the varieties of slave experience in North America.

Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* (1789; reprint 2006). A compelling and influential eighteenth-century slave autobiography.

Paul Mapp, *The Elusive West and the Contest for Empire, 1713–1763* (2011). Offers a continental perspective on the contest for European control of North America.

Owen Stanwood, *The Empire Reformed* (2011). Tells the story of the Glorious Revolution in the American colonies.

Africans in America, Part 1: Terrible Transformation, 1450–1750 (PBS video, 1998) and the related Web site (pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part1/title.html). Treats the early African American experience.

“The Atlantic Slave Trade and Slave Life in the Americas: A Visual Record” (hitchcock.itc.virginia.edu/Slavery). An extensive collection of slave images.

TIMELINE Ask yourself why this chapter begins and ends with these dates and then identify the links among related events.

| | |
|-----------|--|
| 1651 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Navigation Act |
| 1660–1685 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reign of Charles II, king of England |
| 1663 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charles II grants Carolina proprietorship |
| 1664 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English capture New Netherland, rename it New York |
| 1669 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virginia law declares that the murder of a slave cannot be treated as a felony |
| 1681 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • William Penn founds Pennsylvania |
| 1685–1688 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reign of James II, king of England |
| 1686–1689 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dominion of New England |
| 1688–1689 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glorious Revolution in England |
| 1689 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • William and Mary ascend throne in England • Revolts in Massachusetts, Maryland, and New York |
| 1689–1713 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • England, France, and Spain at war |
| 1696 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parliament creates Board of Trade |
| 1714–1750 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • British policy of salutary neglect • American assemblies gain power |
| 1720–1742 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robert Walpole leads Parliament |
| 1720–1750 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • African American communities form • Rice exports from South Carolina soar • Planter aristocracy emerges • Seaport cities expand |
| 1732 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parliament charters Georgia, challenging Spain • Hat Act limits colonial enterprise |
| 1733 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Molasses Act threatens distillers |
| 1739 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stono Rebellion in South Carolina |
| 1739–1748 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • War with Spain in the Caribbean and France in Canada and Europe |
| 1750 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Iron Act restricts colonial iron production |
| 1751 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currency Act prohibits land banks and paper money |

KEY TURNING POINTS: The Glorious Revolution (1688–1689), salutary neglect and the rise of the assemblies (1714–1750), and the Hat, Molasses, Iron, and Currency Acts (1732–1751). How do these developments reflect Britain's new attitude toward its colonies? In what matters did Parliament seek to control the colonies, and in what did it grant them autonomy?