

The English Colonies in North America

What were the similarities and differences among the colonies in North America?

Introduction

In the mid-1700s, a German schoolteacher named Gottlieb Mittelberger boarded a ship bound for the colony of Pennsylvania in far-off North America. He had borrowed the cost of his passage by signing on as an indentured servant, which means that he would have to settle his debt by working for the master who bought his services.

The voyage across the Atlantic was horrible. “The people are packed densely,” Mittelberger wrote, “like herrings so to say, in the large sea vessels. One person receives a place of scarcely 2 feet width and 6 feet length . . . There is on board these ships terrible misery, stench, fumes, horror, vomiting, many kinds of seasickness, fever, dysentery, headache, heat, constipation, boils, scurvy, cancer, mouthrot, and the like, all of which come from old and sharply salted food and meat, also from very bad and foul water.”

When the nightmarish voyage ended, Mittelberger had to stay on board until his services were purchased. Most indentured servants had to work for their masters for three to six years, but commitments varied according to the servants' ages and strength. As Mittelberger noted, “young people, from 10 to 15 years, must serve till they are 21 years old.”

Why were people willing to go through such hardships to come to the colonies? Many colonists came to North America for the chance to own land and start a new life while others were seeking freedom to practice their religion without fear of persecution. There were also some who did not have a choice. In addition to a number of convicts (people in jail) who were forced to go to North America to work off their debts as indentured servants, millions of Africans were kidnapped from their homelands and brought to the colonies as slaves.

In this lesson, you will learn about the people who settled the English colonies. You will read in detail about the similarities and differences between 8 of the 13 colonies.

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Social Studies Vocabulary

cash crop

charter

democratic

Mayflower Compact

mercantilism

slave trade

1 The New England, Middle, and Southern Colonies

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English settlers established colonies in North America for several reasons. Some colonies were created by groups of businesspeople who hoped to profit from resources found in the Americas. Other colonies were settled by people looking for a place to practice their religion without fear of persecution. One colony was even established as a refuge for debtors (people who owe money), who would otherwise have been tossed into prison.

The English government supported all these efforts in part because it was competing for land in the Americas with other nations like France and Spain. England had another reason for establishing colonies: it was also competing for wealth. Like most western European nations in the late 1600s, England followed an economic policy called **mercantilism**. Under this policy, nations attempted to gain wealth by controlling trade and establishing colonies. The colonies made money for England by supplying raw materials to its industries. England turned these raw materials into goods that could then be sold to other nations and to its own colonies.

By 1733, there were 13 British colonies along the Atlantic coastline. They can be grouped into three distinct regions: the New England, Middle, and Southern Colonies. These regions had different climates and resources that attracted settlers and encouraged the development of different ways of life.

The New England Colonies The New England region included the colonies of Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and New Hampshire. The first settlers of these colonies came to America seeking freedom from the religious persecution that they faced in England.

In New England, farming was difficult because of the long, cold winters and the region's rocky, hilly wilderness. But the forests and the sea provided useful resources and ways to make a living. New Englanders built their **economy** on small farms, lumbering, fishing, shipbuilding, and trade.

The Middle Colonies The four Middle Colonies were New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware. The first settlers to these colonies came from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds. The landscape of this region ranged from the rich soil of coastal New Jersey and Delaware to the valleys and wooded mountains of New York and Pennsylvania. Farmers in the Middle Colonies raised a variety of crops and livestock. Lumbering, shipbuilding, and other occupations added to the many opportunities here.

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The people who settled the Middle Colonies represented many cultures and religions. One important group, the Quakers, started the colony of Pennsylvania. Like the early settlers of New England, the Quakers were looking for freedom to practice their religion without fear of persecution. Other groups seeking religious freedom soon followed, and settlements of French, Dutch, Germans, Swedes, Danes, Finns, Scots, Irish, and English began to spread throughout the Middle Colonies.

The Southern Colonies The five Southern Colonies were Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia. This region featured broad rivers and vast wetlands that gradually merged with the sea. The soil and the hot and wet climate were ideal for growing tobacco, rice, and other **cash crops**.

Wealthy colonists took advantage of these conditions by establishing large farms called plantations. Plantation owners relied on indentured servants and enslaved Africans to sow and harvest their fields. After being harvested, the crops could be brought by river to the coast and loaded on ships for transport to other colonies and to Europe.

Government in the Colonies All the colonies were settled with the permission of the king of England. For each colony, the king issued a **charter**, a formal document that outlined the colony's geographic boundaries and specified how it would be governed. Because the colonies were so far from England, however, they needed to be able to make their own laws and keep peace and order.

Most of the colonies developed different forms of government depending on the settlement's purpose. Within most of these colonies, colonists elected members of their community to a general assembly, which made their laws.

Many colonies also had a governor appointed by the king. As the king's representative, the governor could overrule the elected assembly. Some colonies also had councils, or groups of men who represented the English businessmen whose money helped to fund the colony's creation.

In Massachusetts, religious colonists established a theocracy, a government based upon religious principles and whose leaders rule in the name of God. In time, however, a system of town meetings emerged in which colonists voted for representatives to govern them.

In many ways, the colonies were more **democratic** than England. Still, not all colonists had a voice in the government. Usually, only free,

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white, landowning men were allowed to vote. In some colonies, voters also had to belong to the preferred church. Other colonists— including women, servants, slaves, and skilled tradesmen who were not landowners—had no voting rights.



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2. Massachusetts: A New England Colony

In the early 1600s, religion was important in England. The king presided over the Church of England, also called the Anglican Church. However, not everyone agreed with the church's practices.

One group, who would later be called Puritans, wanted to “purify” the Anglican Church by making services simpler and doing away with ranks of authority. A radical faction among Puritans, called Separatists, wanted to be completely separate from the English church and have the ability to form their own congregations. When the king began jailing Separatists for not attending Anglican services, some of them moved to Holland, where they could practice their religion freely.

But Holland wasn't home, and the Separatists wanted their children to grow up in an English culture. In 1620, about 102 Separatists set sail for America aboard the Mayflower. The Separatists, called Pilgrims because they traveled for religious reasons, hoped to build their idea of a perfect society in America. During their voyage, they signed an agreement called the **Mayflower Compact** that described the way they would

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govern themselves in the Americas.

After a long and grueling journey across the Atlantic, the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth, near Cape Cod. When the Pilgrims landed, they were welcomed by the local American Indian tribe, the Wampanoag (WAWM-pah-NAW-ahg), who taught them how to plant crops, trap animals, and catch fish. Without the help of these American Indians, the Pilgrims might not have survived their first winter. In 1621, the Pilgrims invited the Wampanoag to share their first harvest in a threeday feast of thanksgiving. Today, Americans still celebrate this holiday.

Ten years later, a large group of Puritans decided to follow the Pilgrims to America. The king was relieved to see them go and sent them off with a charter for the colony of Massachusetts Bay. The charter said that the Massachusetts colonists would govern themselves. The Puritans were pleased with the charter because they wanted to build a community governed by the rules of the Bible. They hoped to set an example for the rest of the world. Their governor, John Winthrop, said, "We must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us."

Massachusetts New England Colony

- **Founders** Pilgrims led by William Bradford (1620) and Puritans led by John Winthrop (1630)
- **Settlers** Puritans escaping religious persecution
- **Climate** Harsh winters, warm summers
- **Geography** Sandy coast with good ports, rich pastures, forests
- **Economy/Occupations** Crop and livestock farming, lumbering, shops, shipping
- **Religion** Puritan
- **Government** Self-governing, with



3. Rhode Island: A New England Colony

The Puritans of Massachusetts gained the freedom to practice their religion without being persecuted. However, instead of granting similar freedom to others, they created a government that required everyone in the colony to worship the same way as they did.

When a young minister named Roger Williams began preaching different ideas, the Puritans put him on trial. Williams believed that all people should be able to worship in any way they chose. "Forced worship," he declared, "stinks in God's nostrils."

Although the Puritans ordered Williams to be sent back to England, on a cold winter day in 1636, he left his wife and children and escaped to the south. After trudging through snow for days, he met a group of American Indians near Narragansett Bay who cared for him until spring. When his family and a few followers joined him, Williams bought land from the American Indians for a settlement. He called it Providence, a word meaning "the guidance and care of God."

Williams welcomed people with different religious beliefs to Providence. Two years after he and his followers settled Providence, a colonist named Anne Hutchinson was forced to leave Massachusetts for preaching against the Puritans. She followed Williams, and together

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they established a settlement called Portsmouth. In 1647, these and other settlements united to become the colony of Rhode Island. In 1663, Rhode Island elected an assembly to govern the colony.

While the people of Rhode Island sought freedom to follow their own beliefs, this ideal did not extend to enslaved Africans. Sea merchants soon discovered the riches that could be made in the **slave trade**. As a result, Rhode Island became one of the largest slave-trading centers in the world. Some of the wealthiest families in New England made their fortunes from slave trading. At the same time, the **isolated** coves along the Rhode Island coast provided perfect refuges for pirates and smugglers. Puritans in other colonies were disgusted by the slavery, pirating, and smuggling taking place in Rhode Island. Reverend Cotton Mather of Boston called Rhode Island “the sewer of New England.” The actions of slave traders in Rhode Island led many Puritans to believe that rejecting these people and their ideas was justified. Using a word that implied “criminals,” they invented their own name for the colony: “Rogues' Island.”

Rhode Island New England Colony

- **Founders** Roger Williams and Anne Hutchinson
- **Settlers** People seeking religious freedom
- **Climate** Hot, humid summers; cold, snowy winters
- **Geography** Coastal lowlands; flat, rocky woodlands
- **Economy/Occupations** Farming (large cattle and dairy farms, small independent farms), lumbering, shipbuilding, fishing, whaling, trade
- **Religion** Various faiths
- **Government** Self-governing



4. Connecticut: A New England Colony

Even amongst the Puritans who stayed in Massachusetts, not all of them shared exactly the same ideas. Thomas Hooker was a Puritan clergyman who lived in New Towne, a fast-growing community next to Boston. Hooker didn't always agree with the laws and leadership in Massachusetts. When he heard about a fertile valley along a river to the west, he convinced his family and about 100 other people to move there with him.

It took Hooker and his followers two weeks to travel to the Connecticut Valley with their animals and belongings. There they established a settlement on the site of an old Dutch fort, where an earlier group of English colonists had settled. Hooker and his followers called their new community Hartford. In 1639, Hartford joined with two other settlements to form the colony of Connecticut.

Hooker believed that government should be based on “the free consent of the people,” to whom belongs “the choice of public [officials] by God's own allowance.” He helped draw up the first written plan of government for any of the colonies, and which was called the Fundamental Orders. The Fundamental Orders **guaranteed** the right to vote to all men who were members of the Puritan church.

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Meanwhile, other Puritans formed a separate colony nearby called New Haven. The Puritans of New Haven agreed to live by the “word of God,” so their laws were stricter than those in Hooker's Connecticut colony.

Neither of these colonies, however, was legally **authorized** by the king. Then, in 1662, King Charles II granted a charter for a new Connecticut colony that included New Haven. The charter gave Connecticut colonists more rights than those enjoyed by any other colonists except Rhode Island's. A popular legend states that when King James II sent Governor Andros to Hartford 15 years later to take back the colonists' charter, someone stole it and hid it in the trunk of a huge white oak tree. The “Charter Oak” became a symbol of Connecticut's freedom.

Connecticut New England Colony

- **Founder** Thomas Hooker
- **Settlers** Puritans seeking a new settlement
- **Climate** Cold winters, mild summers
- **Geography** Forested hills, seacoast
- **Economy/Occupations** Farming (crops and livestock), shipbuilding, fishing, whaling
- **Religion** Puritan
- **Government** Written constitution (Fundamental Orders), self-governing



5. New York: A Middle Colony

The English took control of the settlement of New Netherland in 1664. The English renamed the colony New York in honor of its new **proprietor** (owner), James, the Duke of York. The duke gave huge chunks of his colony to two friends, Sir George Carteret and Lord John Berkeley, who then established the colony of New Jersey to the south of New York.

The duke also awarded large estates along the Hudson River to wealthy Englishmen. The new landowners charged high rents to farmers working their land. However, this practice created a great difference in wealth between the landowners and their poor tenants, and it discouraged people from settling in New York.

The duke of York expected his colony to be a moneymaking business. As its owner, he appointed people to run the colony. He also issued his own laws and decided what New Yorkers should pay in taxes.

Although New York's rich landlords approved of the duke's approach to governing his colony, farmers, fishers, and tradespeople did not. They

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demanded the right to elect an assembly to make laws for New York. The duke refused, saying that elected assemblies had a habit of disturbing the “peace of the government.”

After years of protest, the duke finally allowed New Yorkers to elect an assembly in 1683. This first assembly passed 15 laws, the most important of which was a charter listing a number of rights that most colonists believed they deserved as English citizens. Among them were the right to elect their own lawmakers, the right to trial by jury, and the right to worship as they pleased.

When the duke saw what the assembly had done, he abolished it. New Yorkers did not get a new assembly until, under the leadership of Jacob Leisler (LIES-ler), they rebelled in 1689. Leisler was elected commander in chief of a democratic council that governed until 1691. That year, New York was finally granted the right to elect an assembly with the power to pass laws and set taxes for the colony.

New York Middle Colony

- **Founders** Dutch West India Company (1624); James Duke of York (1664)
- **Settlers** Dutch and English seeking new lives
- **Climate** Cold, snowy winters; hot, humid summers
- **Geography** Wetlands along the coast and Hudson River, forested mountains to the North
- **Economy/Occupations** Fur-trapping, lumbering, shipping, slave trade, merchants and tradesmen, farming, iron mining
- **Religion** Various faiths
- **Government** British-appointed governor and council alternating with elected assembly



6. Pennsylvania: A Middle Colony

When William Penn asked King Charles II to let him establish a colony in America, the king had two reasons for granting Penn's request. First, he could repay a large debt that he owed to Penn's father, Admiral Penn. Second, he could get rid of William, who had been a thorn in the king's side for several years.

William Penn was a member of the Society of Friends, or Quakers. The Quakers believed in a simple lifestyle and in treating all people equally. They refused to bow before the king, fight in wars, or pay taxes to the Church of England.

In 1668, the king incarcerated Penn, hoping to stop him from preaching the Quakers' ideas. To the king's dismay, Penn continued preaching after his release.

With the Quakers unwelcome in England, Penn sought to establish a colony in America where they would be free to practice their own beliefs. In 1681, the king granted Penn a huge area of land between the Puritan colonies of New England and the Anglican colonies of the South.

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In honor of Penn's father, the colony was called Pennsylvania.

Penn advertised his colony all over Europe. Many were drawn to Pennsylvania by his Great Law of 1682, which guaranteed that people of all faiths would be treated equally.

Penn's appeal attracted settlers from several countries. An early colonist in Pennsylvania marveled at the prosperity and peace in the colony. He wrote, "Poor people (both Men and Women) of all kinds, can here get three times the Wages for their Labour they can in England or Wales . . . Here are no Beggars to be seen . . . Jealousie among Men is here very rare . . . nor are old Maids to be met with; for all commonly Marry before they are Twenty Years of Age."

Penn named his capital city Philadelphia, which is Greek for "City of Brotherly Love." From there, he wrote important government documents that made Pennsylvania the first democracy in America.

Pennsylvania Middle Colony

- **Founder** William Penn
- **Settlers** English Quakers and other Europeans seeking freedom and equality
- **Climate** Cold winters; hot, humid summers
- **Geography** Rolling hills, trees, and fertile soil
- **Economy/Occupations** Farming (crops and dairy) merchants and tradesman, lumbering, shipbuilding
- **Religion** Various faiths
- **Government** Self-governing



7. Maryland: A Southern Colony

The founding of Maryland was a family enterprise. Sir George Calvert, named Lord Baltimore by King James I, was an English gentleman who became a Roman Catholic. In England, with its official Anglican Church, Catholics were treated harshly. Calvert wanted to start a colony “founded on religious freedom where there would not only be a good life, but also a prosperous one for those bold enough to take the risk.” As a businessman, he also hoped the colony would make his own family more **prosperous**, or wealthy.

Unfortunately, Calvert died while he was still bargaining with the king. The new king, King Charles I, granted a charter for the colony to Calvert's son Cecil, the new Lord Baltimore. The charter gave the Calverts complete control of the colony, which was called Maryland.

Armed with these powers, Cecil named his brother Leonard as governor. To make money from the colony, Cecil needed to attract both Protestant and Catholic settlers. He told Leonard to be “very careful to preserve unity and peace . . . and treat the Protestants with as much mildness and favor as justice will permit.”

Leonard's expedition arrived in Maryland in 1634. There he and his followers built St. Mary's City on a high, dry bluff they purchased from an American Indian tribe. The following year, Leonard agreed to let Maryland elect an assembly to govern the colony.

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As more and more settlers arrived, Leonard could see that Catholics would always be outnumbered in the colony. To protect their rights, in 1649 he helped pass America's first law guaranteeing religious liberty, the Act Concerning Religion. This law, however, applied only to Christians. Atheists (people who do not believe in the existence of God) and Jews were not included.

Despite the Calverts' efforts, Protestants and Catholics remained suspicious of one another and waged a tug-of-war in Maryland for more than a century. During this time, the colony's founding family lost and regained power several times. Still, George Calvert's dream was fulfilled. Catholics in Maryland worshiped freely and took part in the colony's government alongside Protestants.

Maryland Southern Colony

- **Founder** Cecil Calvert (Lord Baltimore)
- **Settlers** Catholics and Protestants seeking religious and political freedom
- **Climate** Cold, rainy winters; hot, humid summers
- **Geography** Low, fertile land surrounding Chesapeake Bay
- **Economy/Occupations** Farming and ranching (crops, beef, dairy), lumbering, shipping, fishing, iron mining
- **Religion** Various faiths, particularly Catholic
- **Government** Self-governing



8. Virginia: A Southern Colony

Jamestown, Virginia, was the first successful English settlement in America. After a shaky start, Virginia began to grow and prosper. By 1700, the descendants of those early settlers had become wealthy landowners and the most important people in Virginia.

The economy of Virginia was based on tobacco. Tobacco planters needed vast areas of land to be successful. They also needed a large number of laborers to grow their crops.

At first, planters tried putting the surrounding American Indian tribes to work. But the tribes in this area were not used to farming. Worse, many of them died of diseases they caught from the colonists. The others faded into the forests and disappeared.

Next, tobacco planters tried bringing the poverty-stricken from England to work their land. In exchange for free passage to Virginia, the workers agreed to become indentured servants for a period of five to seven years. Many men, women, and children came to Virginia as indentured

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servants. After completing their service, they were given their freedom along with a small plot of land, some clothing, tools, and seeds.

The first Africans brought to Virginia were also treated as indentured servants. At first, they had the same rights and freedoms as white servants. Once their service ended, they could buy land and servants of their own.

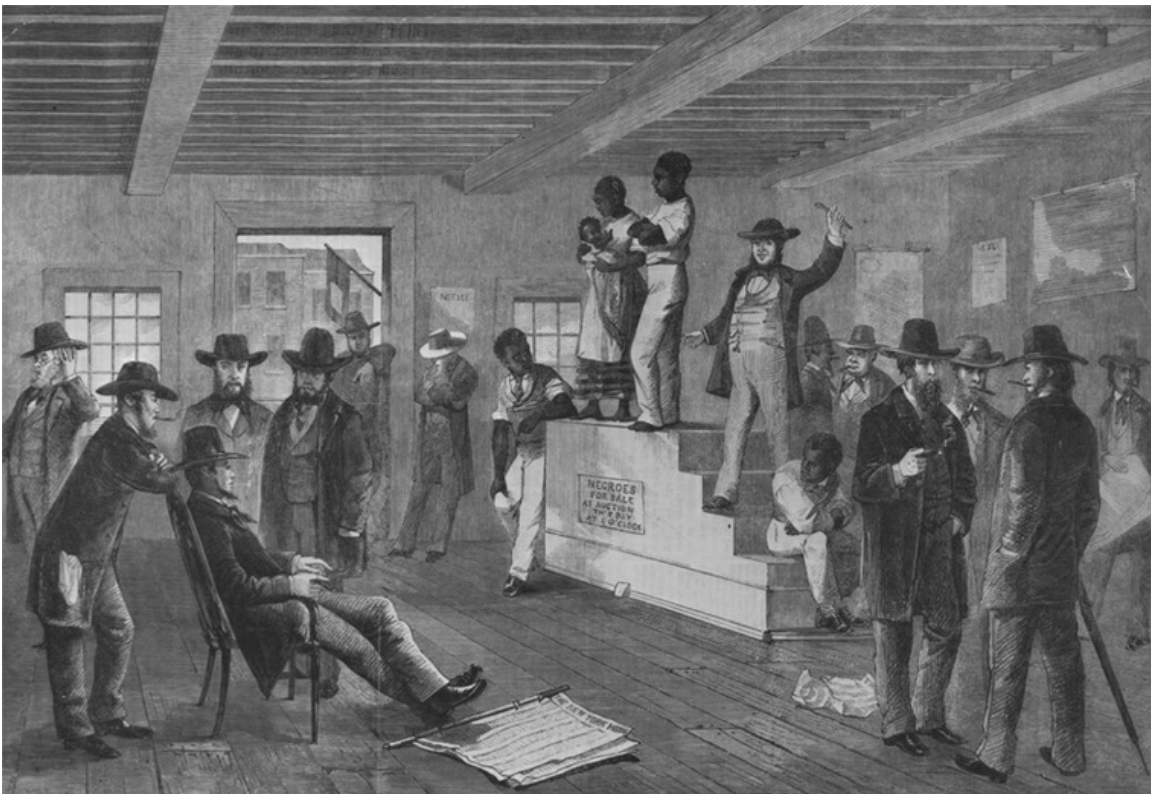
Gradually, however, planters turned to slaves to solve their labor problem. Slaves brought from Africa cost twice as much as servants, but because they were considered to be property, slaves were not released from service like indentured servants.

For the planters, enslaving Africans had other advantages as well. Most enslaved Africans were already familiar with different methods of farming. In addition, because of their dark skin, it was hard for them to escape from their owners and blend into the rest of the population.

Virginia elected an assembly, called the House of Burgesses, in 1619. In 1661, the House of Burgesses passed a law that made African workers slaves for life. By 1700, Virginia had more than 16,000 enslaved Africans—more than one-fourth of the colony's population. For Virginia, slavery had become a way of life.

Virginia Southern Colony

- **Founders** Sir Walter Raleigh and the Virginia Company
- **Settlers** English landowners, skilled laborers (shoemakers, bricklayers, tailors), people seeking profit
- **Climate** Mild winters; hot, humid summers
- **Geography** Coastal lowlands, wooded mountains
- **Economy/Occupations** Farming (plantations and small independent farms)
- **Religion** Church of England
- **Government** Self-governing, with elected assembly (House of Burgesses)



9. Georgia: A Southern Colony

Georgia, the 13th and last colony, was founded by a group of Englishmen whose business plan was based on a grand and noble idea. They wanted to help poor people in England stay out of debtors' prison. In England, at this time, people who couldn't pay their bills went to jail. James Oglethorpe inspired wealthy Englishmen to give money to help establish a colony where the poor could build better lives instead of going to jail.

King George II and his government liked this plan because the Georgia colony would help keep the Spanish from moving north out of Florida. Georgia would stand between Spanish Florida and the rest of the British colonies to the north.

However, the Englishmen's plan depended on getting the cooperation of settlers. Unfortunately, there weren't many poor debtors who wanted to start new lives in the wilderness of North America. Some thought prison would be a safer place.

Instead of an army of debtors, the colonists who went with Oglethorpe to Georgia in 1732 were adventurers much like the settlers in the other colonies. In addition, many Protestants, Catholics, and Jews came to Georgia in search of religious freedom.

As many had feared, life was difficult in Georgia. The Spaniards in Florida wanted to control Georgia, and they continually attacked the new settlements. The Georgians fought them off without any help from the other British colonies. To make matters worse, Oglethorpe had specific ideas about how the colonists should live. Oglethorpe envisioned that his new colony would be a perfect society, and he established laws against drinking alcohol and owning slaves to fulfill this vision. He also believed that the settlers should live on small farms and learn to farm their land themselves.

Unhappy about Oglethorpe's rules, the settlers weren't about to go along with his strict views on society. They wanted to farm large plantations and own slaves like the wealthy planters in neighboring colonies. They disliked Oglethorpe's other rules as well.

After 12 years of governing the colony, Oglethorpe returned to England. In 1752, the people of Georgia elected an assembly.

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Georgia Southern Colony

- **Founders** George II and James Edward Oglethorpe
- **Settlers** Debtors from English prisons, Europeans seeking religious freedom and cheap land
- **Climate** Short, mild winters; long, hot, humid summers
- **Geography** Wetlands and red-clay plains; forested mountains
- **Economy/Occupations** Farming (plantations and independent farms), trade, skilled labor
- **Religion** Various faiths
- **Government** Self-governing

Lesson Summary

In this lesson, you read about the settlement of the 13 English colonies in the Americas.

Settlers and Slaves Settlers had many reasons to come to America in the 1600s and 1700s. Two important reasons were freedom of religion and the chance to start a new life. However, even though colonists treasured freedom for themselves, they had Africans brought to the Americas by force to work as slaves.

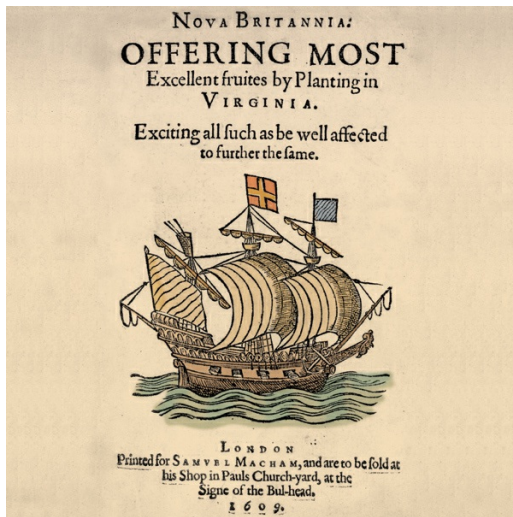
Regional Development The New England, Middle, and Southern Colonies had distinctive geographies and natural resources. As a result, different ways of life developed in each region. Colonies also varied in their form of government, but all were democratic to some degree.

New England Colonies Religion and geography were key influences in these colonies. Although Puritans sometimes disagreed, they hoped to establish model communities based on their religious faith. New England's forests and coastline made lumbering, ship-building, and

trade very important to the region's economy.

Middle Colonies These colonies were geographically, culturally, and religiously diverse. Catholics, Quakers, Anglicans, and members of other Protestant faiths all found homes in this region.

Southern Colonies In these colonies, climate and geography encouraged the planting of cash crops and the development of large plantations. In time, slave labor would become a major part of this region's economy.



Reading Further

A Colonial Cast of Characters

Many kinds of people settled the English colonies of North America. There were Pilgrims and planters, merchants and craft workers, enslaved Africans and indentured servants. Some came seeking freedom and opportunity, while others came because they had no choice. All of them contributed to life in the colonies. Here are four of their stories.

It was November 1620, and William Bradford had just arrived in America after a long and difficult journey aboard the *Mayflower*. However, the ship had not reached its intended destination.

Bradford was one of the leaders of a group of Separatists on the *Mayflower*. The Separatists, who called themselves Pilgrims, had broken away from the Church of England and were seeking religious freedom in America. They had been granted a patent—a royal permit—to settle in Virginia, but violent storms had blown their ship off course. Now, they

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sat off the coast of what would become Massachusetts, hundreds of miles from Virginia.

Winter was coming, so the Pilgrims decided to found their colony there, which they called Plymouth, after a coastal city in England. However, another group of people on board had different ideas. They had not come to America for religious reasons, but to own land. Since they had not reached Virginia, they argued that they were not bound by the terms of the patent and said that no one had the “power to command them.”

Facing a possible rebellion, Bradford and the other Pilgrim leaders drew up an agreement, which we call the Mayflower Compact, to unite the colony. By signing this document, the members of the new colony agreed to form a “civil body politic,” or a form of representative government. They agreed to obey “just and equall laws” created “for the generall good of the Colonie.” This was the first written framework for self-government in the English colonies.

Bradford, who later became governor of Plymouth Colony, had always been ruled by kings and had never lived under any form of self-government. But he did have a strong belief in his rights. The idea of the “rights of Englishmen,” rooted in Magna Carta (a 13th-century document limiting royal power) and the English Bill of Rights, would be a foundation for self-rule throughout the colonies.

Margaret Hardenbroeck: Dutch Trader

William Bradford came to America to practice his religion and build a new society based on religious principles. Margaret Hardenbroeck came for a very different reason. She moved to the colonies to do business, and she became very successful.

Hardenbroeck was born in the Netherlands and moved to New Amsterdam, the Dutch colonial city that later became New York, in 1659. Unlike most colonists who didn't have jobs when they reached the Americas, Hardenbroeck worked as an agent for her cousin, a merchant in Holland. Hardenbroeck sold goods like cooking oil and vinegar and bought furs to send back to Holland, quickly establishing her a reputation as a skilled trader.

New Amsterdam was a growing trade center at the time, which reflected the commercial spirit of Holland, a country that thrived on trade. The city had an open, tolerant feel, and it was a place where people of different religious and national backgrounds could live and do

business.

Hardenbroeck benefited from this commercial spirit, as well as the more relaxed Dutch attitude toward women's rights. In Holland, women could get an education, own property, and conduct business on their own. These were not rights that existed for women in England at the time.

Not long after Hardenbroeck arrived, she married a wealthy merchant. When he died soon after, she inherited his land and business. In a short time, she had become one of the wealthiest citizens in the colony.

A year later, Hardenbroeck married another trader. Together, they continued to expand their business and soon owned a fleet of ships that moved goods from the colonies to Europe and the West Indies and back. They also owned a lot of land, including a plantation in Barbados.

After England took control of New Amsterdam in 1664, Hardenbroeck maintained good relations with her English rulers. English law allowed her less freedom to manage her own affairs, but her business continued to thrive. She remained one of the colony's leading citizens until her death in 1691.



Olaudah Equiano: African Slave

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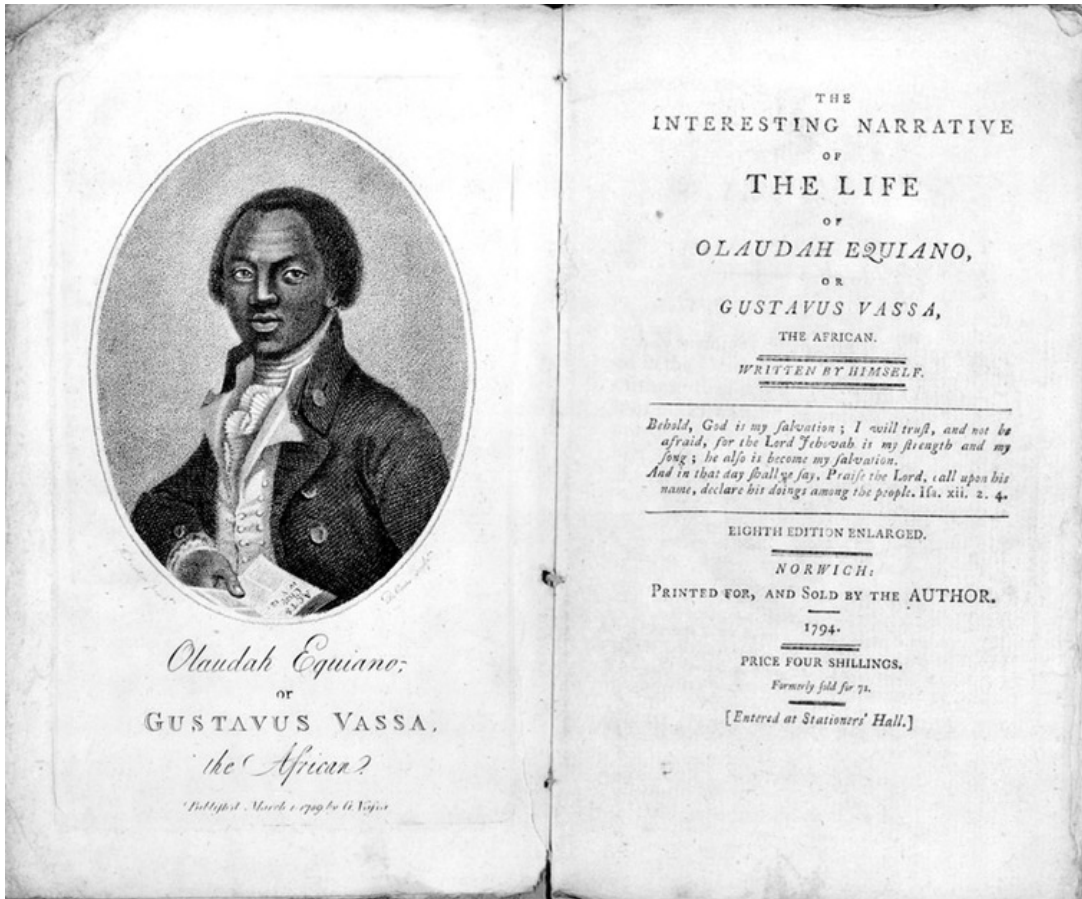
Most people came to the colonies of their own free will, but coming to America was not always a choice. Many black Africans were captured in their homelands and sold to slave traders, who would then pack them onto ships and transport them to the American colonies. This journey, known as the Middle Passage, was horrific for the enslaved Africans.

One man who made this journey was Olaudah Equiano (oh- LAU-duh ek-wee-AHN-oh). In 1789, he wrote a book about his life, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African, Written by Himself*. He described his early life in Africa, his enslavement, and his eventual freedom.

Equiano was born in the kingdom of Benin, in West Africa. His father was a village chief, and Equiano was expected to follow in his footsteps. When he was 11, however, he was kidnapped, taken to the coast, and loaded onto a slave ship, where he was beaten and chained to the deck alongside other slaves. "I inquired of these what was to be done with us," he wrote. "They gave me to understand we were to be carried to these white people's country to work for them." Equiano was initially relieved since he had believed that the white men meant to kill him, but his trials were not over yet.

When the ship was about to set sail, the Africans were put into cramped quarters below deck, and Equiano recalled that:

The closeness of the place and the heat of the climate, added to the number in the ship, which was so crowded that each had scarcely room to turn himself, almost suffocated us . . . The shrieks of the women and the groans of the dying rendered the whole a scene of horror almost inconceivable.



Equiano spent several weeks at sea before arriving in Barbados. He was then sent to a plantation in Virginia, where, after less than a month, he was sold to an English naval officer. Equiano traveled the world as this man's servant, and after seven years he was able to buy his freedom. He was relatively fortunate compared to the hundreds of thousands of Africans who were brought to America and never knew freedom again.

Matthew Lyon: Indentured Servant

Another large group of people came to the colonies as indentured servants. In fact, around half of all European colonists arrived as indentured workers. Similarly to enslaved Africans, some of these people were kidnapped and brought against their will. Others were convicts who were transported in chains. Most indentured servants agreed to come voluntarily, however, and to work for several years to pay off their ship passage. One of these people was a young Irishman named Matthew Lyon.

Lyon was just 14 when he came to the colonies in 1765. Under the terms of indenture, young people were supposed to work until age 21.

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However, Lyon bribed the ship captain to say that he was 18, so when Lyon was auctioned to a buyer in New York, he was only sold for a three-year term of service.

Lyon was too clever to remain a servant for even that length of time, however, and a year into his service, he arranged to buy two bulls from a local farmer, promising to pay the farmer when he was free. Lyon sold the bulls to his master in exchange for his freedom and went to work for the farmer to pay back his debt.

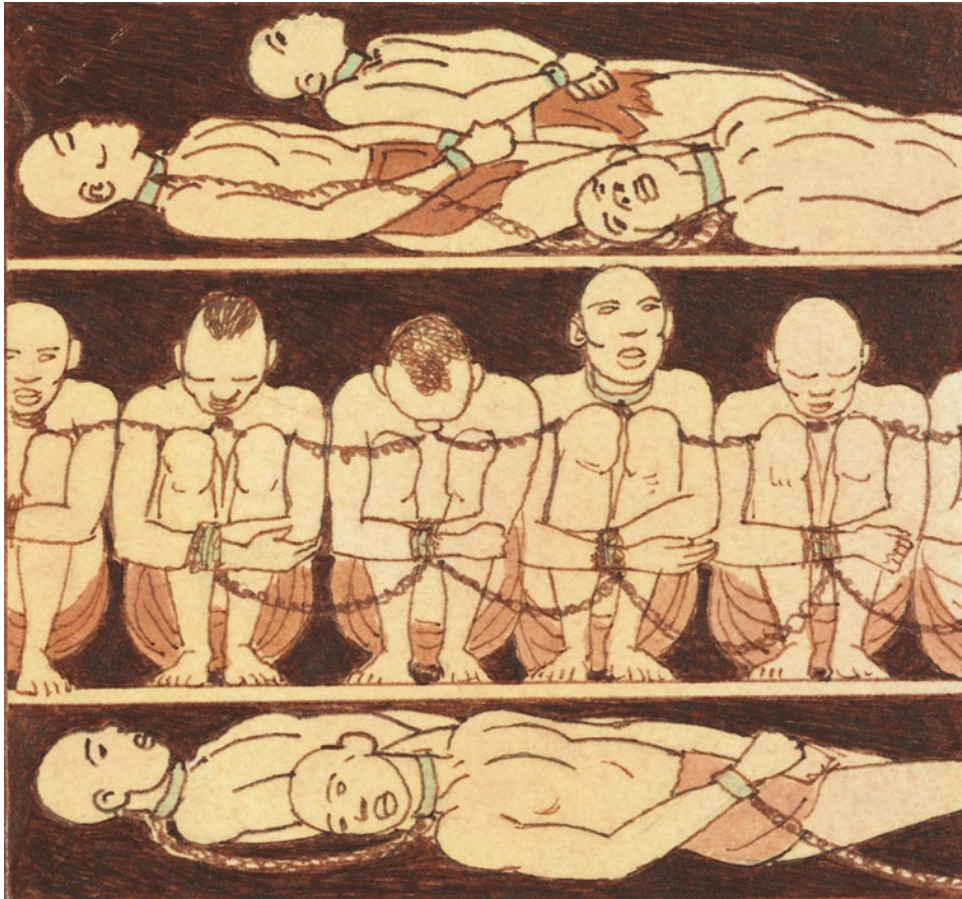
Lyon next got a job at an ironworks in Connecticut. He married the owner's niece, and they eventually settled on land to the north that would later become part of Vermont. There, Lyon joined the Green Mountain Boys, a volunteer fighting force set up to protect settlers' rights, and at the start of the American Revolution in 1775, this force captured Fort Ticonderoga, a British fort in upstate New York. Lyon became an officer and led troops in two more important battles of the revolution.

After the war for independence was won, Lyon served as a legislator in the new state of Vermont, beginning a long career in politics and government. From his early days as an indentured servant, Lyon had worked hard to build a new life in America. Like others who came to the colonies, his spirit and determination helped form the new American nation.

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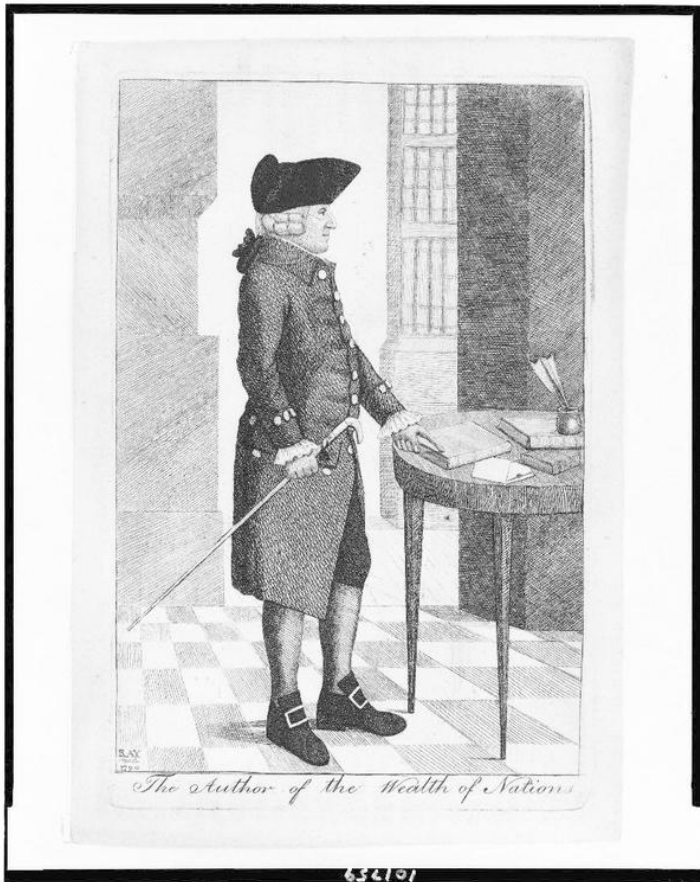




America, Land of Opportunity: The Origins of the Free Enterprise System

You may often hear the term *free enterprise* in connection with the American economy. A free enterprise system has two important qualities. First, private individuals, rather than the government, own the businesses and farms that produce goods and services. Second, the economy is allowed to operate with a minimum of government regulation. This type of economy is also called a *free market system*.

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The free enterprise system is a democratic way to organize an economy. In a democracy, people vote for what they want. In a democratic economy, buyers “vote” by deciding to spend their money on some goods rather than others. Goods that get lots of votes (money spent on them) continue to be made. Goods that no one wants to buy stop being made. In addition, prices go up or down depending on the supply of goods and how many people want them.

America's free enterprise system goes back to colonial days. As colonists made their way to America, many hoped to become wealthy. In fact, the chance to make profits motivated many of the organizations that sponsored colonial settlement. To be sure, the British government imposed some restrictive trade policies, as did some of the colonies. But for the most part the economy of the colonies developed free of government regulation.

In 1776, the year the Declaration of Independence was written, English philosopher Adam Smith published a book called *The Wealth of Nations*. Smith explained and praised the benefits of the free market system. His words inspired many Americans. People believed that, in the United

States, a person could climb rapidly up the economic ladder through hard work and initiative. In addition, a free market went well with democratic ideas.

The free enterprise system greatly benefited Americans in the new nation and continues to do so today. There are three main reasons why.

- Profit is an extremely strong motivator. Entrepreneurs (people who start businesses) are willing to take enormous risks in order to become wealthy.
- Quality products thrive in the marketplace because consumers prefer them to inferior ones. Thus, the free enterprise system commonly produces high-quality goods.
- Creative individuals are drawn toward new ideas. The next invention may lead to a pot of gold. As a result, the United States may well be the most innovative nation on Earth.

Governor John Winthrop's "City Upon a Hill" Sermon (1630)

John Winthrop was a member of England's gentry class because his father had once bought land from King Henry VIII. The gentry was one of the powerful social classes in England. Winthrop went to college and studied law. He became a lawyer and for many years lived as a gentleman on his country estate.

In the 1620s, England began to pass laws that made it difficult for Puritans to worship in the way they wanted. Winthrop was a Puritan. Many Puritans decided to leave England and travel to the Massachusetts Bay Colony in what later would become America. Winthrop was elected the colony's governor in 1629.

As he sailed to his new colony on the ship *Arbella* in the spring of 1630, Winthrop wrote a lengthy religious sermon titled "A Modell of Christian Charity," in which he presented himself and his fellow colonists as being joined together in an agreement with God and with one another. Winthrop felt that God was directing the colonists to build "a Citty upon a Hill" that would be an example for others who wanted to live a Christian life. That is why this part of the sermon has its own name.

Below is the section of "'A Modell of Christian Charity" that is known as Winthrop's "City Upon a Hill" sermon.

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Now the onely way to avoyde this shipwracke, and to provide for our posterity, is to followe the counsell of Micah, to doe justly, to love mercy, to walk humbly with our God. For this end, wee must be knitt together, in this worke, as one man. Wee must entertaine each other in brotherly affection. Wee must be willing to abridge ourselves of our superfluties, for the supply of other's necessities. Wee must uphold a familiar commerce together in all meekeness, gentlenes, patience and liberality. Wee must delight in eache other; make other's conditions our oune; rejoyce together, mourne together, labour and suffer together, allwayes haueing before our eyes our commission and community in the worke, as members of the same body. Soe shall wee keepe the unities of the spirit in the bond of peace. The Lord will be our God, and delight to dwell among us, as his oune people, and will command a blessing upon us in all our wayes. Soe that wee shall see much more of his wisdom, power, goodness and truth, than formerly wee haue been acquainted with. Wee shall finde that the God of Israell is among us, when ten of us shall be able to resist a thousand of our enemies; when hee shall make us a prayse and glory that men shall say of succeeding plantations, "the Lord make it likely that of New England." For wee must consider that wee shall be as a citty upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us. Soe that if wee shall deale falsely with our God in this worke wee haue undertaken, and soe cause him to withdrawe his present help from us, wee shall be made a story and a by-word through the world. Wee shall open the mouthes of enemies to speake evill of the wayes of God, and all professors for God's sake. Wee shall shame the faces of many of God's worthy servants, and cause their prayers to be turned into curses upon us till wee be consumed out of the good land whither wee are a going.

I shall shutt upp this discourse with that exhortation of Moses, that faithfull servant of the Lord, in his last farewell to Israell, Deut. 30. Beloued there is now sett before us life and good, Death and evill, in that wee are commanded this day to loue the Lord our God, and to loue one another, to walke in his wayes and to keepe his Commandements and his Ordinance and his lawes, and the articles of our Covenant with him, that wee may liue and be multiplied, and that the Lord our God may blesse us in the land whither wee goe to possesse it. But if our heartes shall turne away, soe that wee will not obey, but shall be seduced, and worshipp and serue other Gods, our pleasure and proffitts, and serue them; it is propounded unto us this day, wee shall surely perishe out of the good land whither wee passe over this vast sea to possesse it;

*Therefore lett us choose life
that wee, and our seede*

*may liue, by obeyeing His
voyce and cleaveing to Him,
for Hee is our life and
our prosperity.*

• "City Upon a Hill" excerpt from "A Modell of Christian Charitie" by Governor John Winthrop, 1630. Reproduced in *Journal of the American Education Society*, November, 1840. p. 220.

Entire Selection: <https://books.google.com/books?id=F0EwAQAAMAAJ&pg=RA1-PA213&lpg>

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Mercantilism

Around 1630, the English merchant Thomas Mun identified one way to add to England's national wealth. He wrote, "The ordinary means to encrease our wealth and treasure is by Foreign Trade, wherein we must ever observe this rule: to sell more to strangers than we consume of theirs in value." Mun knew that exports brought money into the country and imports took money away. This understanding was a key element in the economic policy known as mercantilism.

Mercantilism is sometimes referred to as "merchant capitalism" because merchants promoted it and benefited from it. This early form of capitalism arose in the 1500s and 1600s, along with European nation-states and the strong monarchs who unified them. In this time of near-constant warfare, a state's power rested on its ability to keep and equip a large army and navy. Fighting wars was a costly business. Government leaders came to realize the value of having lots of money.

The various ways in which European governments acquired money came to be known as mercantilism. Thus, mercantilism was not a strict economic theory with certain rules. Instead, it reflected an evolving set of economic policies put forward by nations to serve their own interests.

National Economic Policies

One such national economic policy called for gathering and holding as much gold and silver, or bullion, as possible. By 1600, Spain had clearly

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proven the value of this policy. It had already extracted an enormous amount of gold and silver from its American colonies, and it had grown powerful as a result. Other states, lacking access to gold and silver mines, sought bullion by creating a favorable balance of trade—by exporting more and importing less. More exports meant more money in the nation's treasury.

To accomplish this goal, states took greater control of their nations' industry and trade. They aimed at being self-sufficient, producing all of their own needed food and manufactured goods. They also insisted that their colonies serve the nation as sources of raw materials and as markets for finished goods.

England was at the forefront in developing such mercantilist policies. It applied mercantilist ideas to its American colonies through a series of navigation acts.

The Navigation Acts

The Navigation Act of 1651 was the first major law passed by Parliament to protect English businesses against foreign competition. This and other navigation acts passed over the next 100 years regulated colonial trade for the benefit of the mother country, England. Provisions of these navigation acts included the following:

- Only English or colonial ships, with crews that were at least 75 percent English, could carry imports into or exports out of any English colony.
- The colonies could not import any European goods unless the ship carrying them had been reloaded in an English port.
- A duty, or tax, had to be paid on tobacco, sugar, rice, molasses, and other specified products when shipped from one colony to another.

Because these laws were at first loosely enforced, merchants in the colonies often ignored them. For example, New England ship captains would carry sugar and tobacco to ports in New France (Canada). There they would trade for European goods. Such illegal activities, including the smuggling of goods into the colonies, made many merchants rich.

Lax enforcement of the navigation acts ended with the British victory in the French and Indian War in 1763. Before the war, the navigation acts were used to control trade, and American colonists agreed, at least in principle, that Great Britain as the mother country had the right to do so. After the war, however, the British Parliament began strict

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enforcement and also passed laws such as the Sugar Act and the Stamp Act to raise revenue. To the colonists, who had no one to speak for them in Parliament, this was taxation without representation and a violation of their rights as English citizens. Colonial protests eventually led to the American Revolution.