Chapter 3: The English Come to Stay, 1600-1660

Overview
The English arrive in North America to stay. Given their experiences at Roanoke (chapter two) their permanence on the continent was anything but a sure bet and their early experiences at Jamestown did not indicate a bright and long future. Jamestown was founded through a joint stock company. Investors would reap profits from the raw materials the colonists might find and from trade with the colonists. But the early years at Jamestown were anything but profitable. A poor location, disease, starvation, and less than harmonious relations with the Indians and even among themselves made the first years at Jamestown dangerous. However, the colonists at Jamestown found something that changed their bleak and uncertain future: tobacco. John Rolfe found a plant that would grow in Jamestown and produce a sweet, fragrant leaf. If Rolfe’s tobacco would be accepted and purchased by consumers in England, the English economy would benefit and the colonists at Jamestown would have found a viable way of making a living in the new world. Tobacco proved to be the economic salvation of the Virginia colony. The first obstacle at Jamestown had been overcome; the second and third obstacles were equally daunting. The colonists needed more land and they needed workers. The colonists took land from the Indians and when indentured servants proved unreliable, despite the promise of increased political freedoms and opportunity for personal advancement, they turned to Africans. Further north, two more English colonies were established. The colonists, Pilgrims at Plymouth (1620) and Puritans at Massachusetts Bay (1629), emigrated as families and communities to a much healthier environment and they maintained amicable relations with the Indians. By 1637, the population of New England had pushed further into the frontier and onto Indian land. The population had also come into conflict the Dutch who controlled trade along the Connecticut River. The result was the inevitable conflict between several European groups, the English and Dutch, and between several Indian groups, the Pequots and Narragansetts. What had begun as a tentative, and less than successful colonies in the early 1600s eventually became successful and economically viable permanent villages of English who saw North America as their permanent home. By the mid 1600s, the English population was growing, their economic futures secure.

Key Topics The information in chapter 3 introduces your students to the following key topics:
- Why the colony at Jamestown succeeded -- and why it almost failed
- The effect of the tobacco economy on society in the Chesapeake
- Gender, family, and the social order in the Chesapeake and New England
- Relations - and conflict - with the Indians in the Chesapeake and New England
- The English Reformation and the origins of Puritanism in England
- How Puritanism shaped New England’s social order
- How New England Puritans handled dissent

Chapter Outline
The Adventures of John Rolfe
The First Chesapeake Colonies
  Planning Virginia
  Starving Times
  Troubled Relations with the Powhatans
  The Tobacco Boom
  Toward the Destruction of the Powhatans
  A New Colony in Maryland
The Political Economy of Slavery Emerges
  The Problem of a Labor Supply
  The Origins of Slavery in the Chesapeake
  A Society With Slaves
  Gender and the Social Order in the Chesapeake
A Bible Commonwealth in the New England Wilderness
The English Origins of the Puritan Movement
What Did the Puritans Believe?
The Pilgrim Colony at Plymouth
The Puritan Colony at Massachusetts Bay
The New England Way
Changing the Land to Fit the Political Economy
The Puritan Family

Feature - Focus on Youth: Childhood in Puritan New England

Dissension in the Puritan Ranks
Roger Williams and Toleration
Anne Hutchinson and the Colony of Believers
Puritan Indian Policy and the Pequot War

Conclusion

Annotated chapter outline with review questions

The Adventures of John Rolfe: John Rolfe was an adventurer who would have lived an unremarkable life except that he revolutionized Virginia’s, England’s, and the world’s economy by perfecting a tobacco plant that produced a mild, sweet leaf that Europeans wanted to smoke, and for marrying the Powhatan “princess” Pocahontas. The plant John Rolfe perfected created a new kind of society -- one that drove Indians from their homelands, lured indentured servants from England to America, and kidnapped Africans for a life of labor on American plantations.

The First Chesapeake Colonies: Looking at the early English colonies in the Chesapeake Bay region, it is clear that the English had not learned any lessons from their experiences at Roanoke. Poor planning, a bad location, unrealistic expectations, flawed leadership, poor relations with the local Indians, and no hope of finding the mineral wealth the Spanish found in Mexico all contributed to failure.

- The Virginia and Plymouth companies were established as joint stock companies. Their investors were hoping that colonies in North America would become a lucrative source of income. Jamestown was established in Virginia April 26, 1607. The early years were unsettled and dangerous and the workers unsuited to the demands of colonization.

- Both Indians and English tried to manipulate the other and establish a diplomatic superiority over the other. Once the English discovered tobacco there was an economic boom in Virginia. With a cash crop the colonists then needed more land and more workers. The Virginia Company employed a number of tactics designed to lure young Englishmen and women to Virginia; among the inducements was the promise of more political freedom than in England at the time; the promise of greater opportunity and freedom caused many to abandon their homes for lives in Virginia. The problem of a cash crop and workers solved, the colonists soon turned to take the Indians’ land and a second war between the Powhattans and the English erupted -- this time the English adopted a policy of extermination.

- An outpost trade colony was established on the northern end of Chesapeake Bay and this land was given to Sir George Calvert, a Catholic Englishman, by King Charles I.

What were the objectives of the founders of Virginia? Why did the colony survive, in spite of poor planning?

The Political Economy of Slavery Emerges: Chesapeake society in the first half of the seventeenth century was shaped by four forces: weak government, the market for tobacco, the availability of land, and the need for labor. It was in this environment that the political economy of slavery took root.

- Life for working men and women in Virginia was harsh; perhaps 90% of those who emigrated to Virginia came as indentured servants; as many as half of them died before completing their work contract.

- Because profits from tobacco were so great and life so short, landowners tried to squeeze every penny of profit as quickly as possible; however brutal the working conditions of indentured servants they remained free men and women and their position was not hereditary but they were far worse off than their counterparts in England. It was only a matter of time before these English did as others had done: turned to African slaves to solve their labor problem. Africans arrived in Virginia in 1619.
• The English who arrived in Virginia did not intend to change their society in any way; tobacco and the incredible wealth it represented changed the way these colonists lived. For example, women went to work in the fields alongside men rather than in the more traditional roles of home maker and women found themselves in positions that not only controlled their destiny but also determined it for themselves. Because of the high mortality rates, being widowed or orphaned was a normal state of affairs. Women who survived their husbands and controlled their property were wealthy and powerful individuals and in high demand on the marriage market.

**A Bible Commonwealth in the New England Wilderness:** England’s next attempts at establishing colonies in North America should not have been successful. The people found no gold, no cash crops, or anything of immediate value for their investors. But these English colonists were successful. Both Plymouth (1620) and Massachusetts Bay (1629) were founded by middle class Christians who emigrated as families and communities in order to escape persecution at home. Their ventures were well planned and well financed and they established positive relations with the local Indians. These Christians were called Puritans and they were committed to establishing new communities based upon God’s laws as they understood them.

• The Puritan movement has its origin in the Protestant Reformation. Two groups of Protestants grew in the Church of England: one wanted to purify the Church of England of its Roman Catholic practices; the other wanted to separate from the Church of England completely. The first Puritan colony was Plymouth (1620). These Puritans were separatists and known as Pilgrims. They arrived in Massachusetts under a patent from the Virginia Company of London but they did not land in Virginia. Because they were in a kind of “no man’s land” they created their own representative government in the document known as the Mayflower Compact. The second Puritan colony, Massachusetts Bay, was founded in 1620. These colonists were middle class professionals who were committed to a cause greater than the profit margin: they believed they were on a mission from God. The Puritans did not want to change their English social and political cultures. They valued private ownership of land which included all the commodities on that land.

• The foundation of Puritan society was the family which was seen as a microcosm of the world, complete with its hierarchies. The Puritan family was a powerful force for maintaining community order; it was the center of the Puritans’ economy: all members had jobs to perform. Children in Puritan families and in Puritan society were seen as miniature adults complete with a propensity for sinful actions. Although young, Puritan children were raised to face the world with an adult’s perceptions, especially where salvation, faith, and questions of eternity were concerned.

• What were the objectives of the founders of the colonies at Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay? Compare the early years of these colonies to those of the Virginia colony.

**Dissension in the Puritan Ranks:** That the Puritans believed they had a covenant with God made them secure in their mission. However, that same covenant was also believed to be a fragile thing -- something that could be endangered by those with different (the Puritans would say “wrong”) beliefs. If their covenant with God could be endangered, it could be destroyed if those with “wrong” ideas were left to their own will. Disobedience to God’s word was a dangerous and to the Puritan way of thinking unacceptable.

• Roger Williams was a Puritan who became a radical separatist. His views were unacceptable to the church elders and the political leaders. He would have been returned to England had he not got wind of his fate; instead he separated himself from the community and formed a new colony in Rhode Island. Rhode Island soon became a haven for dissenters of all sorts. Anne Hutchinson also questioned church and civic leaders; that she was a woman made her actions all the more troublesome. Her views on church doctrine were very popular and her sermons widely attended. She was called into court to testify to her statements and found guilty of creating disharmony within the community. She was banished from Massachusetts and went to Rhode Island. The popular notion of America being founded on religious freedom is true as long as the religion practiced was that of the Puritans.

• The Pequot War (1637) grew out of conflicts among Europeans about who would govern the Connecticut River valley and among the Indians about who would trade with the Europeans. 90 Puritans with their 500 Narragansett allies attacked a Pequot village at Mystic; 300 to 700 Pequots and 2 Puritans were killed. By 1638 the Puritans had control of the Pequots’ land and the few remaining Pequots had been shipped off to the West Indies as slaves.
What place did gender play in the social order of the Chesapeake and New England colonies? Compare and contrast family life in the two regions.

Feature: Focus on Youth: Childhood in Puritan New England: Children in Puritan families and in Puritan society were seen as miniature adults complete with a propensity for sinful actions. Although young, Puritan children were raised to face the world with an adult’s perceptions, especially where salvation, faith, and questions of eternity were concerned.

Conclusion: In 1660 both New England and Virginia colonies each had about 35,000 people. Despite the fact that these colonists were English, with the same culture and political ideas, they lived very different lives. Their paths to success were also very different. However, they were members of one of the up and coming capitalist economies of the world and their place within that context was secure.

Compare and contrast relations with the Indians in the Chesapeake and New England.

Making links to other ideas Using the maps and websites, in addition to your prepared lectures and other assignments, can give you more resources to enable your students to see that history is much more than memorizing names and dates. You will find that the websites are even more comprehensive and adaptable than described and because they have been collected here in one volume you have a world of information no further away than the click of your mouse. If you are new to the web’s opportunities, you will be pleasantly surprised at the breadth and depth of the information available in these sites.

Map 01: What does this map tell you about the nature of English settlements in the Chesapeake Bay? Is that process effecting the Powhattan in any way? What about the other native groups? Are the Indians effecting the English in any way? If so, how?
Map 02: What information does this map convey? Is there any interaction between the Indians and the colonists indicated on this map? If so, what?
Map 03: Compare this map with the previous maps. What is happening to the Indian and colonial settlement patterns in the region? What effect does this change have on the people involved?

Web connections and resources Consider using these websites to supplement your students’ reading and analytical skills. The sites were chosen because of their relevance to the material in the chapter -- not just to mirror it but to provide additional materials and perspectives. Questions from the student study guide have been included so that you can use or amend them to your own needs. Your students may find it insightful for you to guide them through the site as you help them develop research strategies.

“The English Come to Stay” www.prenhall.com/boydston/jamestown
American society historically has been marked by a youthful brashness and physicality that seemed at odds with the nation's growing status as a world power. Historians have suggested that early and long-lasting frontier struggles for survival left an imprint on American folklore, heritage, and national character that distinguishes the U.S. from older nations. What was the frontier struggle that left such a legacy? One example is the settlement of Jamestown, which almost failed, for a variety of reasons ranging from environmental to political, and including relations with Indians. Why did the settlement at Jamestown almost fail, and why do we remember it?

Through this Library of Congress web site, discover the role of religion in the founding of the New England colonies. This site details the religious persecution religious “nonconformists” experienced in their European homelands and the promise of religious freedom the New World held out to these men and women.
1. The authors of your text write that “it is sometimes asserted that Puritans came to New England in search of religious freedom, but they never would have made that claim themselves. They wanted the liberty to follow their own religion but actively denied that opportunity to others.” Why would the Puritans, who had suffered persecution, in turn persecute other Christians?
“Richard Frethorne, letter to his parents, 1623” http://longman.awl.com/history/primarysource_2_10.htm
Read the words of an indentured servant in Maryland as he describes his life of hardship and labor.
1. Based on your reading of the chapter and Richard Frethorne’s letter to his parents consider what kind of future Richard could look forward to in Maryland.

Read about Virginia’s recognition of slavery, slave codes and the need for African slave labor. The site also contains scholarly commentary on the earliest black Americans and their experiences.
1. What role does Virginia’s economic development play in the adoption of slavery? How does the notion of color affect the development of slavery?

“A Brief History of the Pequot War, 1637” http://beatlbarnard.columbia.edu/texts/masons_narrative.htm
Read an account of this battle written by Major John Mason, captain and commander of the Connecticut forces.
1. What did Major Mason hope to accomplish in writing his account of the Pequot War?

Analytical reading  
Your students may need more experience analyzing a short reading passage so that he or she can determine its component parts. They may need help identifying primary and supporting information as well as the author’s analysis. The analytical reading passages and the questions from the student study guide have been duplicated in the instructor’s manual for your use. Your students may need direction and encouragement in using them.

For centuries this starvation has perplexed historians. The land around Jamestown was fertile and abounded with game, and the James River was teeming with fish. The colonists had had several growing seasons and should have been able to raise enough to keep themselves alive. Indeed, when Captain John Smith served as president of the Council from 1608 to 1609 (after all six of the other counselors had either died or returned to England), only a handful of colonists died. He imposed a military-style discipline and required all the colonists to work four hours a day. He bullied the Powhatans into giving the English some food, and he also moved some of the colonists away from Jamestown’s lethal water supply. Smith blamed the starvation on the laziness of the colonists, who preferred searching for riches to planting grain. Disease and malnutrition, however, were probably more to blame. Moreover, seeing so many die around them only increased survivors’ sense of despair. They suffered from what can only be described as depression.

Decisions by the leadership only made the plight worse. John Smith, an effective but widely disliked disciplinarian, had returned to England in 1609 after a gunpowder injury, possibly an assassination attempt. The new rulers unwisely split up the settlement, sending a group of men down the James River to establish a fort and two other parties to establish settlements in spots already inhabited by Indians. In both cases the English were attacked and suffered heavy losses. The contemptuous Indians stuffed bread in the mouths of their hungry victims. Three thousand miles from home, literally starving to death, and surrounded by strange and sometimes hostile native peoples, the colonists who survived the winter were "distracted and forlorn," in many ways resembling modern prisoners of war. They had already begun to abandon the colony, when they were stopped by the arrival of Lord De La Warr, the new governor who had come to impose martial law.
1. Based on the passage, what conclusions can you draw about life at Jamestown? Underline the passages or words that help you draw your conclusions.
2. What specific decisions by the Jamestown leaders made the colonists lives worse? Why would those decisions make their lives so miserable?
3. What is “martial law” and why would Lord De La Warr believe martial law would make things better?
Writing  The questions or writing prompts from the student study guide have been duplicated here for your use. These writing topics make good lecture topics especially if you help your students see the development of the idea in lecture format before they refine the idea in their writing assignments.

1. Jamestown colony was made up of English colonists who looked to the New World for the opportunity that would change their lives. The investors in the Jamestown joint stock company bet their investments that the Jamestown colony would also change their lives by making them rich. Did these two groups have similar definitions of “success?” Explain your answer.

2. Why was life in the Jamestown colony so difficult for the first few years? What contributed to their failures?

3. What happened at Jamestown that allowed the colonists to survive?

4. Why were colonies at Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay created?

5. Compared to those English that lived in the Chesapeake Bay region, the New England colonists had an easier time of it. Why was life easier in the northern colonies?

6. Compare and contrast family life in the Chesapeake Bay with family life in New England.

7. Compare and contrast relations with the Indians in the Chesapeake and New England.

Lecture Strategies  Ultimately the lecture is where you impart, or profess, your knowledge for the benefit of your students. These strategies were designed around the textbook and if your classroom strategy is to use the organization of the text to organize your course content, these lecture ideas may prove helpful. However, if you lecture around themes please see the section entitled “Thematic Lecture Topics.” You may find that you are more comfortable with and your students are more responsive to a combination of the two. Consider, too, the projects suggested in the student study guide. If your students complete these before your lecture, their comprehension will surely be enhanced.

Chapter three, “The English Come to Stay,” presents you with the opportunity to discuss several interesting and complex topics with your students such as the Roman Catholic Church, the Protestant Reformation, the chaotic English monarchy, and the nature of Puritanism. English colonization plans are directly effected by changes in these institutions and ideas and many of those conflicts are carried to the colonies. The notion of the Puritans’ covenant and the American belief that our nation is on some special mission (later called manifest destiny) is an example of an old idea, the Puritans’ covenant, that is still visible today. Dissent and the separation of church and state, cornerstones of American political culture, are nurtured during the Puritan period. The trial of Anne Hutchinson is a interesting study of Puritan theology and theocracy as well as how conflict in Massachusetts was resolved.

Consider, too, the demise of Puritanism and the rise of capitalism. Making a living made many New Englanders more present-centered and less concerned about their eternal lives.

Jamestown also presents some interesting topics for discussion. What does it take for a colony to become successful? Why does making a profit seem to make many of the obstacles disappear? Consider, too, how the colonial experience, making money, owning land, improving one’s station in life changed these English into English-Americans first and then just Americans. The cultural evolution from English to Americans is not just fascinating but important.

At this juncture in the textbook, your students should be developing a concrete understanding of the differences between colonists’ lives lived in the south and those lived in New England. These differences should be kept in mind as they read further into the book and as we arrive in the early decades of the nineteenth century.