CHAPTER THREE: PLANTING COLONIES IN NORTH AMERICA, 1588–1701

SPAIN AND ITS COMPETITORS IN NORTH AMERICA
   New Mexico
   New France
   New Netherland

ENGLAND IN THE CHESAPEAKE
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   Tobacco, Expansion, and Warfare
   Maryland
   Indentured Servants
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THE NEW ENGLAND COLONIES
   The Social and Political Values of Puritanism
   Early Contacts in New England
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THE RESTORATION COLONIES
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CONFLICT AND WAR
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   The Glorious Revolution in America
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CONCLUSION

KEY TOPICS
*A comparison of the European colonies established in North America in the seventeenth century
*The English and Algonquian colonial encounter in the Chesapeake
*The role of religious dissent in the planting of New England colonies
*The restoration of the Stuart monarchy and the creation of new proprietary colonies
*Indian warfare and internal conflict at the end of the seventeenth century

AMERICAN COMMUNITIES: COMMUNITIES STRUGGLE WITH DIVERSITY IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY SANTA FE
The Pueblo community in Santa Fe clashed with Spanish authorities. The Indians had converted to Christianity, but maintained many of their pre-Christian beliefs and practices. Spanish authorities cracked down on pagan practices until 1680 when a Pueblo priest named Pope led a revolt that temporarily overthrew Spanish rule. The Spanish regained authority in 1692, after six years of fighting. They also loosened religious
restrictions. The Pueblos still observed Catholicism in the chapels while the missionaries tolerated the Indians’ traditional practices away from the missions. The vignette illustrates how colonists and Indian communities remained autonomous and often had violent conflicts but learned to live with one another.

**SPAIN AND ITS COMPETITORS IN NORTH AMERICA** Motivated tales of gold and religious fervor, the Spanish reached the Rio Grande valley in 1598, brutally putting down Indian resistance. The Spanish colony of New Mexico was centered in Santa Fe and depended upon forced Indian labor for modest, small-scale farming and sheep herding. The French established an outpost on the Bay of Fundy in 1605 where Samuel de Champlain sought to monopolize the fur trade. Unlike the Spanish, who lived primarily in towns, the French were dispersed throughout the region to exploit the fur trade. French missionaries introduced Christianity as a supplement to the Indian way of life. French traders frequently married Indian women fanning their sons out across the Great Lakes region, and by the 1670s were exploring the upper Mississippi River. By 1700, France claimed a vast inland empire based on the fur trade, but had few settlers.

Upon achieving independence, the United Provinces of the Netherlands developed a global commercial empire. In present-day New York, the Dutch established settlements and opened trade with the Iroquois, who through warfare became the important middlemen of the fur trade with the Dutch.

**ENGLAND IN THE CHESAPEAKE** The English issued charters to joint-stock companies which sold shares to investors hoping to reap profits from gold mines or plantation agriculture. In 1607 the Virginia Company founded the colony of Jamestown. The English saw themselves as latter-day conquistadors. At first the Indians supplied the starving colonists with food, seeking trade benefits, but soon abandoned that policy. Only continuing supplies and new colonists from England saved the struggling community. Meanwhile, worn down from disease and war, Powhatan accepted a peace treaty, but died several years later. The English discovery of tobacco and its popularity in Europe made the colony economically viable. Between 1619 and 1624, 4,500 English settlers arrived, though most died off. Conflicts between the English and Indians continued. One-quarter of the English community was wiped out in 1622, but by 1632 the Indians were thoroughly defeated. Another defeat in 1644 ended the last Indian resistance. The tobacco economy spread northward with the establishment of Maryland. The labor force for the Chesapeake was white indentured servants who served for two to seven years in return for passage. African slaves, though available, were too expensive, and with so many servants dying before completing their terms, the distinction between slave and servant may have seemed academic. By 1650 the Chesapeake colonies had spread across the land, but had developed few community institutions, maintaining close ties with England.

**THE NEW ENGLAND COLONIES** Puritan followers of John Calvin were generally merchants, entrepreneurs, and commercial farmers who sought to purify the English church. They found themselves increasingly in conflict with royal authorities, especially King Charles I. Simultaneously, the French and Dutch had established trade connections with the Indians along the North Atlantic coast. Between 1616 and 1618, a devastating plague decimated the native population, disrupting trade and weakening Indian ability to resist colonization. The first English
colony in New England was founded by Separatists, who believed they needed to establish independent congregations to separate themselves from the corrupt English church. In 1620 these “Pilgrims” founded the Plymouth colony at an abandoned Indian village. After an initial winter of starvation, the Pilgrims (with considerable Indian assistance) succeeded in establishing a community of self-sufficient farms.

In 1629 a group of wealthy Puritans received a charter to found the Massachusetts Bay Company and settle in America. Between 1629 and 1643, 20,000 persons relocated to America, expanding Puritan settlements. Most arrived as families or groups. The colony was governed locally by a governor and elected representatives. The English were primarily interested in acquiring land for agriculture. They used various pressure tactics to obtain land, taking advantage of the Indian population which was weakened by disease. Consequently, conflicts between English and Indians grew. New England merchants developed a diversified economy based on a strong commercial trade. Their closely knit, well-ordered families and communities were not “puritanical” as we understand the word. The family was the basis of the economy with labor divided along gender lines. Puritans stressed male-dominated, well-ordered communities. Settlers clustered near the town center, building churches and schools. The Salem witch trials reflected social tensions over wealth disparity and perceptions of women. The Puritans expected religious uniformity so dissenters such as Roger Williams and Anne Hutchinson who challenged the status quo either left voluntarily or were banished from the colony. Both founded new communities in New England.

THE RESTORATION COLONIES After two decades of rule, Parliament restored the Stuart monarchy in 1660 and Charles II returned from exile. In 1663 to reward those who had helped him, he issued a charter to the proprietors of Carolina. The southern part was settled by Barbadians who set up plantations worked by African slaves. Though the Dutch had set up the North American colony of New Netherlands, a series of wars between the English and Dutch resulted in the English conquest of the Dutch lands. King Charles granted the former Dutch colony to his brother the Duke of York who renamed it New York. In 1681 Charles settled a large debt owed to the father of William Penn, by granting the younger Penn a huge territory west of the Delaware River. Penn was a Quaker who wanted the colony to be a “holy experiment.” Pennsylvania enjoyed good relations with the Indians and the colony later became America’s breadbasket.

CONFLICT AND WAR The last quarter of the seventeenth century was a time of great violence throughout colonial North America. In Massachusetts the expansion of English settlements and extension of English law over Indians ended an alliance with the Wampanoags. In 1675 their leader, “King Phillip,” led an Indian alliance that attacked towns only twenty miles from Boston. By 1676 King Phillips’s War ended in defeat, as the English forged a new alliance with the Iroquois Confederacy. At the same time clashes between backcountry Virginians and Indians had created an explosive situation. When the Royal governor tried to suppress unauthorized attacks on Indians, Nathaniel Bacon led his lower-class followers against Virginia’s authorities. Although the revolt was crushed, planters feared that former servants would continue to be disruptive and increasingly turned to African slave labor. In North and South Carolina revolts against the government and wars against Indians caused disorder. In 1685 the new king, James II, combined much of the north into the Dominion of New England in an effort to increase
royal control. His autocratic rule stimulated the Glorious Revolution of 1688. James was overthrown by Parliament and replaced by his daughter Mary and her Dutch husband William. The English government became a constitutional monarchy. In 1688, King William’s War began, marking the beginnings of 75 years of Anglo-French conflict.

**CONCLUSION** The 17th century saw vast changes as European nations carved out colonies in which hundreds of thousands of Europeans moved to North America.

**Lecture Suggestions**

1. Examine how the French, Spanish, and Dutch in North America differed from the English. Make the connection between the material in Chapter Two on the different empires. Look at who was settling, why people were coming, the kinds of economies that developed, the relationships between the colonies and the mother country, etc.

2. To discuss the Virginia colony, pose the question of how the colony became the center of African slavery. Tracing the growth of Virginia’s tobacco economy and problems of indentured servitude helps explain why the change occurred. Students generally assume that slavery always dominated Virginia. They need to be shown this was not always true.

3. Students have only the vaguest idea of what Puritans believed. One can get a good sense of what they were all about by examining John Winthrop’s idea of a “City on the Hill.” Examine the Puritans’ sense of mission and their need for community order.

4. Compare the Chesapeake, New England, and Middle Colonies. Look at why the regions were settled, who settled there, and what they expected to find. Look at economic development, social development, community, leadership, and conflict with Indians.

**Discussion Questions**

1. In what ways was the Spanish experience with the Pueblos like the experience of other European colonizers? In what ways was it different?

2. In what ways did the French, Dutch, and Spanish need the Indians? How were the French and Spanish experiences with Indians was similar or different from the English experience in this regard?

3. What were the goals of the founders of Virginia? How were these like or not like the goals of the founders of Massachusetts Bay?

4. How did community and family life in the Chesapeake compare with that of Massachusetts?

5. What were the key factors leading to outbreaks of warfare with Indians?

6. What were the key factors leading to outbreaks of rebellion against established authority?
Out of Class Activity

One feature of seventeenth century New England life with which most students are familiar is the Salem witchcraft scare. Students might view the film “The Witches of Salem: The Horror and Hope” (see below) and analyze the factors that made a witchcraft scare likely. Relevant material on the crisis is available in Paul Boyer and Stephen Nissenbaum, *Salem Possessed* (Harvard, 1974) and Chardwick Hansen, *Witchcraft at Salem* (G. Braziller, 1969). Hansen emphasizes psychological factors while Boyer and Nissenbaum emphasize socio-economic factors. Students could read the works as groups and present summations of their positions.

If You’re Going to Read One Book on the Subject

This chapter covers a tremendous amount of material. Stick close to Gary Nash’s *Red White and Black* (Prentice-Hall, 4th edition, 2000) which has a lot on the French, Spanish, and does a nice job with Virginia. To get a good handle on what Puritans were all about there’s no substitute for Edmund Morgan’s *The Puritan Dilemma: The Story of John Winthrop* (Little Brown, 1958). It’s old, but nothing else makes the Puritans seem so reasonable.

Audio-Visual Aids

“The Witches of Salem: The Horror and the Hope” Re-enacts some of the 1692 events related to the witchcraft trials. (Color, 32 minutes, 1972)

“Jamestown Colony (1607 Through 1620)” Chronicles the early history of the colony. (Color, 16 minutes, 1957)

“The Pilgrims” Recreates the scenes and period costumes of the first English settlement in New England. Shows the conditions that caused the Pilgrims to leave England, follows them to Holland, and then on their trip on the Mayflower. Concludes with their first Thanksgiving. (Color, 22 minutes, 1955)