Chapter 2: Colonial Outposts, 1550-1660

Overview
Following Spain’s financial success in Mexico, the French, Dutch, and English begin to look to establish similar colonies in North America in the hopes that they, too, would make money. Each nation approached colonization in a different way. Because of the wealth Spain found in Mexico, the Spanish government moved to fortify its claims to the American southeast by building several forts, among them the one at St. Augustine, Florida. France, Holland, and England also moved to establish claims to land in North America in hopes of finding the wealth they knew must be there.

Key Topics
- European objectives in exploring the North American coast
- Colonial settlements as outposts in a global economy
- The creation of a “middle ground” between French traders and Huron Indians in Canada
- The connection between trade, religious toleration, and slavery in New Netherland
- Why England failed to establish a permanent colony at Roanoke

Review Questions
1. What were the key European objectives for exploring North America in this period? To what extent did England, Spain, France, and Holland achieve their objectives?
2. What was the “mourning war”? What function did it serve in Iroquois culture? How was it adapted to new circumstances in the seventeenth century?
3. Compare the early encounters with Native Americans of the English, French, and Dutch. What was the “middle ground,” and how was it created?
4. Why was the colony at Roanoke established and why was it abandoned?

Annotated chapter

*Don Luis de Velasco Finds His Way Home:* Don Luis de Velasco, born Paquiquineo, a Powhattan Indian from coastal Virginia, was picked up by the Spanish in 1561 somewhere south of his homeland. For the next ten years a Christianized Don Luis lived in Mexico and then Spain before returning in 1570. During that time much had changed, including Don Luis.

*Pursuing Wealth and Glory Along the North American Shore:* Because Spain’s colonies in the New World brought her wealth and power, the other European nations soon followed west with their own dreams of gold and glory. The immediate result was the establishment of colonies designed to bring wealth to the mother country. Although each nation approached colonization differently the primary objective of the exploring nations was wealth. Only when sources of alternative wealth, such as animal furs or fishing, was identified did the colonization effort begin in earnest.

- The Europeans lacked any kind of sophisticated geographical knowledge about the continent and they had mixed relations with the native peoples.
- Initial attempts at establishing a profit-making colony were unsuccessful but the French soon realized that success rested upon establishing friendly relations with the Indians.
- Spain’s wealth made it the role model where the New World was concerned, and its wealth soon became a target of English and French schemes to get rich.
- Because the French and English were moderately successful, the Spanish retaliated by building a string of forts along the Florida/South Carolina coastline, although all of the forts except the one at St. Augustine were eventually abandoned.

*New France: An Outpost in the Global Economy:* Spain succeeded in scaring the French from the southeast. The French focused their attentions on Canada and the region along the St. Lawrence River. In doing so, the French found a new way to make a profit in North America: they struck up a trade in beaver pelts. The French relied on the Indians to trap the animals and became participants in a very
complex and geographically expansive network. Both the French and Indians were profoundly changed by the experiences.

- Blood feuds, or wars of retaliation, called “mourning wars” had been the norm between the Algonquins and Iroquois for generations and had resulted in, among other things, the creation of the Five Nations or Great League of Peace for the Iroquois.
- By 1600, trade in beaver pelts had become increasingly lucrative and the French crown realized that commerce with the Indians could increase his power and wealth. In 1608, Samuel de Champlain established a post at Quebec. There the French established a trading network along the St. Lawrence and learned how to live among the Indians. Soon French peasant farmers and Roman Catholic missionaries moved to the colony.
- The result of the French and Indian trade was the creation of a mutually dependent relationship in which the Indians and the French had to adapt to each other’s ways if either was to be successful.

**New Netherland: The Empire of a Trading Nation:** With Spain suffering a political decline, the British and Dutch stepped into the void. The Dutch relied on the fur trade for wealth and on the Indians to procure those pelts. The Dutch government relied on private companies to set up the trade networks and they lasted as long as they were profitable.

- The Dutch were much more tolerant of different cultures (including Indians and Africans) as long as the investors were making a profit.
- The Dutch disrupted the balance among regional Indian tribes. The Dutch soon found themselves in the middle of a fight between the Mahican tribe on the one hand and the Mohawks on the other. Between 1648 and the 1660s, the balance of power among a number of northeastern tribes collapsed.
- Once the Dutch lost their profit-making centers, they had no real reason to hold onto a colony in North America.

**England Attempts an Empire:** The English colonies were created to make money for the mother country in strict accordance with the mercantilist theory. But unlike the Dutch, England was also motivated by a strong zeal to export Protestant Christianity to the New World.

- England’s first attempts to make money from the New World were hit and miss at best.
- Roanoke Island was settled by two distinct groups of English at two different times for two distinct purposes. The first colonists, organized by Walter Raleigh in 1584, was designed to create a resupply base in North America for privateering ships picking off Spanish gold-laden ships.
- Two years later another group of English arrived. This time a mixed population of 110 men, women, and children arrived. Doomed from the start, by 1590, there were no English left on Roanoke Island.

**Conclusion:** By the mid-1600s, it was obvious that colonies in North America could make money for their mother country and with wealth, a nation could become powerful. Each nation’s colonies developed along distinctive lines, however, their similarities to one another were clear: colonies were seen as a road to national wealth and glory and each colony drew them all into an ever more complex global economy.

**Analytical reading** These questions refer to the passage “An Outpost in a Global Political Economy” on pages 33-34.

1. What caused the “internal conflict and political instability that left the Huron vulnerable to their Indian enemies and increasingly dependent of their French allies”? Why would these result in such changes?
2. What caused New France to increase in size and importance?

**Lecture Strategies** Chapter Two introduces your students to the establishment of the French, Dutch, and first English colonies in North America. On the one hand this chapter discusses commonalities among
the colonizing nations: mercantilism and the competition between them for wealth and power; on the other hand the chapter points out differences between them: the raw materials exploited, attitudinal differences, etc. That the Europeans are motivated by the same goal but pursue it in different ways will probably be confusing for your students, who probably lump all Europeans and "colonies" in the same basket.

The same will probably be true with the Indians. Not only do we tend to lump them all together, but we also tend to see them as powerless in their relationships with the Europeans. Nor do we see them as having any role in the rivalries between the European nations. This chapter is interesting for its complexity. It is also a very good opportunity to introduce the geographic spheres of influence the Europeans came to control so that you can prepare your students for the wars for empire to come.

**Supplements:** Prentice Hall has developed a number of supplements that can enhance your lectures as well as your students’ comprehension and performance.

**American Stories: Biographies in United States History** by Katheryn A. Abbott and Patricia Hagler Minter. See Chapter 2, Making an Old World New, 1580-1770, for biographical sketches of Pocahontas, John Winthrop, and Olaudah Equiano.

**Documents Collection** see Part Two: Colonizing the New World.

*John White, The Lost Colony 1590
*Samuel de Champlain’s Battle With the Iroquois, July 1609
An Act Concerning Servants and Slaves
*Reasons for the Plantation in New England 1629
John Winthrop, “A Model of Christian Charity” 1630
*The Taking of the Fort at Mystic: A Brief History of the Pequot War
The Trial of Anne Hutchinson 1638
*A Jesuit Priest Describes New Amsterdam 1642
*George Alsop, The Importance of Tobacco 1660
The Examination and Confession of Ann Foster at Salem Village 1692
*Onandogas and Cayugas: Iroquois Chiefs /documents/Address the Governors of New York and Virginia 1684
James Oglethorpe: The Stono Rebellion 1739
Gottlieb Mittelberger, The Passage of Indentured Servants 1750

The documents of particular relevance to this chapter are identified with an asterisk, although previous and subsequent parts have relevant documents.