

# Colonial America in the Eighteenth Century

1701–1770

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## CHAPTER LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading and studying this chapter, students should be able:

- Understand how eighteenth-century colonial population growth and economic growth were linked.
- Explain how the market economy developed in New England and in what ways Puritanism was weakened.
- Discern how the population growth of the middle colonies, particularly Pennsylvania, differed from that of New England and the South, including the role played by immigration.
- Recognize how the large influx of slaves into the southern colonies shaped the region's economy, society, and politics.
- Identify the shared experiences that served to unify the culture of the disparate colonies of British North America.
- Comprehend how the policies of the British Empire provided a common framework of political expectations and experiences for American colonists, including the relations between the colonists and their Native American neighbors both in British North America and in Spanish California.

## ANNOTATED CHAPTER OUTLINE

The following annotated chapter outline will help you review the major topics covered in this chapter.

### I. A Growing Population and Expanding Economy in British North America

1. British America experienced a tremendous population explosion during the eighteenth century, rising from 250,000 colonists in 1700 to over 2 million in 1770.
2. The growth and diversity of the colonial population in the eighteenth century stemmed from both natural increases and immigration, which shifted the ethnic and racial balance of the colonies.
3. The colonial economy also expanded during the eighteenth century.
4. In 1700, nearly all the colonists lived within fifty miles of the Atlantic coast.
5. The almost limitless wilderness stretching westward made land relatively cheap; land used for agriculture was worthless without labor, and with the rapidly expanding economy the demand for labor in the colonies was high.

## II. New England: From Puritan Settlers to Yankee Traders

### A. Natural Increase and Land Distribution

1. The burgeoning New England population grew mostly by natural increase, much as it had during the seventeenth century and soon pressed against the limited amount of land.
2. The perils of childbirth gave wives a shorter life expectancy than husbands, but wives often lived to have six, seven, or eight babies.
3. By the eighteenth century, the original land allotments had to be subdivided to accommodate grandsons and great-grandsons, causing many plots of land to become too small for subsistence.
4. During the eighteenth century, colonial governments in New England abandoned the seventeenth-century policy of granting land to towns and sold land directly to individuals, including speculators.
5. Money, rather than membership in a community bound by a church covenant, determined whether a person could buy land; settlement on individual farms meant that colonists regulated their behavior in newly settled areas by their own individual choices and not those of a larger community.

### B. Farms, Fish, and Atlantic Trade

1. New England farmers grew food for their families, but their fields did not produce a huge marketable surplus.
2. As consumers, New England farmers were at the forefront of a diversified commercial economy that linked remote farms to markets throughout the world.
3. Fish accounted for more than one-third of New England's eighteenth-century exports; livestock and timber made up another one-third; Atlantic commerce provided jobs for laborers, tradesmen, ship captains, clerks, merchants and sailors.
4. Merchants, the largest and most successful of whom lived in Boston, dominated New

England commerce; by 1770, the richest 5 percent of Bostonians owned half of the cities wealth.

5. During the eighteenth century, the incidence of genuine poverty did not change much from patterns established in the seventeenth century, with about 5 percent qualifying for poor relief in the eighteenth century.
6. People of African ancestry (almost all of them slaves) numbered more than fifteen thousand by 1770 and lived in towns where they worked as domestic servants and laborers.
7. By 1700, Yankee traders had replaced Puritan saints as the symbolic New Englanders.

## III. The Middle Colonies: Immigrants, Wheat, and Work

### A. German and Scots-Irish Immigrants

1. Germans made up the largest contingent of migrants from the European continent to the middle colonies.
2. German immigrants included artisans and merchants, but the great majority of them were farmers and laborers.
3. By the 1720s, German immigrants wrote back to their friends and relatives, extolling the virtues of life in the New World, which encouraged yet more Germans to emigrate. Similar motives propelled the Scots-Irish to come to the middle colonies.
4. German immigrants belonged to a variety of Protestant churches while Scots-Irish were generally Presbyterians; both groups were clannish, residing among relatives or neighbors from the old country.
5. Scots-Irish immigrants flooded British North America during the decades before the American Revolution.
6. Many German immigrants were forced to become "redemptioners," a variant of indentured servants; Scots-Irish immigrants paid for their passage by

contracting as indentured servants before they sailed to the colonies.

- B. “God Gives All Things to Industry”: Urban and Rural Labor
1. New settlers, whether free or in servitude, poured into the middle colonies because they perceived unparalleled opportunities, particularly in Pennsylvania.
  2. Most servants in the middle colonies worked in Philadelphia, New York City, or one of the smaller towns or villages.
  3. Artisans, small manufacturers, and shopkeepers prized the labor of male servants; female servants made valuable additions to households, where nearly all of them cleaned, washed, cooked, or minded children.
  4. Slaves comprised a relatively small percentage of the total population of the middle colonies because only the affluent could afford them.
  5. Small numbers of slaves managed to obtain their freedom, but free African Americans did not escape whites’ firm convictions about black inferiority and white supremacy; African Americans became scapegoats for European Americans’ suspicions and anxieties.
  6. Immigrants swarmed to the middle colonies because of the availability of land.
  7. Pennsylvania’s policy of negotiating with Indian tribes to purchase additional land reduced violent frontier clashes even though the Penn family sometimes pushed such land agreements to the limit and beyond.
  8. Owners of the huge estates in New York’s Hudson valley preferred to rent rather than sell their land, and therefore attracted fewer immigrants.
  9. The price of farmland varied, depending on soil quality, access to water, distance from a market town, and the extent of improvements.
  10. Farmers made the middle colonies the breadbasket of North America, planting a

wide variety of crops to feed their families as well as wheat in abundance.

11. Flour milling was the number one industry and flour the number one export, constituting nearly three-fourths of all exports from the middle colonies.
12. The standard of living in rural Pennsylvania was probably higher than in any other agricultural region of the eighteenth-century world.
13. By 1776, Philadelphia was at the center of the crossroads of trade in wheat exports and English imports and boasted a population greater than any other city in the British empire, except London.
14. Many of Philadelphia’s wealthiest merchants were Quakers and influenced aspiring tradesmen like Benjamin Franklin, whose popular *Poor Richard’s Almanack* preached the likelihood of long-term rewards for tireless labor.

#### IV. The Southern Colonies: Land of Slavery

- A. The Atlantic Slave Trade and the Growth of Slavery
1. The number of southerners of African ancestry rapidly increased from just over 20,000 in 1700 to well over 400,000 in 1770.
  2. Southern colonists clustered into two distinct geographic and agricultural zones: the upper South, which specialized in growing tobacco, and the lower South, which specialized in growing rice and indigo.
  3. The enormous growth of the South’s slave population occurred through natural increase and the flourishing Atlantic slave trade, which subjected hundreds of thousands of Africans to the infamous Middle Passage.
  4. In 1789, Olaudah Equiano published his account of the Middle Passage and his experiences as a slave.
  5. Most slaves who were brought into the southern colonies came directly from Africa, and almost all the ships that

brought them belonged to British merchants.

6. Mortality during the Middle Passage varied considerably from ship to ship, but on average, about 15 percent of slaves perished during the journey.
  7. Individual planters purchased, at any one time, a relatively small number of newly arrived Africans (called “new Negroes”) and relied on already enslaved Africans to help acculturate or “season” new slaves to the physical as well as the cultural, environment of the southern colonies.
  8. Planters’ preferences for slaves from specific regions of Africa aided slaves’ acculturation to the routines of bondage in the southern colonies because enough linguistic and cultural similarities existed that they could usually communicate with other Africans from the same region.
  9. Slaves who had endured the Middle Passage were poorly nourished, weak, and sick; they encountered the alien diseases of North America without having developed a biological arsenal of acquired immunities.
  10. The slave population grew due to a high rate of natural increase and by the 1740s, the majority of southern slaves were country-born.
- B. Slave Labor and African American Culture**
1. Southern planters expected slaves to work from sunup to sundown and beyond.
  2. Some slaves resisted their bondage through direct physical confrontation with the master, mistress, or an overseer.
  3. In 1739, a group of about twenty slaves launched an unsuccessful rebellion at Stono, South Carolina. The rebellion illustrated that eighteenth-century slaves had no chance of overturning slavery and almost no chance at all of defending themselves in any bold strike for freedom.
  4. Slaves maneuvered constantly to protect themselves and to gain a measure of

autonomy within the boundaries of slavery.

5. In Chesapeake tobacco fields, most slaves were subject to close supervision by whites, while in the lower South, the task system gave slaves some control over the pace of their work and some discretion in the use of the rest of their time.
  6. Eighteenth-century slaves planted the roots of African American lineages whenever possible, establishing kinships and incorporating many other features of their West African heritage, such as diet, music and dance, and religious practices in their lives on New World plantations.
- C. Tobacco, Rice, and Prosperity**
1. The slavery system brought much wealth to the white plantation masters, as well as British merchants, and the monarchy.
  2. The products of slave labor made the southern colonies by far the richest in North America.
  3. The vast differences in wealth among white southerners engendered envy and occasional tension between rich and poor but remarkably little open hostility.
  4. The slaveholding gentry dominated both the politics and economy of the southern colonies and also set the cultural standards.

## **V. Unifying Experiences**

### **A. Commerce and Consumption**

1. The success of eighteenth-century commerce whetted the colonists’ appetite for consumer goods, thus supporting the growing Atlantic trade that took colonial goods to markets in England and brought consumer goods back to the colonies.
2. British exports to North America multiplied eightfold between 1700 and 1770, outpacing the rate of population growth after mid-century; colonial debts soared.
3. Despite the many differences among the colonists, the consumption of English

- exports built a certain material uniformity across region, religion, class, and status.
4. The rising tide of colonial consumption compelled colonists to think of themselves as individuals who had the power to make decisions that influenced the quality of their lives.
- B. Religion, Enlightenment, and Revival
1. Eighteenth-century colonists could choose from almost as many religions as they could consumer goods.
  2. The varieties of Protestant faith and practice ranged across an extremely broad spectrum.
  3. Many educated colonists became deists, looking to nature for God's plan rather than in the Bible. Deists shared the ideas of eighteenth-century Enlightenment thinkers, who tended to agree that science and reason could disclose God's laws in the natural order.
  4. Most eighteenth-century colonists went to church seldom or not at all, although they probably considered themselves Christians.
  5. The spread of religious indifference, of deism, of denominational rivalry, and of comfortable backsliding compelled some ministers to a new style of preaching that appealed more to the heart than to the head; historians have called this wave of revivals the "Great Awakening."
  6. The most famous revivalist in the eighteenth-century Atlantic world was George Whitefield.
  7. Although the revivals awakened and refreshed the spiritual energies of thousands of colonists struggling with the uncertainties and anxieties of eighteenth-century America, conversions at the revivals did not substantially boost the total number of church members.
  8. Like consumption of goods, revivals contributed to a set of common experiences that bridged colonial divides of faith, region, class, and status.
- C. Trade and Conflict in the North American Borderlands
1. British power defended the diverse inhabitants of colonies from Indian, French, and Spanish enemies on their borders and from foreign powers abroad.
  2. The British, French, Spanish, and Dutch all competed for control of the North American fur trade. Native American tribes often took advantage of this competition promising access to territory and furs to both the French and English at once and these shifting alliances and complex dynamics struck a fragile balance along the frontier.
  3. The threat of violence from all sides was ever present, and the threat became reality often enough for all parties to be prepared for the worst.
  4. During the Yamasee War of 1715, Yamasee and Creek Indians—with French encouragement—mounted a coordinated attack against colonial settlements in South Carolina and inflicted heavy casualties.
  5. In 1754, the colonists' endemic competition with the French flared into the Seven Years' War, which would inflame the frontier for years. During this period neither the colonists nor the British developed a clear policy of dealing with the Indians but quickly recognized the value of the tribes as allies.
  6. The Indians' potential as allies prompted officials in New Spain to mount a campaign to block Russian access to present-day California by building forts (called *presidios*) and missions.
  7. By 1772, the Spanish had established a trail of Catholic missions from San Diego to Monterey; for Indians, the Spaniards' California missions had horrendous consequences decimating Indian populations, as they had elsewhere in the Spanish borderlands.

## D. Colonial Politics in the British Empire

1. The British Empire kept the door to its colonies open to anyone, but restricted colonial trade to British ships and traders.
2. British attempts to exercise political power in colonial governments met with success so long as British officials were on or very near the sea.
3. The British government envisioned colonial governors, most of whom were born in England and appointed by the king, as mini-monarchs able to exert as much influence in the colonies as the king did in England, but in reality, they were unable to wield absolute authority in the internal affairs of colonies.
4. British policies did not clearly define the powers and responsibilities of colonial assemblies so the assemblies seized the opportunity to make their own rules.
5. By 1720, colonial assemblies had won the power to initiate legislations, including tax laws and authorizations to spend public funds.
6. The heated political struggles between royal governors and colonial assemblies that occurred throughout the eighteenth century taught colonists to employ traditionally British ideas of representation and that power in the British colonies rarely belonged to the British government.

## CHAPTER QUESTIONS

Following are answer guidelines for the *Review Questions*, *Making Connections*, *Linking to the Past*, *Visual Activity*, *Map Activity*, *Seeking the American Promise*, and *Documenting the American Promise* questions that appear in the textbook chapter. For your convenience, the questions and answer guidelines are also available in the Computerized Test Bank.

## Review Questions

1. How did the North American colonies achieve the remarkable population growth of the eighteenth century? (See the section “A Growing Population and Expanding Economy in British North America” in your textbook.)

*Answer would ideally include:*

- *Description of the increase:* The colonial population underwent an eightfold increase during the eighteenth century, growing from around 250,000 colonists in 1700 to over 2 million in 1770.

- *Natural increase:* About three-fourths of the population growth arose from reproduction, demonstrating the stabilization and maturation of colonial settlements.

- *Immigration:* Immigration accounted for about one-fourth of the growth, as people from Europe and Africa continued to flow into North America.

2. Why did settlement patterns in New England change from the seventeenth to the eighteenth century? (See the section “New England: From Puritan Settlers to Yankee Traders” in your textbook.)

*Answer would ideally include:*

- *Population growth:* Though it grew more slowly than other colonies, the population of New England continued to grow, primarily through natural increase. The stringency of Puritanism and density of settlement made it a less attractive destination to potential immigrants than other colonies.

- *Limited availability of land:* Smaller than the southern colonies, New England pressed against hostile frontiers in the North and the West. This restricted New Englanders’ access to new land for settlement.

- *Partible inheritance:* The seventeenth-century practice of distributing land equally among male heirs resulted, by the eighteenth century, in allotments too small for subsistence farming, forcing some descendants to leave their home settlements.

- *From land grants to sales:* Needing revenue, colonial governments in the eighteenth century abandoned the practice of granting land to towns and instead sold it directly to individual purchasers. This practice eroded the seventeenth century patterns of settlement in towns and villages as New Englanders increasingly settled on individual farms.

3. Why did immigrants flood into Pennsylvania during the eighteenth century? (See the section “The Middle Colonies: Immigrants, Wheat, and Work” in your textbook.)

*Answer would ideally include:*

- *Appeal of Pennsylvania:* During the eighteenth century, Pennsylvania had a reputation for unparalleled economic opportunity and the vast availability of land. William Penn’s policy of negotiating with Indian tribes lessened the occurrence of land disagreements, encouraging immigrants and potential land buyers to the area.

- *Freedom of religion:* The freedom of conscience promised in Pennsylvania was especially attractive to the large amounts of German and Scots-Irish immigrants who belonged to dissenting Protestant sects.

4. How did slavery influence the society and economy of the southern colonies? (See the section “The Southern Colonies: Land of Slavery” in your textbook.)

*Answer would ideally include:*

- *Population:* Slaves of African ancestry grew from 20 to 40 percent of the population between 1700 and 1770 due to natural increase and the Atlantic slave trade.

- *African influence:* Large numbers of newly enslaved Africans coming into the southern colonies, who imported African kinship structures, naming patterns, food crops, and music, made the influence of African culture in the South quite strong.

- *Labor force:* Slaves formed the basis of the agricultural workforce on the tobacco, indigo, and rice plantations. Their productivity allowed the export of these products and made their masters and the southern colonies quite wealthy. Slaves supported slaveowners’ leisure and achievement.

- *Slave ownership designates gentry:* Slaveholders were the wealthiest, most powerful southerners. They dominated culture, politics and the economy and created a society which made slave rebellions nearly impossible.

5. What experiences tended to unify the colonists in British North America during the eighteenth century? (See the section “Unifying Experiences” in your textbook.)

*Answer would ideally include:*

- *Economy:* All of the colonies in North America experienced an increase in both trade

practices and consumer goods. Each region relied on some form of agriculture for trade: The northern colonies produced lumber and shipping; the middle colonies, like Philadelphia, were the center for wheat and flour; and the southern colonies produced rice and tobacco. Despite exporting different products, each region of North America was linked through the Atlantic trade system, exporting agricultural products and importing British consumer goods.

- *Decline of religion:* The boom period of immigration during the eighteenth century not only brought different cultures to North America but also a variety of dissenting Protestant faiths. Along with the influence of the Enlightenment and Deism, previous Puritan practices began to decline in this period and a general indifference towards traditional religious practices swept through the colonies.

- *Identity as British colonists:* During this period the colonists began to identify themselves as not only colonist, but British subjects. The consumer trade practices brought decidedly British goods to the colonies and the institution of the Navigation Acts solidified the colonies’ close connection with Britain. The colonies also felt the influence of British ideas of representative government within their colonial assemblies. The colonial assemblies gradually established a strong tradition of representative government they saw as analogous to English Parliament. The colonists used British ideas of representative government to defend their own colonial interests.

## Making Connections

1. Colonial products such as tobacco and sugar transformed consumption patterns on both sides of the Atlantic in the eighteenth century. How did consumption influence the relationship between the American colonies and Britain? In your answer, consider how it might have strengthened and weakened connections. (See section “Unifying Experiences” in your textbook.)

*Answer would ideally include:*

- *Unifying dimensions of consumption:* The economy that made patterns of eighteenth-century consumption possible forged bonds throughout the Atlantic world. For example, New England fish fed the Caribbean slaves who produced the sugar that graced the tables of English consumers. The wealth that these economies concentrated in the hands of planters, merchants, and the crown created shared

interests amongst Atlantic elites. Protecting trade from Indian disruptions and competing European powers led colonies to look to England for military support.

- *Colonial consumption and British identity:*

The availability of English goods throughout the colonies offered colonists ways to assert their British identity despite geographic separation.

- *Colonial consumption and colonial identity:*

The opportunities to exercise individual choice through consumption provided colonists lessons in individual prerogative and self-determination. The bonds of the Atlantic community could not soothe all the tensions between the colonies and England, especially in the face of royal attempts to closely direct colonial affairs and colonists' growing sense of distinct interests and privileges. Nevertheless, colonists would draw on British ideas of representative government in attempting to negotiate their disputes with England.

2. Why did the importance of religion decline throughout the colonies from the seventeenth to the eighteenth century? How did American colonists respond to these changes? (See sections "New England: From Puritan Settlers to Yankee Traders," "The Middle Colonies: Immigrants, Wheat, and Work," and "Unifying Experiences" in your textbook.)

*Answer would ideally include:*

- *Massachusetts example:* The religiously organized colonies of New England offer case studies in the difficulty of maintaining religious fervor, especially in the face of expanding and diversifying populations.

- *Enlightenment influence:* Deism, and its compatibility with explorations of science and reason, attracted many educated colonists. These beliefs demoted the value of the Bible and churches.

- *Denominational rivalry:* The dizzying diversity of religious options available in the colonies made it increasingly difficult for a single church to dominate a region.

- *Responses:* Many colonists embraced the freedoms of religious indifference, declining to attend, let alone become members of, churches. Others, however, were troubled by these developments and tried to revive Americans' religious fervor. The preachers closely associated with the Great Awakening stoked these fires with appeals to emotion. Their message of individual

value and capacity to act found an audience amongst thousands of colonists in the mid-eighteenth century.

3. How did different colonies attempt to manage relations with Indians? How did the Indians attempt to manage relationships with the Europeans? In your answer, consider disputes over territory *and* trade. (See section "Unifying Experiences" in your textbook.)

*Answer would ideally include:*

- *New England:* Sharing borders with powerful tribes like the Iroquois and the Mohicans, as well as the French to the North, constricted New England's territorial expansion, suggesting the ways other groups in North America could constrain colonial expansion.

- *Pennsylvania:* From the time of its establishment, Pennsylvania had pursued policies of negotiation with Indians, purchasing rather than simply annexing Indian lands. This policy of purchase reduced the frequency of violent conflict with Indians in the colony.

- *Indians' engagement with Europeans:* Indians both desired to protect their territorial claims and derive benefit from trade with European powers. They recognized and took advantage of the availability of multiple European powers in North America, often attempting to play one off the other to their best advantage.

- *Trade and shifting alliances:* British colonists recognized that Indians could be pivotal allies or enemies in conflicts with the French and Spanish in the New World. These complex power dynamics were on display in the conflicts that arose in relation to the fur trade.

4. Varied immigration patterns contributed to important differences among the British colonies. Compare and contrast patterns of immigration to the middle and southern colonies. Who came, and how did they get there? How did they shape the economic, cultural, and political character of each colony? (See sections "New England: From Puritan Settlers to Yankee Traders," "The Middle Colonies: Immigrants, Wheat, and Work," and "The Southern Colonies: Land of Slavery" in your textbook.)

*Answer would ideally include:*

- *Diversity in Pennsylvania:* Available land, freedom of conscience, and a reputation for economic opportunity drew immigrants from



Germany, England, Scotland, and Ireland. Many were farmers and artisans—members of European middling classes.

- *Redemptioners*: Many Europeans who immigrated to Pennsylvania had to take the gamble of a hazardous ocean trip and selling themselves for a time as indentured servants in the colony. Such servants supplemented family-based labor, which dominated Pennsylvania agriculture.

- *Land availability*: Residents of the middle colonies pushed westward in pursuit of cheap land, establishing flourishing farms that produced affluence for them, and food for other colonies. The ratio of available land to labor helped ensure that most colonists avoided poverty.

- *Urban life*: Agricultural production made possible high levels of consumption in the middle colonies, as well as giving rise to an urban merchant class concentrated in Philadelphia.

- *Shifting southern populations*: The white population of the southern colonies continued to grow through natural increase and immigration. The most dramatic development in the demographics of the southern colonies was the growth of the slave population, both through natural increase and forced migration of enslaved Africans. The proportion of southerners who were black grew from 20 percent in 1700 to 40 percent in 1770.

- *Regional divergence in the South*: The influence of the slave trade produced two distinct regions: the upper South around the Chesapeake Bay, which continued to focus on tobacco production and maintain a white majority, and the lower South, which specialized in rice and indigo production. The labor demands of these crops led to a black majority population in this region.

- *Slavery versus servitude*: Most Africans, unlike white immigrants, came as slaves, forced to endure the dangers of the Middle Passage under duress, only to be sold into permanent servitude in North America. Slavery differed from indentured servitude not just in the near impossibility of freedom, but also in the absence of legal checks on masters' authority over slaves. The inherited status of slavery also meant that slaves would increasingly be born in the United States, living for generations in the colonies but without ever enjoying the benefits of the freedoms and opportunities immigrants pursued.

- *Wealth and disparity*: Slavery produced enormous wealth for the southern colonies and England. Free whites in the South enjoyed per capita wealth four times greater than that of New Englanders. Although this wealth was distributed very

unevenly in the region, hostility between whites in the South was largely restrained. The gentry enjoyed great power, controlling voting and acting as arbiters of cultural standards. The sense of whites' common interest and privilege, made stark against the alternative of black slavery, helped unify southern whites even in the face of internal inequality.

## Linking to the Past

1. How did the British North American colonies in 1750 differ politically and economically from those in 1650? Were there important continuities? (See Chapters 3 and 4.)

*Answer would ideally include:*

- *Political differences*: The political life of the colonies in 1650 was directly impacted by the motivations that brought the settlers to those regions. Massachusetts Bay, for example, was a colony run by Puritans for Puritans; while southern colonies, with settlers whose economic interests were tied to England, saw more political involvement by the crown. By the late seventeenth-century all of the colonies were increasingly under the control of the crown and common political interests were being shaped across colonial borders, including relations with Native Americans and trade with England.

- *Economic differences*: Import and export of products grew to be a significant interest of colonists in all regions of English North America. As the production capacity of the colonies increased, so did political interests by the crown to control trade in and out of the colonies.

- *Continuities*: Until the 1750s, the colonists still viewed themselves, largely, as English men and women. They shared many cultural similarities with those across the Atlantic in England and valued the protection of the English military when needed in conflict with the French, the Spanish, and the Native Americans.

2. Is there persuasive evidence that colonists' outlook on the world shifted from the seventeenth to the eighteenth century? Why or why not? (See Chapters 3 and 4.)

*Answer would ideally include:*

- *A shifting world view?* Examining the colonies by region, students might first point to the diminished role of Puritanism in the northern colonies, which resulted from both the

Enlightenment and the increased commercial interests of the colonists. In the middle and southern colonies, the growing number of slaves entering the colonies from the West Indies and Africa influenced not only the way that the colonists saw themselves as participants in a global market, but also the culture of colonies where the population of Africans and African Americans was increasing. White men and women of English descent increasingly used skin color to delineate the social classes and keep themselves in a superior position economically and politically.

## Seeking the American Promise: A Sailor's Life in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World

1. What attracted Ashley Bowen to a seafaring life? How successful was he?

*Answer would ideally include:*

- Brown likely went to sea because he wanted to earn wages, to rise in the ranks from seaman to mate and possibly master (or captain), to save enough money to marry and support a family, and then retire comfortably after twenty or so years of work. He was not successful because he learned very little from his captain and ran away after only four years of service.

2. How did Bowen's experiences as a seaman compare to those of farmers in the colonies?

*Answer would ideally include:*

- Bowen's wages of five dollars per month were roughly equivalent to that of a farmer. However, to earn this wage he experienced dangers he would not have experienced on a farm. Bowen was indentured to a captain, suffered through sickness, imprisonment, foul weather, and accidents.

3. How might Bowen's outlook on the world compare to that of the vast majority of colonists who seldom or never went to sea?

*Answer would ideally include:*

- Unlike those colonists who looked towards the farms and forests for their future, Bowen had the opportunity to visit dozens of ports in North America, the West Indies, the British Isles, and Europe. Bowen experienced foreign languages and cultures in his travels, which undoubtedly provided

him with a broader understanding of the world and its challenges than was held by the typical male colonist of his time.

## Documenting the American Promise: Spanish Priests Report on California Missions

1. In what ways did Jayme and Serra agree about the motivations of the Indians in and around Mission San Diego de Alcalá? In what ways did they disagree? How would Serra's recommendations for rebuilding the mission have addressed the problems identified by Jayme that caused the revolt?

*Answer would ideally include:*

- *Agreements:* Jayme and Serra agree that the Indians' rebellious behavior at the mission was motivated, at least in part, by Indians' desires to protect themselves against soldiers' actions. Jayme sees Indians' responses to the soldiers as self-defense; Serra sees the Indians' actions as an enraged response to soldiers' efforts to chastise them.

- *Disagreements:* Jayme sees the Indians as more virtuous and moral in their behavior than the soldiers, while Serra sees the Indians as heathens and the soldiers as people who were trying to do their jobs, but approaching those jobs in the wrong way.

- *Serra's recommendations for soldiers:* Serra believed that the soldiers' job was to protect the mission and the missionaries, not to conquer the Indians. If Jayme had ordered the soldiers to focus on protecting the mission and prevented them from maltreating the Indians, the revolt might not have happened.

2. How did the goals and activities of the Spanish soldiers compare with those of the Catholic missionaries?

*Answer would ideally include:*

- *Missionaries' goals and activities:* The missionaries seem to be genuinely interested in converting the Indians to Christianity but they—and especially Serra—appear to think that successful conversion of the Indians requires at least some element of control over them.

- *Soldiers' goals and activities:* The soldiers are interested not only in controlling the Indians but also in exploiting and harassing them by raping women,

ruining their crops, punishing them for perceived misdeeds, etc.

- *Reasons for differences and similarities:* The primary differences come from motivation. The missionaries are religiously motivated in their efforts with the Indians and the soldiers are motivated more by their own self-interest. Missionaries' and soldiers' desire to control the Indians comes from their mutual belief that they are racially and culturally superior to the Indians.

3. How did the religious convictions of Jayme and Serra influence their reports? What might Spanish soldiers or Indians have said about these events? What might they have said about missionaries like Jayme and Serra?

*Answer would ideally include:*

- *Religion and Jayme's point of view:* Jayme seems to be most concerned about Christian behavior. He suggests that the Indians behave virtuously and morally and that they want to be Christians. He wants Indians to convert officially, but is very pleased that they behave "like Christians." He sees soldiers, on the other hand, as Christians in name who behave in very unchristian ways. His report is focused on the need to bring soldiers' behavior in line with their avowed religion.

- *Religion and Serra's point of view:* Serra, unlike Jayme, focused on bringing Indians into the Christian church. He sees them as heathens who need to be saved. He is less explicitly critical of the soldiers. He doesn't condemn their behavior but only suggests that they need to guard the missionaries more effectively.

- *Soldiers' likely perspective:* If soldiers had made a report, they probably would have focused on the Indians as pagans who needed to be controlled first and forced into Christianity second. They would likely focus on the Indians' paganism and their lack of virtuous behavior. They would frame their treatment of the Indians as a necessary part of converting them.

- *Indians' likely perspective:* If the Indians were reporting, they would probably focus on the ways the soldiers' exploited them. They might also complain about the missionaries who did not respect their culture and whose criticisms legitimated the soldiers' bad treatment of them. Indians' report of the attack on the San Diego Mission would be framed as a

partially successful self-defense against Christians and soldiers' efforts to annihilate them.

## Visual Activity

### Bethlehem, Pennsylvania (p. 134)

**Reading the Image:** What does this painting indicate about the colonists' priorities?

*Answer would ideally include:*

- *Priorities:* This painting of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, shows an orderly settlement dominated by straight lines and right angles. Crops (to the right of center) and garden areas (center) are laid out in tidy rows; the houses and buildings are rectangular. The only exceptions are the roads that follow the banks of waterways: Presumably, even the industrious residents of Bethlehem could not convince the channels to change course. Settlers in the town clearly believed in keeping things in their places, with penned livestock separated from fields and forested areas banished to well beyond the outskirts of human habitation. It also is evident from the multistory, centrally located town buildings that residents appreciated communal life, even if they did settle on individual farms like the one in the foreground.

**Connections:** Why might Pennsylvanians have been so concerned about maintaining order?

*Answer would ideally include:*

- *The importance of order:* Moravian immigrants, members of a dissenting Protestant sect who were persecuted in Europe for their refusal to bear arms and swear loyalty oaths, founded the town of Bethlehem. For immigrants like these, it was very important to establish control over their lives and also over their surroundings. The name "Bethlehem" indicates that they saw their new town as a sanctuary or the birthplace of something holy. They would not have wished to encourage disorder to such symbolic new beginnings. Moreover, many Europeans reacted to the wilderness of the New World by working extremely hard to maintain what they saw as civilized standards of behavior and life, including the imposition of "rational" towns on an inherently irrational landscape.

## Map Activities

### Map 5.2: Atlantic Trade in the Eighteenth Century (p. 128)

**Reading the Map:** What were the major markets for trade coming out of Europe? What goods did the British colonies import and export?

*Answer would ideally include:*

- *Imports and exports of the British colonies:* European products went to the major port cities of the North American colonies (Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Norfolk, and Charleston) and also to the West Indies and the Ivory, Gold, and Slave coasts of western Africa. The most common items that colonists imported from England were manufactured goods; there was some trade in linens and horses as well. There was, however, a thriving trade between the colonies and both Africa and the West Indies, with the colonies exchanging fish, livestock, flour, lumber, rice, and rum for slaves and sugar. Most other exports went to England and revolved around raw materials and foodstuffs. Boston, for instance, shipped fish, furs, and naval stores, while Norfolk provided tobacco, and the West Indies shipped molasses and fruit.

**Connections:** In what ways did the flow of raw materials from the colonies affect British industry? How did British colonial trade policies influence the Atlantic trade?

*Answer would ideally include:*

- *Raw materials:* The raw materials provided by the colonies provided a spur to the growth of the mass market. Colonial flour, sugarcane, and tobacco leaf could be processed into relatively inexpensive consumer commodities, like crackers, sweets, and pipe tobacco, which were within the reach of a broad range of purchasers.

- *Trade policies:* Colonial trade policies guaranteed that the British benefited from the Atlantic trade; they had a virtual monopoly over colonial raw materials, and so collected customs duties on them and also re-exported them at considerable profit.

### Map 5.3: The Atlantic Slave Trade (p. 136)

**Reading the Map:** Where in Africa did most slaves originate? Approximately how far was the trip from the busiest ports of origin to the two most common New World destinations?

*Answer would ideally include:*

- *Origin of the slave trade:* Most slaves originated from the Congo and Angola in West Africa. The trip to Brazil, one of the two most common New World destinations, was about 3,250 miles; the trip to the West Indies was about 5,400 miles.

**Connections:** Why were so many more African slaves sent to the West Indies and Brazil than to British North America?

*Answer would ideally include:*

- *Patterns of the slave trade:* More slaves went to the West Indies and Brazil for several reasons. West Indian and Brazilian planters grew sugarcane, a labor-intensive crop that required year-round attention under unhealthy working conditions. In British North America, not only did slaveholders grow less demanding crops, like tobacco and rice, they also lived in societies with higher numbers of free workers whose labor supplemented that of slaves. The more healthful conditions of North American agriculture meant that slaves in those colonies experienced natural increase—that is, more births than deaths—whereas slaves in the sugar colonies experienced the reverse: natural decrease. The West Indies and Brazil imported the most slaves because of their high demand for labor, an absence of free workers to perform it, and the need to replace existing slaves who died quickly under the harsh conditions of the sugar economy.

## LECTURE STRATEGIES

### Lecture 1: Ethnic and Religious Heterogeneity in Colonial America

Colonial America demonstrated remarkable diversity in the eighteenth century. Consider focusing on ethnicity and religion to prove this point, going from region to region. New England was the most homogeneous, with a predominance of English descendants who practiced a mainly Puritan-derived religion. Even in New England, however, diversity was present. Explain the Great Awakening in New England, and then ask how widespread deep religious devotion was at the time. (Be sure to cover the “threats” that the Enlightenment, denominational rivalry, and backsliding posed to religiosity in New England.)

Next, move on to the middle colonies and explain the coming of the Germans and the Scots-Irish. With them came more diverse religions, such

as the Lutheran and Presbyterian denominations. Discuss George Whitefield's visits to America and how the revivalism he championed paralleled the egalitarian values expressed by colonists' patterns of consumption. Finally, discuss the ethnicity of immigrants to the South. You may want to direct students' attention to Map 5.1, "Europeans and Africans in the Eighteenth Century," to demonstrate the racial and ethnic diversity of the colonies. Leave most of the discussion on slavery for the next class, but point out that southerners differentiated between ethnicities among slaves. Using the discussion of ethnicity as a starting point, begin exploring the construction of the concept of race.

### Lecture 2: Solidly Establishing Slavery

In this lecture, you can introduce students to the institution of slavery. Direct students' attention to Map 5.3, "The Atlantic Slave Trade," and Table 5.1, "Slave Imports, 1451–1870" to emphasize the solidification of the institution of slavery in the Western Hemisphere. Using the textbook, reconstruct the violence that permeated slavery. Africans were kidnapped, abused, and sold to slave traders. The Middle Passage killed at least 15 to 20 percent of all Africans transported to the Americas. Here, you can refer students to the account of Olaudah Equiano's capture and his experience of the Middle Passage. Slavery in the West Indies meant certain death, and even coming to mainland America did not drastically improve a slave's chances for survival. Ten to 15 percent died in their first year as slaves in America, while they were "seasoned." They could not communicate with the master, who often considered them little more than livestock. Other slaves helped them make the transition from free persons embedded in systems of social relations to slaves who had no legal rights at all. Slaves might have been able to negotiate and resist the will of the master to a certain degree (describe such instances if possible), but ultimately the master prevailed through sheer brutality and a legal system that legitimized all that he chose to do. Ask students to consider the textbook's account of the Stono rebellion and its consequences as a means for understanding how slavery permeated society. Finally, reintroduce your discussion of race and extend it to define the word *racism*. Students may need an explanation that racism means more than mere prejudice. Help students understand that racism stems from the belief in the biological inferiority of other races—in this case, nonwhites. They also need to understand that eighteenth-century racism entailed action and that it

was goal oriented: Racism amounted to the systematic oppression of a racial minority designed to maximize exploitation of that minority. There will be a lot to talk about.

### Lecture 3: The Colonial Economy in the Eighteenth Century

The British colonies in America were embedded in a system of economic relations that benefited crown and colony alike. Draw students' attention to Map 5.2, "Atlantic Trade in the Eighteenth Century," and to Figure 5.1, "Colonial Exports, 1768–1772." Ask students to consider the questions posed by Map 5.2, focusing on the ways in which trade policies influenced both Britain and the colonies. Reintroduce the original Navigation Acts of the 1650s and 1660s as they related to the American colonies. Explore the impact of the Board of Trade on American commerce (it was minimal, with the exception of the re-exporting of tobacco). Show the agricultural basis of colonial prosperity (and how it rested on slave labor) and how that prosperity translated into increasing consumerism. Explore the extent of that prosperity by discussing the distribution of wealth in America compared with that of England. Who became rich in America? Did one's region make a difference in one's options? How important were merchants? Were farmers absolutely independent of the market? Use the Benjamin Franklin vignette at the start of the chapter to discuss how widespread prosperity and consumerism encouraged people to think of themselves as individuals capable of making their own choices for good or evil. Finally, discuss the perks of the empire that made this prosperity possible. The crown regulated trade and collected some taxes in the process, but the colonists benefited from being included in the empire's commerce on the same basis as citizens of England. The American colonists could trade with other British colonies and enjoyed the protection of the British navy. These advantages could not have been provided by the colonies themselves.

## Common Misconceptions and Difficult Topics

### 1. Slavery Was a Monolithic Institution

Many students consider slavery a monolithic institution and are unable or unwilling to see the differences in ancient, medieval, African, and New World slavery. You should quickly clear up this

misconception. Be sure to illustrate the role that race played in African slavery in the New World. You will also want to cover the role of natural increase and a resident master class in the American South. To explore the variances in the institution of slavery, point students to the differences outlined in the textbook in the tobacco and rice cultures in the American South. You may have a student who asks which system was better. Resist value judgments and stress *difference* instead. The brutality of the system should be self-evident in both cultures.

## 2. Colonists Were Self-Reliant Frontiersmen

Students frequently misunderstand the social and economic order of colonial America in the eighteenth century. They believe that a general self-sufficiency translates into absolute self-reliance. They fail to understand that, whether colonists were located in coastal cities or on the frontier, they continued to be embedded in a network of relations: political, economic, social, and familial. As the textbook makes clear, the colonists did engage in market activities, in pursuit of consumption of manufactured goods. But even when colonists failed to participate in market economic relations, there was still an exchange of goods taking place. Consumption did not necessarily mean that a cash transaction took place. One might exchange one's own labor or the loan of livestock for a manufactured good. The nonmarket, local exchange of goods, even on the frontier, rested on the ability of merchants to obtain goods, and sometimes credit, from Britain and Europe. Have students look at Figure 5.1 on colonial exports and the photo of the English glass mirror to demonstrate the web of market relations. Discuss how people perceived themselves as interdependent within the colonial economy.

## 3. American Colonists Did Not Profit from Their Participation in the British Empire

Because the colonies ultimately rebelled against the British Empire, some students will assume that the Americans never benefited from being a part of the empire. Make the point that the American colonies' prosperity, as evidenced by the increasing consumption described in this chapter, was a direct result of their participation in the British Empire. In many ways, the colonists got the best of all worlds. The British navy protected them and their ships of commerce, while the American merchants did their best to avoid taxation whenever possible. The colonists benefited from a stable governmental system in which they (at least the elites) helped make the rules. And they benefited from

governmental policies that promoted immigration. Very little was asked in return at this time. The crown profited from its American colonies, but the colonies profited as well.

## IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES

### Class Discussion Starters

Have your students consider the possible course of colonial development had New England and the middle colonies adopted cash-crop agriculture. How would the patterns of settlement have been different? Would plantations have been possible in the northern colonies, considering the climate? Would slavery have become more entrenched in the North if a plantation-based economy had prevailed? If your students respond positively, follow up by asking them to consider whether slavery was merely an economic institution—in other words, whether it reflected ideological differences between northern and southern whites or whether it was merely a response to economic needs.

### Using Primary Sources

Francis Daniel Pastorius, a well-educated German, went to Pennsylvania in 1683. He later wrote of his experiences and observations in the newly forming colony: <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/7439>. Throughout the eighteenth century, a diverse population of Europeans immigrated to the Middle Colonies including Gottlieb Mittelberger, who described conditions in the New World that fell far short of his expectations: <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5712> and <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5713>. Compare Mittelberger's reported experiences to those of Pastorius. What factors might account for the differences in the two men's perspectives?

### Using Film and Television in the Classroom

When discussing the Great Awakening, you may want to consider showing your class "Revolution," the second episode of the PBS series *Africans in America*, which covers the revival's impact on the institution of slavery.

## Historical Debates

Have your students debate the degree to which colonists considered themselves British (or French, Dutch, German, etc.) and the degree to which they considered themselves Americans. You might wish to have students review the conclusion of the chapter, “The Dual Identity of British North American Colonists” and then discuss the growth of public opinion and its influence on the creation of an American culture. When can (or should) historians reasonably begin to speak of something as identifiable as “American culture”? Did it exist by 1760? Why or why not?

## Additional Bedford/St. Martin’s Resources for Chapter 5

### PowerPoint Maps, Images, Lecture Outlines, and i>Clicker Content

These presentation materials are downloadable from the Instructor Resource tab at [bedfordstmartins.com/roark/catalog](http://bedfordstmartins.com/roark/catalog), and they are available on our Bedford Lecture Kit CD-ROM. They include ready-made and fully customizable PowerPoint multimedia presentations built around lecture outlines that are embedded with maps, figures, and selected images from the textbook and are supplemented by more detailed instructor notes on key points. Also available are maps and selected images in JPEG and PowerPoint format; content for i>clicker, a classroom response system, in Microsoft Word and PowerPoint formats; the Instructor’s Resource Manual in Microsoft Word format; and outline maps in PDF format for quizzing or handouts. All files are suitable for copying onto transparency acetates.

### The Bedford Series in History and Culture

Volumes from the Bedford Series in History and Culture can be packaged at a discount with *The American Promise*. Relevant titles for this chapter include:

- *A BRIEF NARRATIVE OF THE CASE AND TRYAL OF JOHN PETER ZENGER, Printer of the New York Weekly Journal with Related Documents*, edited with an introduction by Paul Finkelman, Albany Law School
- *The Great Awakening: A Brief History with Documents*, Thomas S. Kidd, Baylor University
- *The New York Conspiracy Trials of 1741: Daniel Horsmanden’s JOURNAL OF THE PROCEEDINGS with Related Documents*,

edited with an introduction by Serena R. Zabin, Carleton College

- *THE LANCASTER TREATY OF 1744 with Related Documents*, edited with an introduction by James H. Merrell, Vassar College
- *Slavery, Freedom, and the Law in the Atlantic World: A Brief History with Documents*, Sue Peabody, Washington State University Vancouver, and Keila Grinberg, Universidade Federal do Estado do Rio de Janeiro
- *THE INTERESTING NARRATIVE OF THE LIFE OF OLAUDAH EQUIANO WRITTEN BY HIMSELF with Related Documents*, Second Edition, edited with an introduction by Robert J. Allison, Suffolk University

To view an updated list of series titles, visit [bedfordstmartins.com/history/series](http://bedfordstmartins.com/history/series).

### Reading the American Past

The following documents are available in Chapter 5 of the companion reader *Reading the American Past* by Michael P. Johnson, Johns Hopkins University:

- Elizabeth Ashbridge Becomes an Indentured Servant in New York: *Some Account of the Early Part of the Life of Elizabeth Ashbridge, Who Died in . . . 1755* (1807)
- Poor Richard’s Advice: Benjamin Franklin, *Father Abraham’s Speech from Poor Richard’s Almanac*, 1757
- An Anglican Criticizes New Light Baptists and Presbyterians in the South Carolina Backcountry: Charles Woodmason, *Sermon on the Baptists and the Presbyterians*, ca. 1768
- Advertisements for Runaway Slaves: *South Carolina Gazette* and *Virginia Gazette*, 1737–1745
- A Moravian Missionary Interviews Slaves in the West Indies, 1767–1768: Christian George Andreas Oldendorp, *History of the Evangelical Brethren’s Mission on the Caribbean Islands*, 1777

### Online Study Guide at [bedfordstmartins.com/roark](http://bedfordstmartins.com/roark)

The Online Study Guide helps students review material from the textbook as well as practice historical skills. Each chapter contains assessment quizzes and interactive activities accompanied by page number references to encourage further study.