

Early British Colonies

MAIN IDEA

Beginning in the early 1600s, the English established colonies along the eastern shore of North America.

WHY IT MATTERS NOW

The original 13 English colonies in North America formed the foundation of what would become the United States of America.

Terms & Names

- John Smith
- Jamestown
- joint-stock companies
- indentured servant
- Puritan
- John Winthrop
- King Philip's War
- William Penn
- Quaker
- mercantilism
- Navigation Acts

One European's Story

John Smith craved adventure. Smith's father had urged him to be a merchant, but the restless Englishman wanted to see the world. In 1606, he offered his services as a colonist to the Virginia Company, a group of merchants charged with starting an English colony in North America. He later recalled his vision of the opportunities that awaited those who settled the Americas.

A PERSONAL VOICE JOHN SMITH

“What man who is poor or who has only his merit to advance his fortunes can desire more contentment than to walk over and plant the land he has obtained by risking his life? . . . Here nature and liberty . . . give us freely that which we lack or have to pay dearly for in England. . . . What pleasure can be greater than to grow tired from . . . planting vines, fruits, or vegetables? . . .”

—*The General History of Virginia*

Smith would need all of his abilities to steer the new colony, Jamestown, through what turned out to be a disastrous beginning. In time, however, the colony survived to become England's first permanent settlement in North America.

The English Settle at Jamestown

In April of 1607, nearly four months after the Virginia Company's three ships had left England, they reached the North American shore. Sailing part way up a broad river leading into Chesapeake Bay, the colonists selected a small, defensible peninsula and built Fort James to protect the settlement of **Jamestown**, named for their king.

A DISASTROUS START Unlike Spanish colonies, which were funded by Spanish rulers, the English colonies were originally funded by **joint-stock companies**. Stock companies allowed several investors to pool their wealth in support of a colony that would, they hoped, yield a profit. Investors in the Jamestown colony demanded a quick return on their investment, and the colonists hoped to find gold to satisfy them. Consequently, they neglected farming and soon

▲ John Smith, seen here in a 19th-century painting based on a 1616 engraving, was a self-proclaimed soldier of fortune, sea captain, and poet.

Rediscovering Fort James

INTERACTIVE

Erosion turned the Jamestown Peninsula into an island and, for many years, the site of the original Fort James was assumed to be under water. However, in 1996, archaeologists from the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities discovered artifacts on what they concluded was the original site of the fort.

Since then, archaeologists have discovered armor, weapons, even games used by the first colonists. Archaeologists and historians are constantly learning more and more about this long-buried treasure of American history.

16th-century helmet and breastplate. ▶



▲ An archaeologist kneels beside holes left from the original palisade fence of Fort James. Note that the palisades were less than one foot in width.



Site of Jamestown

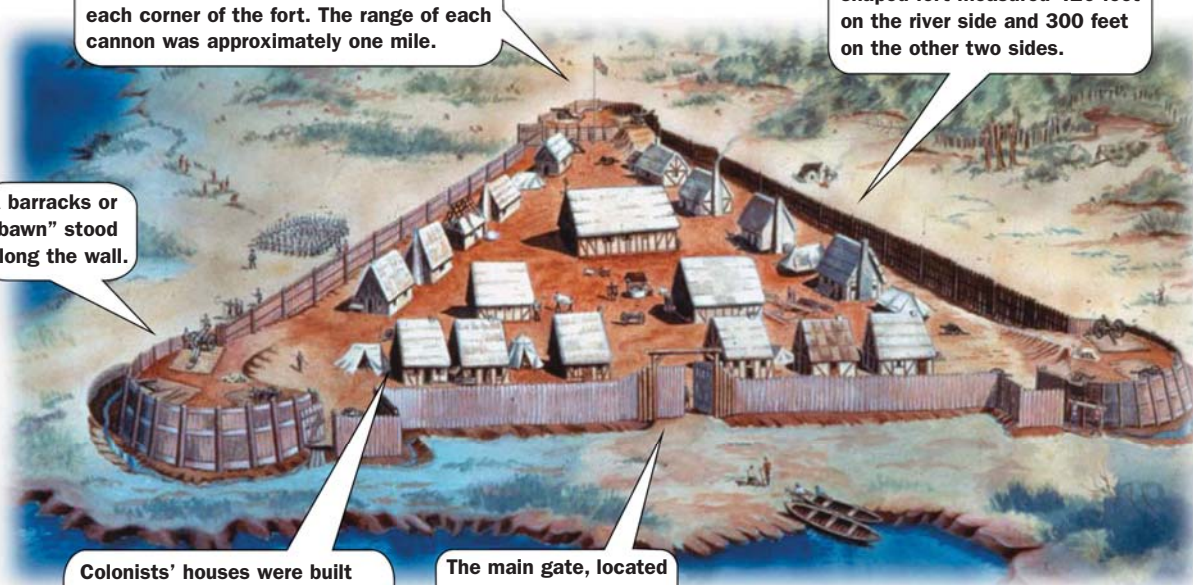
Rounded bulwarks, or watch towers, mounted with cannon were located at each corner of the fort. The range of each cannon was approximately one mile.

The walls of the triangular-shaped fort measured 420 feet on the river side and 300 feet on the other two sides.

A barracks or "bawn" stood along the wall.

Colonists' houses were built about ten feet from the fort's walls. Houses measured sixteen by forty feet and several colonists lived in each.

The main gate, located on the long side, faced the James river.



▲ This illustration re-creates what historians and archaeologists now believe Fort James looked like early in its history.

MAIN IDEA**Analyzing Causes**

A Why was the early settlement at Jamestown a near disaster?

suffered the consequences. Disease from contaminated river water struck them first, followed soon by hunger. After several months, one settler described the terrifying predicament: “Thus we lived for the space of five months in this miserable distress, . . . our men night and day groaning in every corner of the fort, most pitiful to hear.” **A**

Smith held the colony together by forcing the colonists to farm and by securing food and support from the native Powhatan peoples. Then Smith was injured and returned to England. Without Smith’s leadership, the colony eventually deteriorated to the point of famine. The settlement was saved, however, by the arrival of new colonists and by the development of a highly profitable crop, tobacco.

TOBACCO REQUIRES A SUPPLY OF LABOR In order to grow tobacco, the Virginia Company needed field laborers. Immigration jumped in 1618, when the company introduced the headright system, offering 50 acres of land to “adventurers” who would pay their own or another’s transportation from England. Many of those who arrived in Virginia, however, came as **indentured servants**. In exchange for passage to North America and food and shelter upon arrival, an indentured servant agreed to a limited term of servitude—usually four to seven years. Indentured servants were mainly from the lower classes of English society and therefore had little to lose by leaving for a new world.

The first enslaved Africans arrived in Virginia aboard a Dutch merchant ship in 1619. After a few years, most of them received land and freedom. It would be several decades before the English colonists in North America began the systematic use of enslaved Africans as laborers.

COLONISTS CLASH WITH NATIVE AMERICANS The colonists’ desire for more land—to accommodate their growing population and the demand for more crop space—led to warfare with the original inhabitants of Virginia. Unlike the Spanish, the English followed a pattern of driving away the people they defeated. Their conquest over the native peoples was total and complete, which is one reason a large mestizo-like population never developed in the United States.

ECONOMIC DIFFERENCES SPLIT VIRGINIA The English colonists who migrated to North America in increasing numbers battled not only Native Americans but sometimes each other. By the 1670s, one-quarter of the free white men in Virginia were poor former indentured servants who lived mainly on the western frontier of Virginia, where they constantly fought with Native Americans for land.

Although Virginia’s governor, William Berkeley, proposed building forts to protect the settlers, the settlers refused to pay taxes to maintain these forts. The colonists, under the leadership of a young planter named Nathaniel Bacon, marched on Jamestown in September of 1676. Bacon confronted colonial leaders with a number of grievances, including the frontier’s lack of representation in Virginia’s colonial legislature, or law-making body, the House of Burgesses. Although Bacon’s Rebellion ultimately failed, it exposed the restlessness of the colony’s former indentured servants. **B**

MAIN IDEA**Analyzing Issues**

B Why were Virginia’s frontier settlers frustrated with their government?

HISTORICAL SPOTLIGHT**EARLY REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT**

As the English settlers colonized North America, they sowed the seeds of the representative style of government that would become the foundation of American democracy.

Virginia’s House of Burgesses served as the first representative body in colonial America. The House first met in Jamestown in 1619 and included two citizens, or burgesses, from each of Virginia’s eleven districts. The body claimed the authority to raise taxes and pass legislation—subject to veto by the English governor.

The Mayflower Compact, which the Pilgrims crafted as they sailed to North America in 1620, created a civil government and pledged loyalty to the king. It stated that the purpose of their government in America would be to frame “just and equal laws . . . for the general good of the colony.”

Created in 1639, the Fundamental Orders of Connecticut extended voting rights to a greater number of white males in that colony. It also declared that the colonial legislature could assemble without a call by the governor.



◀ Puritans cherished their Bibles, passing them down as family treasures from one generation to the next. This Bible belonged to Governor William Bradford of the Plymouth Colony.

Puritans Create a “New England”

After King Henry VIII (1491–1547) broke with Roman Catholicism in the 1530s, the Church of England was formed. Although the new church was free of Catholic control, one religious group, the **Puritans**, felt that the church had kept too much Catholic ritual. They wanted to “purify,” or reform, the church by eliminating all traces of Catholicism. Some Puritans, called Separatists, wanted to separate from the English Church. They often met in secret to avoid the punishment inflicted upon those who did not follow the Anglican form of worship. **C**

One congregation of Separatists, known today as the Pilgrims, eventually migrated to America. There, in 1620, this small group of families founded the Plymouth Colony, the second permanent English colony in North America. Their Mayflower Compact, named for the ship on which they sailed to North America, became an important landmark in the development of American democracy.

THE MASSACHUSETTS BAY COLONY Other Puritans who were not Separatists turned their thoughts toward New England in the 1620s. They felt the burden of increasing religious persecution, political repression, and dismal economic conditions. In 1630, a group of Puritans established the Massachusetts Bay Colony along the upper coast of North America. The port town of Boston soon became the colony’s thriving capital. Settlers established other towns nearby and eventually incorporated the Plymouth Colony into the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

The Puritans believed they had a special covenant, or agreement, with God. To fulfill their part, they were to create a moral society that would serve as a beacon for others to follow. Puritan leader **John Winthrop** expressed the sense of mission that bound the Puritans together, in a sermon delivered aboard the flagship *Arbella*: “We [in New England] shall be as a City upon a Hill; the eyes of all people are on us.”

Although Puritans made no effort to create a democracy, the Massachusetts Bay Company extended the right to vote to all adult male members of the Puritan church—40 percent of the colony’s men. As their system of self-government evolved, so did the close relationship between the government and the Puritan church. The Puritan view dominated Massachusetts society: taxes supported the Puritan church, and laws required church attendance. **D**

DISSENT IN THE PURITAN COMMUNITY The Puritans came to America to follow their own form of worship, and they were intolerant of people who had dissenting religious beliefs. One such dissenter was Roger Williams, an extreme Separatist, who expressed two controversial views. First, he declared that the English settlers had no rightful claim to the land unless they purchased it from Native Americans. Second, he argued that every person should be free to worship according to his or her conscience.

MAIN IDEA

Analyzing Issues

C Why were the Puritans unhappy with the Church of England?

Vocabulary
repression: the act of putting down by force

MAIN IDEA

Forming Generalizations

D What type of society did the Puritans want to create?

MAIN IDEA

Analyzing Issues

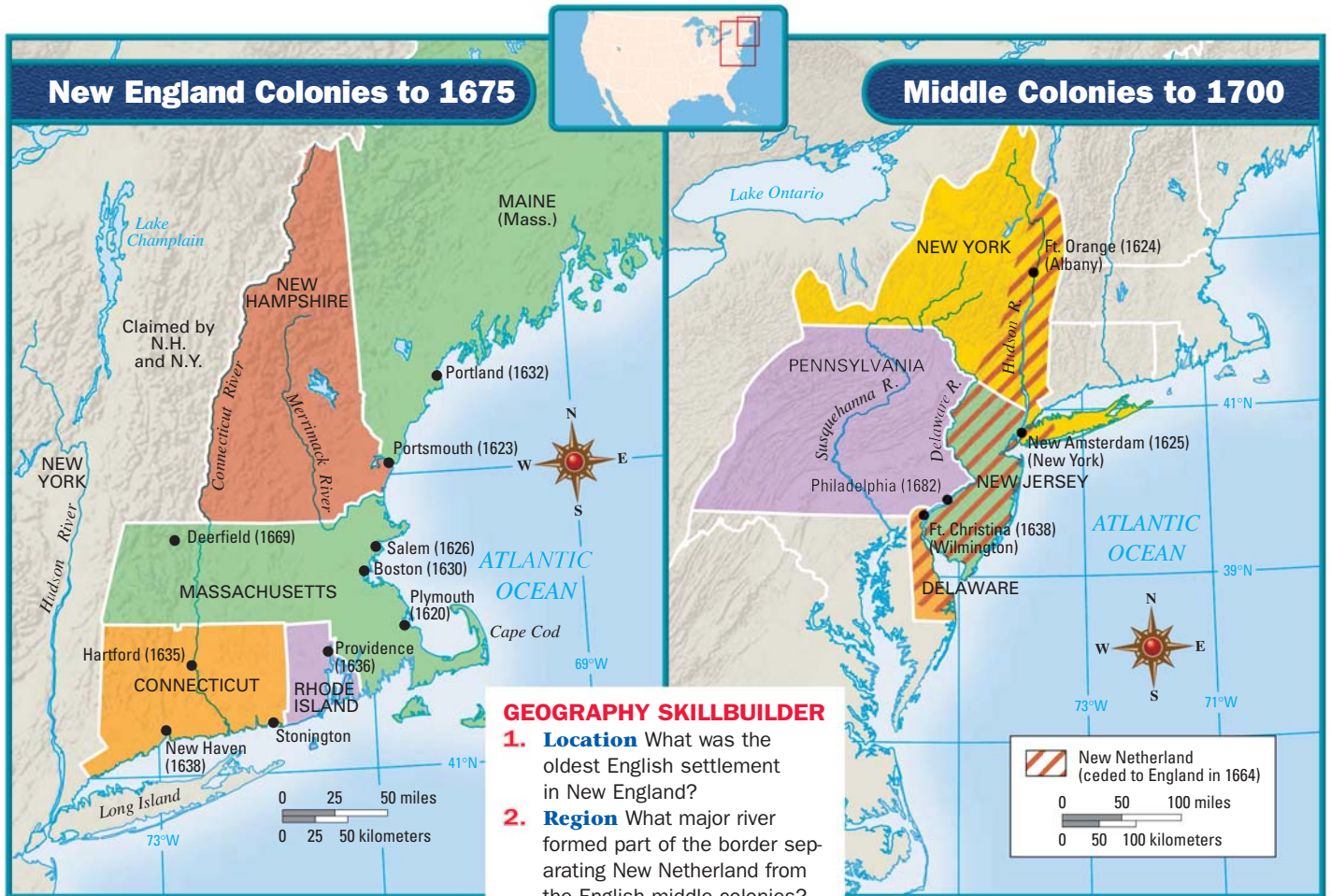
E In what principles did the government of Providence differ from that of Massachusetts?

When officials tried to deport Williams back to England, he fled Massachusetts and traveled south. He negotiated with a local Native American group for a plot of land and set up a new colony, which he called Providence. In Providence, later the capital of Rhode Island, Williams guaranteed religious freedom and separation of church and state. **E**

Another dissenter, Anne Hutchinson, taught that worshippers did not need the church or its ministers to interpret the Bible for them. Banished from the colony, Hutchinson, with her family and a band of followers, fled first to Rhode Island and, after her husband died, to New Netherland—which later became part of New York—where she died in a war with Native Americans.

NATIVE AMERICANS RESIST COLONIAL EXPANSION While Williams and his followers were settling Rhode Island, thousands of other white settlers fanned out to western Massachusetts and to new colonies in New Hampshire and Connecticut. From the beginning, Native Americans had helped the colonists, providing them with land and giving them agricultural advice. Soon, however, disputes between the Puritans and Native Americans arose over land and religion. As Native Americans saw their lands taken over by settlers, they feared an end to their way of life. In addition, Native Americans resented the Puritans' efforts to convert them and bristled under Puritan laws such as the prohibition of hunting and fishing on Sunday.

KING PHILIP'S WAR Great tension continued between Native Americans and settlers for nearly 40 years. Eventually, the Wampanoag chief Metacom, whom the English called King Philip, organized his tribe and several others into an alliance to wipe out the invaders. The eruption of **King Philip's War** in the spring of 1675 startled the Puritans with its intensity. Native Americans attacked



and burned outlying settlements throughout New England. Within months they were striking the outskirts of Boston. The alarmed and angered colonists responded by killing as many Native Americans as they could, even some from friendly tribes. For over a year, the two sides waged a war of mutual brutality and destruction. Finally, food shortages, disease, and heavy casualties wore down the Native Americans' resistance, and they gradually surrendered or fled. **F**

MAIN IDEA

Predicting Effects

F What long-term effects would you predict followed King Philip's War?

Settlement of the Middle Colonies

While English Puritans were establishing colonies in New England, the Dutch were founding one to the south. As early as 1609, Henry Hudson—an Englishman employed by the Dutch—had sailed up the river that now bears his name. The Dutch soon established a fur trade with the Iroquois and built trading posts on the Hudson River.

THE DUTCH FOUND NEW NETHERLAND In 1621, the Dutch government granted the newly formed Dutch West India Company permission to colonize New Netherland and expand the thriving fur trade. New Amsterdam (now New York City), founded in 1625, became the capital of the colony (see map on page 25). In 1655, the Dutch extended their claims by taking over New Sweden, a tiny colony of Swedish and Finnish settlers that had established a rival fur trade along the Delaware River. To encourage settlers to come and stay, the colony opened its doors to a variety of ethnic and religious groups. **G**

In 1664, the English took over the colony without a fight. The duke of York, the new proprietor, or owner, of the colony, renamed it New York. The duke later gave a portion of this land to two of his friends, naming this territory New Jersey for the British island of Jersey.

MAIN IDEA

Analyzing Events

G How did the Dutch create an ethnically diverse colony?

WORLD STAGE

THE ENGLISH CIVIL WAR AND RESTORATION

From 1642 to 1651, England was torn apart by great wars between loyalist supporters of King Charles I, and those who supported Parliament, many of whom were Puritans. The parliamentary armies were victorious, and Charles I was tried for treason and executed in 1649. For a decade, England became a commonwealth, or republic, headed first by Oliver Cromwell, a Puritan, and then by his son Richard.

However, the English grew weary of the rather grim and sober Puritan rule, and in 1660 the monarchy was restored under Charles II. The Restoration would have a profound effect on America, leading to the creation of new colonies and to more direct involvement by the Crown in colonial affairs.

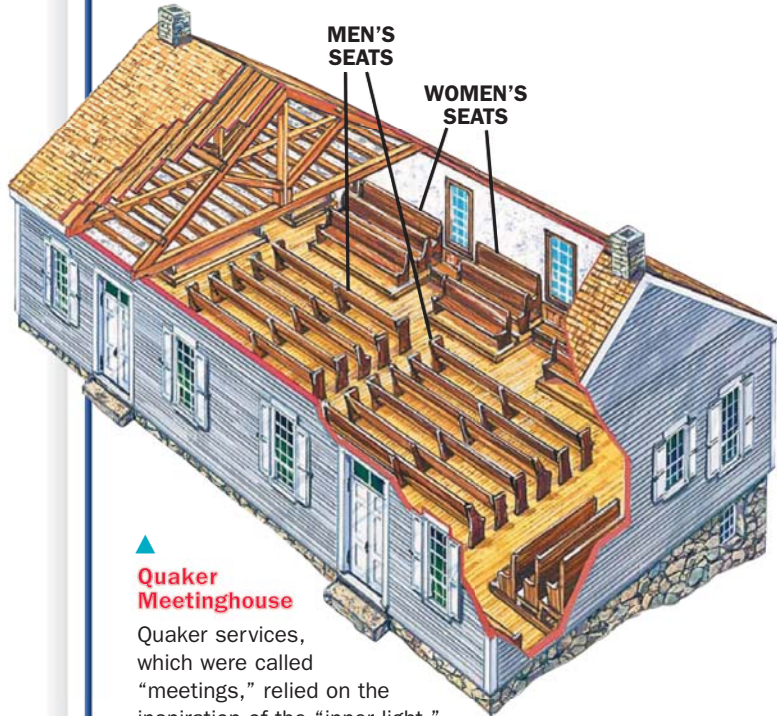
THE QUAKERS SETTLE PENNSYLVANIA The acquisition of New Netherland was one step in England's quest to extend its American empire after 1660, when the English monarchy was restored after a period of civil war and Puritan rule. The new king, Charles II, owed a debt to the father of a young man named **William Penn**. As payment, Charles gave the younger Penn a large property that the king insisted be called Pennsylvania, or "Penn's Woods," after the father. Following this, in 1682, Penn acquired more land from the duke of York, the three counties that became Delaware.

William Penn belonged to the Society of Friends, or **Quakers**, a Protestant sect that held services without formal ministers, allowing any person to speak as the spirit moved him or her. They dressed plainly, refused to defer to persons of rank, opposed war, and refused to serve in the military. For their radical views, they were scorned and harassed by Anglicans and Puritans alike.

Penn wanted to establish a good and fair society in keeping with Quaker ideals of equality, cooperation, and religious toleration. Penn guaranteed every adult male settler 50 acres of land and the right to vote. His plan for government called for a representative assembly and freedom of religion. Like Roger Williams before him, Penn believed that the land belonged to the Native Americans, and he saw to it that they were paid for it.

COLONIAL MEETINGHOUSES

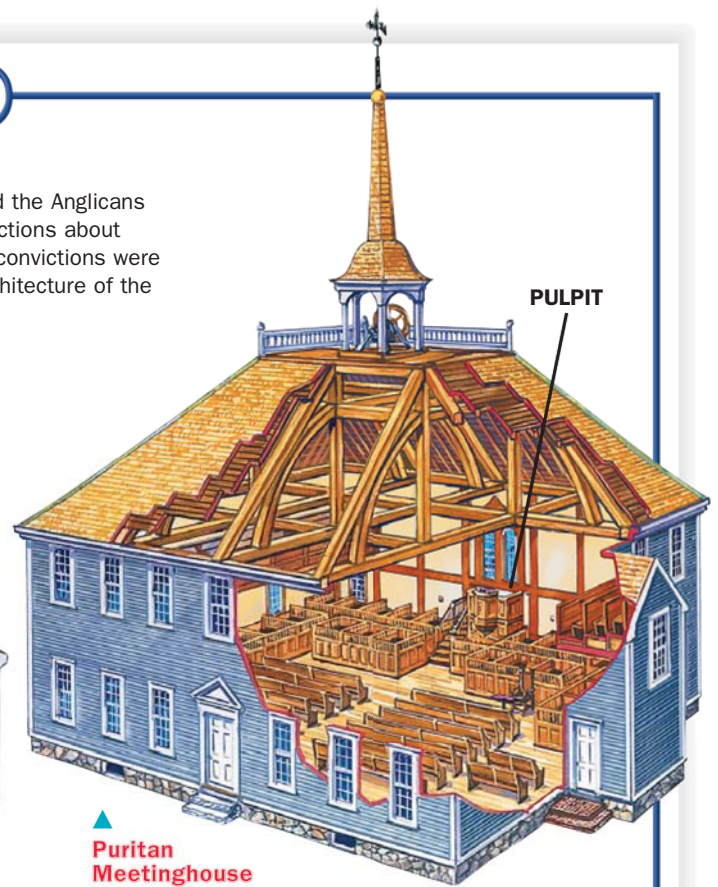
The Puritans of the Northeast, the Quakers of Pennsylvania, and the Anglicans of the Southern colonies held profound but often different convictions about community, social responsibility, and individual freedom. These convictions were expressed in the religious services of each group and in the architecture of the places of worship where these services were held.



▲ **Quaker Meetinghouse**

Quaker services, which were called “meetings,” relied on the inspiration of the “inner light.” Meetings reflected a respect for conscience and freedom of speech.

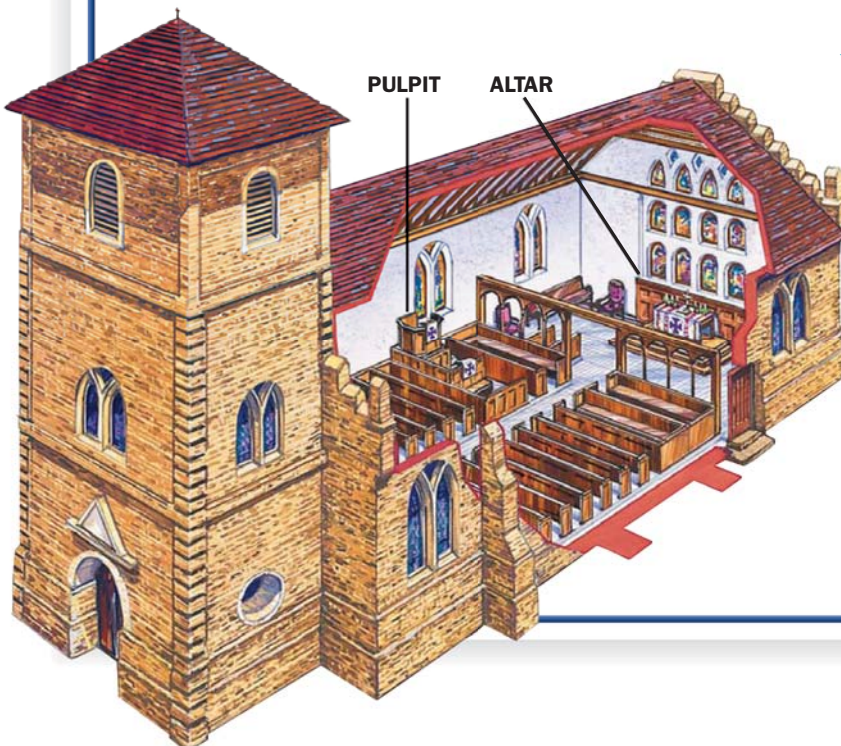
Men and women entered by separate doors and sat on opposite sides, facing each other. In some meetinghouses, women sat in slightly elevated seats. Both men and women could speak during the meeting.



▲ **Puritan Meetinghouse**

Puritan services focused on preaching. Sermons, which sometimes lasted for hours, instructed the individual conscience to be mindful of the common good.

The pulpit was the focal point of the meetinghouse. A plain interior reflected a value for austerity and simplicity. Meetinghouses were also used for town meetings.



▲ **Anglican Church**

The head of the Anglican church was the British monarch. Anglican services valued ritual. Their churches stressed the importance of authority and status.

Anglican churches emphasized the altar through ornamentation and elaborate windows. A screen separated the altar from the congregation. Elaborate pews were reserved for wealthy church members.

SKILLBUILDER Interpreting Visual Sources

1. In what ways do the Puritan and Quaker meetinghouses resemble each other? In what ways are they different?
2. How does the interior of the Anglican church show respect for hierarchy?

SEE SKILLBUILDER HANDBOOK, PAGE R23.

Penn himself spent only about four years in Pennsylvania. Meanwhile, his idealistic vision had faded but did not disappear. The Quakers became a minority in a colony thickly populated by people from all over western Europe. Slavery was introduced, and, in fact, many prominent Quakers in Pennsylvania owned slaves. However, the principles of equality, cooperation, and religious tolerance on which he had founded his vision would eventually become fundamental values of the new American nation. **H**

MAIN IDEA

Contrasting

H How did Penn's actions toward Native Americans differ from those of the Puritans in Massachusetts?

England and Its Colonies Prosper

THIRTEEN COLONIES Throughout the 1600s and 1700s, more British colonies in North America were founded, each for very different reasons. In 1632, King Charles I granted land north of Chesapeake Bay to George Calvert, the first Lord Baltimore. Calvert's son Cecil, the second Lord Baltimore, named the colony Maryland, after Queen Henrietta Maria, Charles's wife. In 1663, King Charles II awarded a group of key supporters the land between Virginia and Spanish Florida, a territory that soon became North and South Carolina.

In 1732, an English philanthropist named James Oglethorpe, along with several associates, received a charter for a colony he hoped could be a haven for those imprisoned for debt. Oglethorpe named the colony Georgia, after King George II. Few debtors actually came to Georgia, and the British Crown assumed direct control of the colony in 1752. By that time, the Crown had begun to exercise more and more control over colonial economies and governments.

The thirteen British colonies existed primarily for the benefit of England. The colonies exported to England a rich variety of raw materials, such as lumber and furs, and in return they imported the manufactured goods that England produced. The thirteen colonies that became the original United States were founded over a period of 125 years. Together, the colonies represented a wide variety of people, skills, motives, industries, resources, and agricultural products.

MERCANTILISM AND THE NAVIGATION ACTS Beginning in the 16th century, the nations of Europe competed for wealth and power through a new economic system called **mercantilism** (mûr'kən-tē-lîz'əm), in which the colonies played a critical role. According to the theory of mercantilism, a nation could increase its wealth and power in two ways: by obtaining as much gold and silver as possible, and by establishing a favorable balance of trade, in which it sold more goods than it bought. A nation's ultimate goal was to become self-sufficient so that it did not have to depend on other countries for goods.

The key to this process was the establishment of colonies. Colonies provided products, especially raw materials, that could not be found in the home country.

In 1651, England's Parliament, the country's legislative body, moved to tighten control of colonial trade by passing a series of measures known as the **Navigation Acts**. These acts enforced the following rules:

- No country could trade with the colonies unless the goods were shipped in either colonial or English ships.
- All vessels had to be operated by crews that were at least three-quarters English or colonial.
- The colonies could export certain products, including tobacco and sugar—and later rice, molasses, and furs—only to England.
- Almost all goods traded between the colonies and Europe first had to pass through an English port.

The system created by the Navigation Acts obviously benefited England. It proved to be good for most colonists as well. By restricting trade to English or colonial

Vocabulary

charter: A document issued by a monarch or other authority creating a public or private corporation

The Thirteen Colonies to the 1700s



New England colonies

- Massachusettsshipbuilding, shipping, fishing, lumber, rum, meat products
- New Hampshireship masts, lumber, fishing, trade, shipping, livestock, foodstuffs
- Connecticutrum, iron foundries, shipbuilding
- Rhode Islandsnuff, livestock

Middle colonies

- New Yorkfurs, wheat, glass, shoes, livestock, shipping, shipbuilding, rum, beer, snuff
- Delawaretrade, foodstuffs
- New Jerseytrade, foodstuffs, copper
- Pennsylvaniaflax, shipbuilding

Southern colonies

- Virginiatobacco, wheat, cattle, iron
- Marylandtobacco, wheat, snuff
- North Carolinanaval supplies, tobacco, furs
- South Carolinarice, indigo, silk
- Georgiaindigo, rice, naval supplies, lumber


GEOGRAPHY SKILLBUILDER

Region Which colonies are noted for their industrial activity, such as building, rather than agricultural activity?

	New England colonies
	Middle colonies
	Southern colonies
	Other British possessions
	French possessions
	Spanish possessions


0 100 200 miles
0 100 200 kilometers

The date provided for each colony indicates the date of the first permanent settlement.

ships, the acts spurred a boom in the colonial shipbuilding industry and helped support the development of numerous other colonial industries. 

MAIN IDEA

Analyzing Effects

 What effects did the Navigation Acts have on both Britain and its colonies?

COLONIAL GOVERNMENTS Whatever their form of charter, by the mid 1700s, most colonies were similar in the structure of their governments. In nearly every colony, a governor appointed by the Crown served as the highest authority. The governor presided over an advisory council, usually appointed by the governor, and a local assembly elected by landowning white males. The governor had the authority to appoint and dismiss judges and oversee colonial trade.

In addition to raising money through taxes, the colonial assembly initiated and passed laws. The governor could veto any law but did so at a risk—because in most colonies the colonial assembly, not the Crown, paid the governor’s salary. Using this power of the purse liberally, the colonists influenced the governor in a variety of ways, from the approval of laws to the appointment of judges.

GROWING SPIRIT OF SELF-DETERMINATION The colonies were developing a taste for self-government that would ultimately create the conditions for rebellion. Nehemiah Grew, a British mercantilist, voiced one of the few early concerns when he warned his compatriots about the colonies’ growing self-determination in 1707.

A PERSONAL VOICE NEHEMIAH GREW

“The time may come . . . when the colonies may become populous and with the increase of arts and sciences strong and politic, forgetting their relation to the mother countries, will then confederate and consider nothing further than the means to support their ambition of standing on their [own] legs.”

—quoted in *The Colonial Period of American History*

Aside from a desire for more economic and political breathing room, however, the colonies had little in common that would unite them against Britain. In particular, the Northern and Southern colonies were developing distinct societies, based on sharply contrasting economic systems.

SECTION 3

ASSESSMENT

1. TERMS & NAMES For each term or name, write a sentence explaining its significance.

- John Smith
- indented servant
- King Philip’s War
- mercantilism
- Jamestown
- Puritan
- William Penn
- Navigation Acts
- joint-stock companies
- John Winthrop
- Quaker

MAIN IDEA

2. TAKING NOTES

Identify the effects of each of the causes listed in the chart below.

Cause	Effect
Virginia colonists need labor to grow tobacco	
Puritans are persecuted in England	
William Penn acquires Pennsylvania	
Parliament passes the Navigation Acts	

CRITICAL THINKING

3. EVALUATING

In your judgment, what were the benefits and drawbacks of using indentured servants for labor in Virginia? Support your judgment with references to the text. **Think About:**

- the labor demands of growing tobacco
- the characteristics and cost of indentured servants
- the causes and consequences of Bacon’s Rebellion

4. PREDICTING EFFECTS

Reread Nehemiah Grew’s prediction for the colonies in the Personal Voice above. How do you think the British government would respond to his prediction? What issues do you see arising as potential sources of tension between the colonies and Great Britain?