

THE LIMITS OF LIBERTY

AMERICAN HISTORY

Second Edition

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1. *Colonial Foundations, 1607–1760*

The United States began as an extension of Europe. In some important respects it has remained one. American religion, law, education, literature, philosophy, art, and science—and of course language—all bear the mark of European origins. Long after they became politically independent, Americans remained in a state of cultural (and to a lesser extent, economic) dependence upon Europe, reading European books, aping European fashions, drawing on European technological 'know-how' and recruiting European labor to till their fields and develop their mines and factories. Yet even the first colonial settlements were never an exact replica of Europe. Right from the start American society and culture diverged from European models. The American environment had dissolving effects: it demanded and encouraged new ways of thinking and behaving and forced European settlers to modify the institutions they brought with them. The sheer size of America, its remoteness from Europe, its climatic and topographical peculiarities, its seemingly endless economic opportunities, the extraordinary energies required to subdue the wilderness—these factors helped to form a fluid, mobile society and bred a temper that was at once restless, optimistic, enterprising, reckless, and impatient of external restraint. A further source of divergence was that Americans drew not on one European tradition but several. Although during the crucial early decades of settlement English influences were paramount, by 1760 there was a sufficient non-English leavening to give the population a distinctive spice. In the nineteenth century America attracted vast numbers of immigrants from every country in Europe—and from other parts of the world. A unique blend of peoples and cultures was to result. Americans, then, remained in Europe's debt but evolved a distinct society with an ethos and an idiom of its own.

The Physical Setting

White settlement of the continental United States, an area three-quarters that of Europe, required continuous adaptation over a period of nearly three centuries to a succession of strange and widely different physiographic regions: forests, grassy prairies, treeless plains, swamps, deserts, mountains, saline sinks, and high, semiarid plateaux. Westward advance

was made more difficult by the fact that the natural grain of the North American continent is longitudinal. Two great north-south mountain systems serve to wall in the continental heartland. On the east the Appalachians, consisting of a series of parallel mountain ranges bordering a fringe of coastal plain, extend a thousand miles from Newfoundland to Alabama. On the west the towering peaks and rugged masses of the Cordilleras, the giant mountain chain comprising the Rockies, the Cascades, and the Sierra Nevada, straddle the backbone of the continent all the way from Alaska to central New Mexico. Between these two mountain barriers lies a vast sprawling plain drained by one of the world's great river systems—the Mississippi and its tributaries—which flows southward and empties into the Gulf of Mexico.

The first settlers were however fortunate in that the side of the North American continent facing Europe was more penetrable than that facing Asia. Along the Atlantic coastline they found an abundance of good harbors, a relatively deep coastal plain suitable for agriculture, and numerous navigable rivers affording access to the interior. But if these physiographic features—none of them duplicated on the Pacific coast—invited settlement, European newcomers had to endure greater extremes of climate than they had been used to: summers were hotter and more humid, winters (north of the Chesapeake at least) longer and more severe. They were also confronted with dense forest on a scale unknown in Europe for centuries. But while this was an obstacle to travel and agriculture it was vital to the settlers' survival. It furnished timber for shelter and fuel and its abundant wildlife—notably deer, bears, beavers, badgers, wild turkeys, and pigeons—constituted a rich source of food and clothing. It also yielded lumber, naval stores, and furs for which there was a demand in Europe. Hardly less valuable were the fish which teemed in American rivers and lakes and in even greater variety and profusion on the continental shelf, the underwater ledge jutting out from the coast into the Atlantic. Except in New England, the Atlantic coastal plain (once cleared of trees) consisted of fertile farmland particularly favorable to the cultivation of Indian corn and tobacco, the two most important plants North America has given to the world. However, the early settlers introduced a variety of European edible plants and vegetables and, since the dog was the only domestic animal then existing in America, they also imported horses, cattle, sheep, and pigs.

The American Indian

When the first settlers arrived in America early in the seventeenth century, they found a land unexplored but by no means uninhabited. Most scholars are agreed that the misnamed 'Indians' descend from Mongoloid immigrants arriving from Siberia by way of the Bering Strait at least 30,000

years ago. From Alaska they slowly fanned out across the length and breadth of the Americas. In 1600 there were perhaps one and a half million Indians in what is now the United States. While they shared common physical features—black hair, high cheekbones, and some shade of coppery skin—the Indians were culturally very varied. Some tribes were nomadic, others sedentary; some were pacific, others warlike; some lived in bark wigwams, others in skin tepees, others again in adobe or stone cliff-dwellings. There were more than six hundred different Indian languages.

In parts of central and south America some Indian peoples had become highly advanced: the civilizations of the Mayas and the Aztecs of Mexico and of the Incas of Peru were their achievements. But the tribes of North America were relatively primitive. They knew nothing of the wheel, the horse, metal cooking utensils, or firearms. They thus had much to learn from the white man. However they had much to teach him in return: how to grow maize or Indian corn, for example, and how to cultivate, cure, and use tobacco. Despite this mutual dependence relations between the races were soon to fall into a pattern of hostility. White men long had little understanding of, or sympathy with, a polytheistic (and thus in their eyes 'pagan') culture which found the concept of the private ownership of land not only alien but repugnant. Cultural differences bred friction, skirmishing, and finally open warfare. In the end, the Indians were no match for a technology vastly superior to their own, while the intruders, for all their avowed intention of converting the Indians to Christianity, saw the tribes essentially as an obstacle to be overcome or removed, along with other perils of the wilderness. Most of the story of the white man's treatment of the Indian is a dreary record of dishonored treaties, encroachments on Indian hunting-grounds, and the crushing of those not cajoled, bribed, or intimidated into relinquishing their patrimony. Over a period of three centuries relentless white pressure, the white man's diseases, and the white man's alcohol would demoralize the Indians, destroy their culture, and all but rob them of a sense of identity. By 1900, when the whites had spread over the whole continent, there were fewer than 250,000 Indians in the United States, most of them herded into reservations, chronically poor, diseased, and disoriented. Place-names were almost the only legacy of their presence: of the present fifty states over half bear names of Indian origin.

England and Colonization

Among the white newcomers to the New World, the English were late starters. Adventurous Norse seafarers from Iceland and Greenland had reached Newfoundland and Labrador at the beginning of the eleventh century and may even have attempted to settle. But nothing had come of their discoveries. Columbus's first voyage of discovery in 1492, undertaken in

the belief that Asia could be reached by sailing west across the Atlantic, opened the age of American colonization. It produced prompt results. Spain, eager for the riches America was believed to hold, at first laid claim to the whole of the New World but in 1494 concluded with Portugal the Treaty of Tordesillas which established a north-south demarcation line 370 leagues west of the Cape Verde Islands; everything west of the line belonged to Spain, everything east of it to Portugal. Accordingly, in the early decades of the sixteenth century, Portugal established a colony in Brazil while Spain explored much of the rest of South America and the Caribbean. Soon, some Spaniards ventured northward from Mexico in their search for precious metals. In the 1530s and 1540s expeditions led by Hernando de Soto and Francisco Vasquez Coronado traversed wide stretches of the Mississippi Valley and the Great Plains but, finding no gold, concluded that the region had little to offer. Apart from leaving a fort at St. Augustine, Florida and a number of missions in the Southwest, Spain turned her back on America north of the Rio Grande in the later sixteenth century, though without relinquishing her claims there. But Spain's apparent success led England, France, the Netherlands, and Sweden to defy those claims and plant colonies on the North American mainland.

English interest in the New World dated back to 1497 when Henry VII sent John Cabot—like Columbus a Genoese—in search of a westward passage to the Orient. For most of the sixteenth century England did not challenge Spain's imperial dominance, but by 1580 the Tudor monarchy had consolidated its authority and the Elizabethan settlement had achieved a religious equilibrium. The defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588 then ended the threat of invasion. At about the same time, the growth of joint-stock trading companies like the Muscovy Company (1555), the Levant Company (1581), and the Barbary Company (1585) was kindling wider interest in America as a route to the East and provided means of raising the capital needed for colonization. Meanwhile, a sharp rise in England's population and new problems of rural employment as grain-growing gave way to wool-growing fed impressions that the country was overpopulated. In 1584 an Oxford geographer, Richard Hakluyt, brought out a promotional tract, *A Particular Discourse concerning Western Discoveries*, setting forth the case for colonization. Colonies would, he said, buy English manufactures, make England self-sufficient in colonial products, offer homes and land to her surplus population, furnish bases for attacking the Spanish empire, and enable the gospel to be carried to the Indians. Hakluyt's arguments, elaborated in later works, were well received. Already, in 1583, one of his friends, Sir Humphrey Gilbert, with the Queen's approval, had led a colonizing expedition to Newfoundland (he had been lost at sea on the voyage home). A few years later Gilbert's half-brother, Sir Walter

Raleigh, made a series of attempts to found a colony on Roanoke Island, off what later became North Carolina. But in 1591 a relief expedition found Roanoke utterly deserted and what happened to the 'lost colony' was never discovered. Yet in spite of failure, these efforts demonstrated two things: the inadequacy of one man's resources to finance such enterprises and the necessity of keeping colonists supplied from England. England came to dominate the colonial scene because these lessons were learned.

The thirteen mainland colonies which were ultimately to band together to form the United States of America were haphazard creations. The unity born of their common English heritage was small, and was subtly replaced as time passed by a different kind of unity, one shaped by New World experiences and the New World environment. They were founded by unconnected private ventures with aims ranging from the utopian to the mundane. Appearing over a period of a century and a quarter and strung out along 1,500 miles of Atlantic coastline, they were to develop at widely different rates, evolving dissimilar economies, forms of government, and religious codes, and attracting populations of diverse ethnic and racial makeup. The first of them was founded because of a desire for profit.

In 1606 James I granted a charter to two groups of merchants, the London Company and the Plymouth Company, giving them the right to colonize North America between the 34th and 45th parallels. Neither group envisaged agricultural settlement, but aimed at establishing trading posts to collect furs, fish, and timber, manufacture tar, pitch, and potash, and mine precious metals. The Plymouth Company's first colony (on the coast of Maine) lasted only a few months. The London Company's enterprise further south was successful after repeated disasters and disappointments. In December 1606 the Company sent out three small ships, the *Susan Constant*, the *Goodspeed*, and the *Discovery* with 104 men and boys. They entered Chesapeake Bay in May 1607 and founded Jamestown on the James River. Several hundred additional settlers joined them in the next two years. Though hardly any were of noble birth, the early colonists represented a rough cross-section of English society. Most of them came from the squires or from yeoman stock or were the sons of substantial merchants. What they sought was quick wealth.

The colony ran into trouble from the start and for more than a decade hovered on the brink of extinction. The site was swampy. Few of the settlers possessed either an inclination to work hard or farming skills. They quarreled among themselves and wasted their energies looking for gold instead of growing food. The mortality was appalling; during the 'starving time' of 1609–10 famine and disease reduced the population from 500 to 60. The colony survived only because of the resourceful leadership, first of a colorful soldier of fortune, Captain John Smith, and then of Sir

Thomas Dale, a stern disciplinarian who assumed control in 1611. Their efforts would have been in vain, however, without continued support by the London promoters. Reorganized in 1609 as the Virginia Company, they continued to send out supplies and reinforcements. In order to recruit settlers the Company offered new incentives, giving the settlers a share of the Company stock and allowing them to cultivate their own land instead of working communally. In 1618, a 'headright' system gave every person who imported a settler or servant into the colony fifty acres of land. Meanwhile, it had been discovered that tobacco would grow successfully in the colony. Tobacco altered the venture's original purpose and quickly became the basis of Virginia's economy; in 1618 fifty thousand lbs. were exported, in 1626 more than six times as much. The stabilizing of the colony was clearly reflected in the Company's decision in 1619 to send out shiploads of women, "Whereby the Planters' minds may be faster tied to Virginia by the bonds of Wyves and children." At the same time, self-government, which would serve to distinguish all the English colonies from the colonies of other European powers, was introduced. In 1618 the Virginia Company had ordered the calling of an elective assembly and it met for the first time in the church at Jamestown on July 30, 1619. Yet the future was still uncertain. In 1620 Virginia had less than a thousand settlers and two years later was almost wiped out by Indian attack. But by 1624 the crisis was over. It then became a royal colony because the Company had gone bankrupt, the Crown reluctantly continuing the right of representation.

Maryland differed from Virginia in being the creation of a single proprietor rather than a company. George Calvert, Lord Baltimore, was a Roman Catholic convert. Long interested in colonization, he induced Charles I in 1632 to make him a vast land grant north of the Potomac river. The new colony (named 'Maryland' after the queen, Henrietta Maria) was to be at the same time a feudal lordship, a source of income to the proprietor, and a refuge for Calvert's co-religionists. Since Calvert died before the charter was sealed it was actually issued to his son, Cecilus, the second Lord Baltimore, who in late 1633 sent two ships and between 200 and 300 passengers to settle the family province. The expedition included two Jesuits and most of its leaders were Roman Catholics, but most of its members were Protestants. Profiting from Virginia's experience and mistakes Maryland escaped the hardships and misfortunes of its neighbor and, like Virginia, based its economic life on tobacco. The land was parceled out into large manors, but the relics of feudalism soon disappeared, and although the charter had made the proprietor the sole source of political authority, subject only to the advice and consent of the freemen, things worked out differently in practice. An assembly first met in 1635 and quickly won the right to initiate legislation. The most celebrated enactment was the Maryland Toleration Act of 1649, passed at Lord Baltimore's insistence to pro-

tect the colony's dwindling minority of Catholics. It did not, as is often claimed, mark a general acceptance of the principle of religious toleration and was repealed in 1654.

Meanwhile other Englishmen had settled six hundred miles to the north in 'New England', a region explored by Captain John Smith and named by him. This movement involved many more people than the Chesapeake enterprises and had religion as its mainspring. The pioneers were a little band of Separatists from Scrooby, Nottinghamshire; in 1608 they had gone to Holland to escape ecclesiastical and popular hostility and after a decade in exile had decided to seek a fresh refuge across the Atlantic. With financial help from a group of London merchants, they set sail from England in the *Mayflower* in September 1620. Though they were only about a third of the *Mayflower's* 102 passengers, the Separatists—or 'Pilgrims' as they styled themselves—effectively controlled the enterprise. Whether by accident or design, they made a landfall at Cape Cod and on December 16, 1620 landed at what is now Plymouth. Being outside the jurisdiction given to Virginia by James I the Pilgrims were dubious about their legal status. Before disembarking, therefore, they drew up the celebrated 'Mayflower Compact', which bound the signatories to form a 'civil body politic'. It was to remain the basis of government throughout the colony's history.

Like the Jamestown settlers, the Pilgrims faced appalling hardships. During the first winter half of them died, including nearly all the women. Several lean years followed before the development of farming and fishing secured the colony's future. Even then Plymouth grew only slowly and remained isolated until absorbed by Massachusetts Bay colony in 1691. This had been a far more significant foundation. The Puritans who settled Massachusetts Bay not only placed a distinctive stamp on New England but were long to influence American life and thought. Strictly speaking they were not religious refugees; nor did they go to America to establish the principle of freedom of conscience. Far from being driven out of their native land, they left it voluntarily and with royal blessing, though for religious reasons. They (unlike the Separatists) had wanted to reform the Church of England from within, but that aim seemed unattainable once Charles I had successively made their chief opponent, William Laud, Bishop of London (1628) and Archbishop of Canterbury (1633).

In 1629 Charles I granted a charter to the Massachusetts Bay Company, a body which had fallen under the control of a group of prominent Puritans. At a meeting at Cambridge the stockholders decided to remove both the charter and the Company to America. As governor of the proposed colony they elected John Winthrop, a Suffolk lawyer and landowner and a fervent Puritan. He was to become the dominant figure in early Massachusetts. It is also true that although the Puritan leaders were generally well-to-do, some of them had suffered from inflationary price rises, a

depression in the cloth trade, and a succession of bad harvests. Yet there can be no doubting that religion was the main force moving them. They wanted to move to New England to establish a Bible Commonwealth based on Puritan beliefs under a form of government in church and state that would both satisfy their own aspirations and serve as a model for those left behind. Toleration they bitterly repudiated. They went into the wilderness to practice what they deemed to be the one true form of worship, and believed it would be sinful to allow any other.

The Puritan 'Great Migration' was the largest exodus in the history of seventeenth-century English colonization. In 1630 seventeen vessels carried Winthrop and nearly a thousand settlers to Massachusetts Bay. In the next ten years twenty thousand more followed them. At first, chiefly from East Anglia and the West Country, two of the staunchest Puritan strongholds, emigrants came later from all over England. Most were of above average wealth and education and, unlike the first settlers of the Chesapeake area, generally brought their families with them. They were also frequently accompanied by their pastors, whole congregations often emigrating in a body.

The founders of Massachusetts insisted on orderly and well-regulated settlement. In 1630 they established Boston and half a dozen other towns along the shores of Massachusetts Bay. Soon afterwards they planted a circle of secondary settlements twenty or thirty miles inland. By 1640 there were more than twenty towns; though little more than villages, they contrasted sharply with Virginia's scattered farms and plantations. They served as political and administrative units, controlled their own internal affairs, and regulated land distribution so that persons of wealth and social position received larger grants than others. After the usual early hardships the settlers took to growing food on land cleared and abandoned by the Indians and were soon self-sufficient. Massachusetts had a harsh climate and stony soil and no staple commodity to export, but it had other resources, notably timber and fish. Shipbuilding began as early as 1631 and before long lumber, fish, and grain were being exported to the West Indies and southern Europe.

The leaders of Massachusetts Bay believed that the mass of the people were unfit to rule. Authority, they thought, should be exercised by those whom God, in Winthrop's words, had made "high and eminent in power and dignity", in other words, themselves. But except at the very beginning oligarchical control was never absolute. In part this was because of the way the Company's charter was adapted to serve as the constitution of the colony. The charter had vested control of the Company in the freemen or stockholders but in 1631, in order to perpetuate the Puritan character of the enterprise, political participation was made dependent on church membership rather than on ownership of stock. That membership was restricted

to 'visible saints', certified by the clergy after rigorous examination, but at least during the early years this meant a large proportion of the adult males. Moreover, further concessions had soon to be made to meet complaints against authoritarian rule. In 1632 the freemen gained the power to elect the governor directly; two years later they were empowered to select deputies to represent them in the General Court, which acted as a legislature and possessed the right to levy taxes. Finally, in 1644, the General Court became bicameral, the upper house consisting of the governor and his 'assistants', the lower house of the deputies. The consent of both houses was to be needed to enact legislation.

Representative government weakened neither Puritan control nor the religious character of the Bible Commonwealth. Massachusetts was not strictly a theocracy since the clergy did not hold secular office, yet Church and State were closely intertwined. Puritan preachers, as the sole authorized interpreters of the Scriptures, were highly influential: leading divines like John Cotton, "the foremost scholar and official apologist for the New England Way", were regularly consulted by the political leaders. As in Europe, it was taken for granted that the state had the duty to maintain and protect religion. Every town was required to build a meeting-house, taxes were levied to pay ministers' salaries, and laws prescribed church attendance and restricted Sabbath-day activities. Moreover, the civil authorities dealt harshly with the heterodox. Blasphemers had their ears cropped, Baptists and Quakers were whipped, fined, and expelled. Once, four Quakers who returned to the colony after having been banished, were hanged on Boston Common.

Intolerance in Massachusetts Bay encouraged settlement elsewhere in New England. The founders of Rhode Island had been expelled from Massachusetts for their opinions. The most celebrated of them were Roger Williams and Anne Hutchinson. Williams was a minister, a Separatist, and a leveler, who denied the validity of the Massachusetts charter on the ground that the land belonged to the Indians and questioned the rights of civil magistrates to control consciences and beliefs. When the alarmed authorities ordered him to leave Massachusetts he went to Narragansett Bay and established the town of Providence on land bought from the Indians (1636). Soon afterward Mrs Anne Hutchinson, the wife of a Boston merchant, stirred up religious dissension there. She challenged clerical authority and insisted that faith alone was necessary for salvation. Tried for sedition and heresy, she was sentenced to banishment (1638), and (with her family) followed Williams to Narragansett Bay. Before long the exiles came together to form the colony of Rhode Island, which in 1644 obtained from the Long Parliament a charter providing for the separation of Church and State and for absolute freedom of conscience.

New Hampshire, too, was founded as a religious refuge—in 1638 by

followers of Anne Hutchinson. But the other colonies spawned by Massachusetts Bay resulted largely from a desire for wider economic opportunity. The Reverend Thomas Hooker, who led an overland exodus to the Connecticut Valley in 1636 and founded the town of Hartford, may have had differences with the Massachusetts authorities but had religious and political opinions much the same as theirs. The constitution he drew up for Connecticut, the Fundamental Orders, took Massachusetts as its model. In any case, his followers, like other Puritans later in the 1630s, were prompted by the need for more fertile land. The colony of New Haven, founded in 1638 by yet another group from Massachusetts, was perhaps an even stricter Bible Commonwealth than the Bay colony itself. It was unique among the Puritan colonies in denying jury trial because it was not mentioned in the Scriptures. (Too small to exist independently, New Haven was absorbed into Connecticut when the latter colony obtained a royal charter in 1662.)

The English Civil War brought emigration temporarily to an end in 1642. By then, a group of virtually autonomous Puritan communities had taken firm root in New England. Their *de facto* independence grew during the period of the Commonwealth and Protectorate when Englishmen were preoccupied with domestic affairs. The need for united defense against the Indians, the Dutch, and the French prompted Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Haven, and Plymouth to form the New England Confederation in 1643. Rhode Island, thought by her neighbors to be disreputably liberal, was excluded. The Confederation was no more than a loose league but was the first experiment in federation in American history. Though weakened by intercolonial jealousies, it held together long enough to wage King Philip's War (1675-6), the most devastating Indian War of the century, and was not dissolved until 1684.

The restoration of Charles II in 1660 opened a new phase of colonization. The next twenty-five years brought English settlement to the South Atlantic seaboard and the Middle Atlantic region between New England and the Chesapeake. Unlike Virginia and Massachusetts Bay, all the Restoration colonies resembled Maryland in being based on royal grants to individual proprietors or groups of proprietors. In charters of 1663 and 1665 Charles awarded Carolina, a vast tract of land immediately south of Virginia, to a group of eight proprietors, all prominent politicians. One of them, Sir Anthony Ashley Cooper, later Earl of Shaftesbury, together with his physician and adviser, the eminent philosopher, John Locke, drew up the Fundamental Constitutions, an elaborate frame of government for the new colony. It envisaged a highly stratified society ruled by a hereditary aristocracy; it also provided for religious toleration and Negro slavery. Both the latter provisions were in fact implemented but otherwise the Fundamental Constitutions proved unworkable. Government in the new col-

ony came to resemble that of other proprietary colonies in having an appointed governor and council and an elected assembly. The northern and southern halves of the Carolina grant were geographically distinct and the northern region around Albemarle Sound was soon colonized by a group of settlers from Virginia. Within a few years they were profitably engaged in growing tobacco and raising naval stores. Further south the bulk of the early settlers were small planters from Barbados, displaced by the extensive cultivation of sugar by slave-labor. In 1669, together with some settlers direct from England, they established themselves inland on the south bank of the Ashley river, and a decade later moved to the present site of Charleston. Hopes of producing silk came to nothing, but rice and indigo proved valuable staples and a lucrative trade developed with the Indians in deerskins and furs. In 1712 the proprietors appointed separate governors for North and South Carolina.

New York, the first proprietary colony in the Middle Atlantic region, was created in 1664 when Charles II granted the territory between the Connecticut and Delaware rivers to his brother James, Duke of York (afterward James II). The area, though long claimed by England, was first under Dutch occupation and was known as New Netherland. Yet the Dutch were primarily interested in the fur trade not colonization, and by 1650 there were still only 3,000 people in New Netherland. Already, land-hungry Puritans from Connecticut had crossed to Long Island and were pressing toward the scattered Dutch settlements. In the Second Anglo-Dutch War the Duke of York's forces had little difficulty in forcing the surrender of the weakly held colony. Apart from renaming the towns—New Amsterdam became New York—the proprietary government changed little, leaving the Dutch undisturbed in their religion, commercial privileges, and estates. James in fact continued the Dutch practice of bestowing vast tracts on a few favorites, and since the great landowners, Dutch and English alike, refused to sell land and exploited their tenants New York attracted relatively few settlers. James also granted freedom of conscience, a code of laws which included jury trial and even a limited form of self-government, but did not accede until 1683 to the demand for an elected assembly. Its first act was to adopt a Charter of Liberties, which James repudiated. On his accession to the throne in 1685 New York was transformed into a royal colony.

James, almost as soon as he received his proprietary, had given away the lands between the Hudson and the Delaware, the southernmost part of what had been New Netherland, to two of his friends, both Carolina proprietors, Lord Berkeley and Sir George Carteret. The new colony was named New Jersey (after the Channel Island where Carteret had been born). In 1674 the proprietors divided their grant in two. Berkeley took the western half, Carteret the eastern, and Berkeley at once sold West

Jersey to members of the Society of Friends. In late 1675 it began to be settled by English Quakers. Meanwhile East Jersey had been filling up with transplanted New England Congregationalists and Baptists, attracted by the promise of religious freedom and an elected legislature. They were soon at odds with the proprietors over land titles and rents. Since their animus towards Quakers was unabated, they became still more discontented when in 1682 a wealthy Quaker syndicate headed by William Penn bought East Jersey from Carteret's heirs. Finally in 1702 East and West Jersey were reunited as a royal colony, though disputes over land were to persist well into the eighteenth century.

Although New Jersey thus became a refuge for Quakers, William Penn wanted a colony of his own for his co-religionists. Quakerism, at once the simplest and the most mystical of the unorthodox sects that sprang from seventeenth-century Puritanism, denied the necessity for a special priesthood and for outward rites, its central idea being the doctrine of the "inner light"—that inspiration comes from within each individual. They attracted almost universal hatred in England not only by their democratic scorn for all forms of authority and a tendency to disorderliness that contrasted strangely with their peaceful professions. Penn, the son of an admiral who was one of Charles II's staunchest supporters, had become a Quaker in 1667 but had retained his connection with the Court. In 1681, in payment of a debt owed to the deceased admiral, Charles II granted Penn an extensive tract of land beyond the Delaware. This was to be Pennsylvania. The following year Penn bought the former Swedish settlements along the Delaware from the Duke of York; these "three lower counties" were granted their own representative assembly in 1703 and became the separate colony of Delaware.

Though Penn's 'Holy Experiment' was idealistic and generous, he intended that Pennsylvania should at the same time yield a profit in the form of land sales and quitrents. He sold large tracts to rich English, Welsh, and Irish Quakers and promoted emigration from Continental Europe with pamphlets in several languages. By 1685 religious toleration and easy terms for land purchase had attracted eight thousand colonists from the British Isles, Holland, and the German Palatinate. Penn himself sailed to his colony in 1682 to lay down careful plans for a capital city named, appropriately, Philadelphia (Greek for 'brotherly love'). The following year a group of German settlers founded Germantown, near Philadelphia. Needing the financial backing of well-to-do Quaker associates Penn had to water down his commitment to popular rule: the Pennsylvania 'Frame of Government' provided for an elected assembly, but left power mainly with an appointed governor and council. And although Pennsylvania's Quaker elite was soon to become a minority, it dominated

the colony's politics down to the American Revolution. Penn himself derived little profit from his proprietary; indeed it nearly bankrupted him. But Pennsylvania itself prospered.

Pennsylvania was the last seventeenth-century foundation. It gave England a continuous string of seaboard colonies from French Canada almost to Spanish Florida. The settlement of Georgia in 1732 completed the pattern. The group of wealthy philanthropists headed by General James Oglethorpe, to whom George II granted a twenty-one year charter in 1732, intended it to serve as an asylum for debtors and hoped to develop the Southern fur trade. The British government, for its part, saw Georgia as a buffer against Spanish and Indian attack. There was even a utopian dimension to the enterprise: it sought to promote virtue by forbidding slavery and rum and by limiting land holdings to 500 acres. Oglethorpe became the colony's first governor. By 1740 the trustees had sent out 1,500 colonists, only a few of them debtors. Besides Englishmen, Scots, and Swiss, they included German Protestant pietists called Salzburgers. The first two decades were difficult. Vineyards and mulberry trees proved unsuccessful and settlers complained continually about the restrictions imposed on them. The trustees eventually gave way, first over rum, then over slavery and land policy. This opened the way to large-scale cultivation of rice and indigo, but Georgia grew only slowly, even after 1751 when it became a royal colony. As late as 1760 its population was barely six thousand.

The Structure of Government

All the colonies, whether royal, proprietary, or corporate, eventually came to have a more or less identical governmental structure. This consisted of a governor, a council (which acted as the upper house of the legislature), and a legislative assembly. Except in Rhode Island and Connecticut, where he was elected by the legislature, the governor was appointed by the Crown or the proprietor and in theory he possessed sweeping powers. As the king's official representative he was head of government, chief magistrate, and commander of the armed forces; he could summon and dissolve assemblies, veto their laws, and appoint lesser officials. But in practice the governor's authority was limited. Generally resented as an outsider, he had also to contend with the colonial assemblies upon which he was dependent for appropriations and, because of Parliament's refusal to vote money for the purpose, even for his own salary. In every colony the assembly was elected (and, it might be added, much more representative than the British Parliament). The ownership of property was so widespread that it has been estimated that between 50 and 80 percent of adult white males were entitled to vote, though the proportion which actually did so was much lower. Moreover, prevailing notions of deference ensured that those elected were generally men of position and substantial property.

This did not make the assemblies any less insistent on the self-government provided for in the colonial charters and which they claimed was their birthright as Englishmen. Following the example of the House of Commons in its struggle with the Stuarts, the assemblies used their control of the purse to encroach on the governors' prerogatives and by the beginning of the eighteenth century they had already won a large measure of autonomy in local affairs. In particular they enjoyed the right to initiate legislation, levy taxes, and supervise expenditure. Colonial laws needed the approval of the Privy Council, but when they were disallowed—a fate suffered by only 5 percent of the 8,500 measures submitted to London between 1691 and 1775—colonial legislatures would generally reenact them in slightly amended form.

In local government institutional structures reflected the differing social and economic conditions of the colonies. In New England, where settlements were relatively compact and tightly organized, authority over local affairs was vested in town meetings in which all freeholders had voting rights; these assemblies fixed town tax-rates and chose selectmen to administer the town's business. When New Englanders moved to other colonies they carried their township system of government with them and even today it provides a forum for deciding local matters in many parts of the United States. In the more sparsely scattered Southern colonies, the basic unit of local government was the county. No provision was made for direct democracy on the New England township model. The county court, an administrative as well as a judicial body, consisted of justices of the peace appointed by the governor—usually in practice for life. The sheriff, too, was appointed by the governor. As the chief executive officer of the county, he was charged (like his counterpart in contemporary England) with keeping the peace and supervising elections and also with collecting taxes.

Though political parties were unknown in the colonies political factionalism was endemic and political controversy intense. The most persistent disputes were those between creditors and debtors over paper money and between frontiersmen and seaboard oligarchies over land, political representation, and frontier defense. On several occasions sectional and class conflict led to violence, an early and dramatic example being Bacon's Rebellion in Virginia in 1676. Though sparked off by a clash between frontiersmen and Indians, it exposed divisions within white society. When the royal governor, William Berkeley, refused early in 1676 to take appropriate action against marauding Indians he incensed frontiersmen already exasperated by his refusal to open more western land for settlement. They suspected that the sympathy Berkeley and his associates in the planter ruling class displayed toward Indians stemmed from a selfish desire to protect their fur-trading interests. Nathaniel Bacon, a wealthy young planter

recently arrived from England, threw in his lot with the frontiersmen and, having raised a volunteer army to fight the Indians, marched on Jamestown and seized the government. But after Bacon had died of swamp fever, Berkeley regained control and executed thirty-seven of the rebels.

Mercantilism and the Imperial System

Unlike France and Spain, England was slow to develop either a comprehensive policy for supervising the colonies or effective machinery for implementing it. Struggles between King and Parliament pushed colonial questions into the background and the colonies were allowed to go their own way. But by the end of the Civil Wars their place in a general scheme of empire required consideration. Attempts began to be made to establish closer control over them. The imperial system that resulted was based, like that of other European powers, on an economic philosophy, later to be called mercantilism, which held that economic self-sufficiency was the key to national wealth and power. Mercantilists assumed that colonies existed solely to serve the interests of the mother country, to supply her with raw materials, absorb her manufactures, and provide employment for her shipping. Between 1651 and 1673 Parliament put these ideas into a series of Trade and Navigation Acts designed to establish an English monopoly of the colonial carrying trade, the colonial market, and certain valuable colonial products. All cargoes to or from the colonies were to be carried in ships built and owned in England or the colonies and manned by predominantly English crews. In addition, certain 'enumerated' commodities—sugar, cotton, indigo, dyewoods, ginger, and tobacco—could only be exported direct from the colonies to England even if their ultimate destination lay elsewhere. Finally, European goods bound for America had, with few exceptions, to be landed first in England and then re-shipped.

During Charles II's last years the tendency towards control from London became more pronounced. In 1675 a special committee of the Privy Council—the Lords of Trade and Plantations—was established to oversee colonial affairs. In 1684 Massachusetts, which had persistently violated the laws of trade, was deprived of its charter and placed under a royal governor. Then in 1686 the process of centralization reached its climax when James II combined all the New England colonies into a single unit, the Dominion of New England. The existing assemblies were abolished and a governor appointed with autocratic powers. Later on New Jersey and New York were added to the Dominion. The Glorious Revolution of 1688 soon ended this experiment. When news reached Boston of James II's fall a popular uprising overthrew the new regime and there were similar events in other colonies. In Maryland Protestant insurgents drove out the representatives of the Catholic proprietor and elected a convention to choose a new gov-

error. In New York a German merchant led a rebellion and took over the government; his reluctance to surrender power resulted ultimately in his being hanged for treason.

Under William and Mary the abolished colonial legislatures were revived, but attempts to tighten royal control went on. By a new charter of 1691, Massachusetts became a royal colony with a governor appointed by the Crown; so for a time did Maryland. By the middle of the eighteenth century only three proprietary colonies (Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Delaware) and two corporate colonies (Connecticut and Rhode Island) remained outside the direct control of the Crown. Even they had their quota of royal officials. In 1696 a new body, the Board of Trade, was given wide powers over the colonies and new machinery to ensure compliance with the laws of trade. English colonial policy remained strictly mercantilist. The list of enumerated commodities was steadily extended until by 1763 it included practically everything the colonies produced except fish, grain, and lumber. Laws were also passed to check colonial manufacturing; the Woolens Act of 1699 forbade the export of woolen yarn and cloth outside the colony in which it was produced and the Hat Act of 1732, passed in response to complaints of colonial competition from London felt-makers, prohibited the export of colonial beaver hats and instituted a lengthy apprenticeship for colonial hatters. Additional slitting mills and plating forges and the export of colonial iron outside the empire were forbidden by the Iron Act of 1750. Finally, restraints were placed on colonial-currency issues, British merchants having become alarmed at the instability and rapid depreciation of the colonial currency.

Nevertheless, elaborate though the legal and administrative framework became, the colonies were never effectively brought under imperial control. Distance was partly to blame. Administrative confusion compounded the problem. The colonies were administered not by a single government department but by several. The Board of Trade shared responsibility with a number of other departments and agencies, notably the Treasury, the Admiralty, and the Secretary of State for the Southern Department. Nor was the character of the officials sent to America always calculated to promote imperial interests. The chief posts in the colonial customs service came to be sinecures, filled by placemen who remained in England and sent deputies to perform their duties. Rarely men of ability and integrity, the wretchedly ill-paid deputies found it hard to resist bribes to wink at infractions of the laws of trade. Another reason for laxity of control was the 'salutary neglect' that came to prevail during Robert Walpole's long ascendancy (1721-42). Calculating that strict enforcement of the laws of trade would simply limit colonial purchases from England, Walpole deliberately relaxed them. And although Halifax, as president of the Board of Trade between 1748 and 1761, tentatively attempted to tighten imperial

control, the colonies remained for the most part loosely governed until after 1763.

The Colonial Economy

British mercantilist policies affected colonial economic development less than was once thought. There was no serious American complaint about mercantilist regulations before the imperial system was reformed in the 1760s and even then they were not a crucial grievance. Some aspects of the system were undoubtedly damaging to the colonies. Not all the provisions of the Acts of Trade and Navigation could be easily evaded. Burdens have to be weighed, however, against the substantial benefits the colonists received as members of the British empire. Colonial products enjoyed a protected market in England. Parliament granted generous subsidies (amounting to \$300,000 a year by the 1760s) to producers of such colonial commodities as naval stores, indigo, and lumber products. The colonial shipbuilding industry profited by the exclusion of foreign ships from colonial trade. By the time of the Revolution one-third of the British merchant marine had been built in the colonies, especially New England. Nor on the whole did the laws regulating manufacturing have much impact. Only the Hat Act appears to have been effective. The Woolens Act affected Ireland more than the American colonies, as indeed it was meant to. The prohibitions of the Iron Act were openly disregarded: some colonial assemblies even carried defiance to the point of subsidizing new slitting mills. Not that the Iron Act was wholly restrictive. Though designed to check the expansion of the iron-finishing industry it sought to encourage crude-iron production and allowed colonial bar and pig iron to enter England free of duty. Partly because of this the colonies had outstripped England as producers of crude iron by the time of the Revolution. But whatever the effect of particular measures, the British mercantilist system as a whole was not so restrictive as to inhibit the development of a flourishing colonial economy. On balance it may even have been economically advantageous to the colonies.

The growth of a flourishing iron industry should not be taken as evidence of economic sophistication. Most of the slitting mills, furnaces, and forges were small, employing only handfuls of workers. So did shipbuilding yards. Most colonial manufactures—textiles, boots, and shoes and the like—were products of domestic industry. Farming remained the dominant economic activity, employing perhaps 90 percent of the working population. Agricultural techniques were primitive and improvident, at least by comparison with the best contemporary European practice. Only the most rudimentary farm implements were used. The abundance of land and the scarcity of labor discouraged manuring and crop rotation. Even so, virgin soil produced high yields. The maturity of colonial agriculture was reflected in its

degree of specialization. In the South tobacco remained the most important export staple and the mainstay of the economy. Although tobacco cultivation tended to exhaust the soil and some planters, especially those who moved inland to the Piedmont, turned to wheat-growing, tobacco exports rose from about 14 million pounds in the 1670s to 100 million pounds a century later. The eighteenth century also saw spectacular increases in the export of Southern rice and indigo. The Middle Colonies became a granary, exporting wheat to other mainland colonies, the West Indies, and southern Europe. New England remained a land of small subsistence farms, but 'farming the sea' provided it with a profitable alternative. From the Newfoundland Banks and the shores of Nova Scotia Yankee fishermen brought back great quantities of cod and mackerel, to be dried and exported, along with livestock and lumber. More than half of New England's thriving export trade was with the West Indies, which supplied her in return with sugar, molasses, and other tropical products. New England distillers turned molasses into rum, most of it for domestic consumption, rum being almost a dietary staple of the colonists. But considerable quantities were used as an outward cargo in the notorious triangular trade between New England, West Africa, and the West Indies. New England slavers would carry rum and other commodities from Boston or Newport to the Guinea coast, then slaves from Africa to the West Indies, and finally sugar and molasses from the West Indies to their home ports. New England's West Indian trade seemed likely to be crippled, along with her rum industry, by the Molasses Act of 1733. Passed in response to complaints of foreign competition from the sugar planters of the British West Indies, it placed prohibitory duties on sugar and molasses imported into the mainland colonies from French, Spanish, and Dutch possessions in the Caribbean. But the measure proved largely a dead letter and the illicit trade with the foreign West Indies persisted.

Thus for all its apparatus of regulation and control the British imperial system was in practice easygoing. No other colonizing nation conceded to its colonial subjects the degree of autonomy the inhabitants of British America enjoyed. Right from the beginning the English colonists had been allowed a great deal of latitude in running their own affairs. The imperial system was intended to enrich the mother country, and it certainly did that, but it could hardly be called tyrannical when the colonists were more lightly taxed than Englishmen or when they were as prosperous and as lightly governed as any people in the world.