

John Smith and Opechancanough

The powerful Indian warrior Opechancanough towers over English explorer John Smith in this engraving. In December 1607, Smith led a party of Jamestown colonists upriver in search of Indian food supplies. Two hundred warriors intercepted them, captured Smith, and took him to the Powhatan village of Werowacomoco. It was on this occasion that Pocahontas supposedly interceded to save his life (see *Thinking Like a Historian*, p. 50). The note at the bottom of the engraving is doubly mistaken, as it was Opechancanough (not Powhatan) who took Smith captive. Library of Congress.



38 of the 120 men were alive nine months later. Death rates remained high: by 1611, the Virginia Company had dispatched 1,200 colonists to Jamestown, but fewer than half remained alive. “Our men were destroyed with cruell diseases, as Swellings, Fluxes, Burning Fevers, and by warres,” reported one of the settlement’s leaders, “but for the most part they died of meere famine.”

Their plan to dominate the local Indian population ran up against the presence of Powhatan, the powerful chief who oversaw some thirty tribal chiefdoms between the James and Potomac rivers. He was willing to treat the English traders as potential allies who could provide valuable goods, but—just as the Englishmen expected tribute from the Indians—Powhatan expected tribute from the English. He provided the hungry English adventurers with corn; in return, he demanded “hatchets . . . bells, beads, and copper” as well as “two great guns” and expected Jamestown to become a dependent community within his chiefdom. Subsequently, Powhatan arranged a marriage between

his daughter Pocahontas and John Rolfe, an English colonist (*Thinking Like a Historian*, p. 50). But these tactics failed. The inability to decide who would pay tribute to whom led to more than a decade of uneasy relations, followed by a long era of ruinous warfare.

The war was precipitated by the discovery of a cash crop that—like sugar in Brazil—offered colonists a way to turn a profit but required steady expansion onto Indian lands. Tobacco was a plant native to the Americas, long used by Indians as a medicine and a stimulant. John Rolfe found a West Indian strain that could flourish in Virginia soil and produced a small crop—“pleasant, sweet, and strong”—that fetched a high price in England and spurred the migration of thousands of new settlers. The English soon came to crave the nicotine that tobacco contained. James I initially condemned the plant as a “vile Weed” whose “black stinking fumes” were “baleful to the nose, harmful to the brain, and dangerous to the lungs.” But the king’s attitude changed as taxes on imported tobacco

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THINKING LIKE A HISTORIAN

Matoaka—nicknamed Pocahontas—was born around 1596 in the region the English would soon name Virginia. A daughter of Chief Powhatan, her interactions with colonists were important at the time and have been mythologized ever since. Pocahontas left no writings, so what we know of her comes from others. From these accounts, we know that she acted as a mediator with the Jamestown settlers; she was the first Native American to marry an Englishman; and she traveled to England with her husband and son. Pocahontas fell ill and died in Gravesend, England, in June 1617.

Who Was Pocahontas?

1. John Smith, *Generall Historie of Virginia*, 1624.

Smith's description of being a captive of Powhatan in 1607.

Having feasted [Smith] after their best barbarous manner they could, a long consultation was held, but the conclusion was, two great stones were brought before Powhatan: then as many as could layd hands on him, dragged him to them, and thereon laid his head, and being ready with their clubs, to beate out his braines, Pocahontas the Kings dearest daughter, when no entreaty could prevaile, got his head in her armes, and laid her owne upon his to save him from death: whereat the Emperour was contented he should live to make him hatchets, and her bells, beads, and copper.

2. Robert Vaughn's engraving of Pocahontas saving Smith's life, from John Smith's *Generall Historie of Virginia*, 1624.



King Powhatan commands John Smith to be slain, his daughter Pocahontas begs his life, her thanks in his hand how he subdued 30 of their King, reads history

Source: © British Library Board / Robana / Art Resource, NY.

3. John Smith, *Generall Historie of Virginia*, 1624.

Pocahontas visited Jamestown regularly in the years following Smith's capture. Smith returned to England in 1609; four years later Captain Samuel Argall kidnapped Pocahontas and held her captive in Jamestown.

[S]he too James towne [was brought.] A messenger forthwith was sent to her father, that his daughter Pocahontas he loved so dearely, he must ransom with our men, swords, peeces, tooles, &c. he treacherously had stolen. . . . [H]e . . . sent us word, that when we would deliver his daughter, he would make us satisfaction for all injuries done to us, and give us five hundred bushels of Corne, and for ever be friends with us. . . . [W]e could not believe the rest of our armes were either lost or stolen from him, and therefore till he sent them, we would keep his daughter. . . . [W]e heard no more from him a long time after. . . .

[Long before this, Master John Rolfe, an honest Gentleman of good behavior had been in love with Pocahontas, and she with him. . . . T]his marriage came soone to the knowledge of Powhatan, a thing acceptable to him, as appeared by his sudden consent, for within ten daies he sent Opachisco, an old Uncle of hers, and two of his sons, to see the manner of the marriage, and to do in that behalf what they were requested. . . . which was accordingly done about the first of April: And ever since we have had friendly trade and commerce.

4. John Rolfe, Letter to Sir Thomas Dale, 1614.

Pocahontas and John Rolfe married in April 1614. In June, Rolfe defended his motives in this letter to Virginia's deputy-governor.

I freely subject my selfe to your grave and mature judgment, deliberation, approbation and determination. . . . [I am not led by] the unbridled desire of carnal affection: but for the good of this plantation, for the honour of our cuntry, for the glory of God, for my owne salvation, and for the converting to the true knowledge of God and Jesus

Christ, an unbelieving creature, namely Pocahontas. To whom my hartie and best thoughts are, and have [for] a long time bin so intangled, and intrahled in so intricate a labyrinth, that I was even awearied to unwind my selfe thereout. . . . [I have often thought]: surely these are wicked instigations, hatched by him who seeketh and delighteth in man's destruction[.]

I say the holy spirit of God has often demanded of me, why I was created . . . but to labour in the Lord's vineyard. . . . Likewise adding hereunto her great appearance of love to me, her desire to be taught and instructed in the knowledge of God, her capableness of understanding, her aptness and willingness to receive any good impression, and also the spirituall, besides her owne incitements stirring me up hereunto. . . .

Now if the vulgar sort, who square all men's actions by the base rule of their owne filthiness, shall tax or taunt me in this my godly labour: let them know, it is not any hungry appetite, to gorge my selfe with incontinency; sure (if I would, and were so sensually inclined) I might satisfy such desire, though not without a seared conscience.

5. **Portrait of Pocahontas by Simon Van De Pass, 1616.** In 1616, the Virginia Company of London sent Pocahontas, John Rolfe, and their son Thomas to England, where she met King James and sat for this portrait, the only surviving image of Pocahontas.



Source: National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution/Art Resource, NY.

6. **John Smith, *Generall Historie of Virginia*, 1624.** In 1624, John Smith recalled a meeting he had with Pocahontas during her 1616 tour of England.

[H]earing shee was at Branford with divers of my friends, I went to see her: After a modest salutation, without any word, she turned about, obscured her face, as not seeming well contented; and in that humour her husband, with divers others, we all left her two or three houres. . . . But not long after, she began to talke, and remembered mee well what courtesies she had done: saying, [“]You did promise Powhatan what was yours should bee his, and he the like to you; you called him father being in his land a stranger, and by the same reason so must I doe you: [”] which though I would have excused, I durst not allow of that title, because she was a Kings daughter; with a well set countenance she said, [“]Were you not afraid to come into my fathers Countrie, and caused feare in him and all his people (but mee) and feare you here I should call you father; I tell you then I will, and you shall call mee childe, and so I will bee for ever and ever your Countryman. They did tell us [always] you were dead, and I knew no other till I came to [Plymouth]; yet Powhatan did command Uttamatomakkin to seeke you, and know the truth, because your Countrymen will lie much. [”]

Sources: (1, 3, 6) John Smith, *Generall Historie of Virginia* (Glasgow: James MacLehose and Sons, 1907), 101, 218, 220, 238–239; (4) J. Franklin Jameson, *Narratives of Early Virginia* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1907), 237–244.

ANALYZING THE EVIDENCE

1. Most historians now believe that the event described and shown in sources 1 and 2 was a Powhatan ritual to make Smith an ally and that his life was not actually in danger. What elements of these sources suggest the validity of this interpretation? Why would Pocahontas—a child of eleven or twelve at the time—have had a role in such a ritual?
2. How does Vaughn (source 2) depict power relations and social hierarchy among the Powhatans? Where does Pocahontas fit within this hierarchy? What messages about Pocahontas do you think Van De Pass (source 5) intended to convey? How do these images contribute to the Pocahontas myth?
3. How does Rolfe explain his interest in Pocahontas (source 4)? What is his view of her? How do you interpret the letter?
4. Assess the reliability of sources 1, 3, and 6 and consider Smith's motive in including them in his *Historie*. Source 6 purports to record an actual conversation between Pocahontas and Smith. What is the tone of this encounter, and what might explain Pocahontas's remarks?

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Imagine the various encounters Pocahontas experienced with the Jamestown Englishmen from her point of view. Reflect on who Pocahontas was as described in these documents—savior and friend, captive, baptized wife, Virginia Company prize, and betrayed ally—and in a brief essay, use Pocahontas's experience to explore the uncertain nature of English-Powhatan relations in the first decade of contact.

bolstered the royal treasury. Powhatan, however, now accused the English of coming “not to trade but to invade my people and possess my country.”

To foster the flow of migrants, the Virginia Company allowed individual settlers to own land, granting 100 acres to every freeman and more to those who imported servants. The company also created a system of representative government: the **House of Burgesses**, first convened in 1619, could make laws and levy taxes, although the governor and the company council in England could veto its acts. By 1622, land-ownership, self-government, and a judicial system based on “the lawes of the realme of England” had attracted some 4,500 new recruits. To encourage the transition to a settler colony, the Virginia Company recruited dozens of “Maides young and uncorrupt to make wives to the Inhabitants.”

The Indian War of 1622 The influx of migrants sparked an all-out conflict with the neighboring Indians. The struggle began with an assault led by Opechancanough, Powhatan’s younger brother and successor. In 1607, Opechancanough had attacked some of the first English invaders; subsequently, he “stood aloof” from the English settlers and “would not be drawn to any Treaty.” In particular, he resisted English proposals to place Indian children in schools to be “brought upp in Christianytie.” Upon becoming the paramount chief in 1621, Opechancanough told the leader of the neighboring Potomack Indians: “Before the end of two moons, there should not be an Englishman in all their Countries.”

Opechancanough almost succeeded. In 1622, he coordinated a surprise attack by twelve Indian chiefdoms that killed 347 English settlers, nearly one-third of the population. The English fought back by seizing the fields and food of those they now called “naked, tanned, deformed Savages” and declared “a perpetual war without peace or truce” that lasted for a decade. They sold captured warriors

into slavery, “destroy[ing] them who sought to destroy us” and taking control of “their cultivated places.”

Shocked by the Indian uprising, James I revoked the Virginia Company’s charter and, in 1624, made Virginia a **royal colony**. Now the king and his ministers appointed the governor and a small advisory council, retaining the locally elected House of Burgesses but stipulating that the king’s Privy Council (a committee of political advisors) must ratify all legislation. The king

also decreed the legal establishment of the Church of England in the colony, which meant that residents had to pay taxes to support its clergy. These institutions — an appointed governor, an elected assembly, a formal legal system, and an established Anglican Church — became the model for royal colonies throughout English America.

Lord Baltimore Settles Catholics in Maryland A second tobacco-growing colony developed in neighboring Maryland. King Charles I (r. 1625–1649), James’s successor, was secretly sympathetic toward Catholicism, and in 1632 he granted lands bordering the vast Chesapeake Bay to Catholic aristocrat Cecilius Calvert, Lord Baltimore. Thus Maryland became a refuge for Catholics, who were subject to persecution in England. In 1634, twenty gentlemen, mostly Catholics, and 200 artisans and laborers, mostly Protestants, established St. Mary’s City at the mouth of the Potomac River. To minimize religious confrontations, the proprietor instructed the governor to allow “no scandall nor offence to be given to any of the Protestants” and to “cause All Acts of Romane Catholicque Religion to be done as privately as may be.”

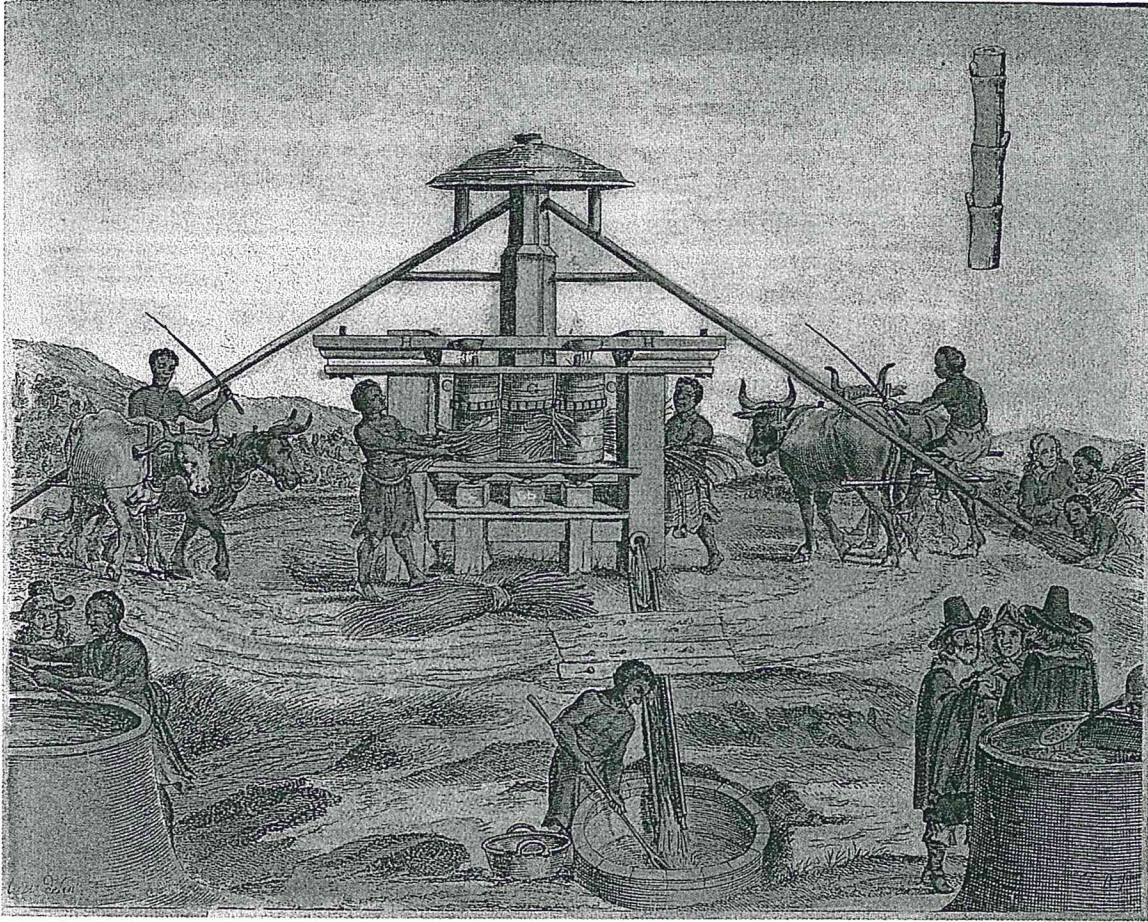
Maryland grew quickly because Baltimore imported many artisans and offered ample lands to wealthy migrants. But political conflict threatened the colony’s stability. Disputing Baltimore’s powers, settlers elected a representative assembly and insisted on the right to initiate legislation, which Baltimore grudgingly granted. Anti-Catholic agitation by Protestants also threatened his religious goals. To protect his coreligionists, Lord Baltimore persuaded the assembly to enact the Toleration Act (1649), which granted all Christians the right to follow their beliefs and hold church services. In Maryland, as in Virginia, tobacco quickly became the main crop, and that similarity, rather than any religious difference, ultimately made the two colonies very much alike in their economic and social systems.

The Caribbean Islands

Virginia’s experiment with a cash crop that created a land-intensive plantation society ran parallel to developments in the Caribbean, where English, French, and Dutch sailors began looking for a permanent toehold. In 1624, a small English party under the command of Sir Thomas Warner established a settlement on St. Christopher (St. Kitts). A year later, Warner allowed a French group to settle the other end of the island so they could better defend their position from the Spanish.

EXPLAIN CONSEQUENCES

How did the proximity of the Powhatan Chiefdom affect developments in early Virginia?



A Sugar Mill in the French West Indies, 1655

Making sugar required both hard labor and considerable expertise. Field slaves labored strenuously in the hot tropical sun to cut the sugarcane and carry or cart it to an oxen- or wind-powered mill, where it was pressed to yield the juice. Then skilled slave artisans took over. They carefully heated the juice and, at the proper moment, added ingredients that granulated the sugar and separated it from the molasses, which was later distilled into rum. The Granger Collection, New York.

Within a few years, the English and French colonists on St. Kitts had driven the native Caribs from the island, weathered a Spanish attack, and created a common set of bylaws for mutual occupation of the island.

After St. Kitts, a dozen or so colonies were founded in the Lesser Antilles, including the French islands of Martinique, Guadeloupe, and St. Bart's; the English outposts of Nevis, Antigua, Montserrat, Anguilla, Tortola, and Barbados; and the Dutch colony of St. Eustatius. In 1655, an English fleet captured the Spanish island of Jamaica—one of the large islands of the Greater Antilles—and opened it to settlement as well. A few of these islands were unpopulated before Europeans settled there; elsewhere, native populations were displaced, and often wiped out, within a decade or so. Only on the largest islands did native populations hold out longer.

Colonists experimented with a wide variety of cash crops, including tobacco, indigo, cotton, cacao, and ginger. Beginning in the 1640s—and drawing on the example of Brazil—planters on many of the islands shifted to sugar cultivation. Where conditions were right, as they were in Barbados, Jamaica, Nevis, and Martinique, these colonies were soon producing substantial crops of sugar and, as a consequence, claimed some of the world's most valuable real estate.

Plantation Life

In North America and the Caribbean, plantations were initially small **freeholds**, farms of 30 to 50 acres owned and farmed by families or male partners. But the logic of plantation agriculture soon encouraged consolidation: large planters engrossed as much land as they

could and experimented with new forms of labor discipline that maximized their control over production. In Virginia, the **headright system** guaranteed 50 acres of land to anyone who paid the passage of a new immigrant to the colony; thus, by buying additional indentured servants and slaves, the colony's largest planters also amassed ever-greater claims to land.

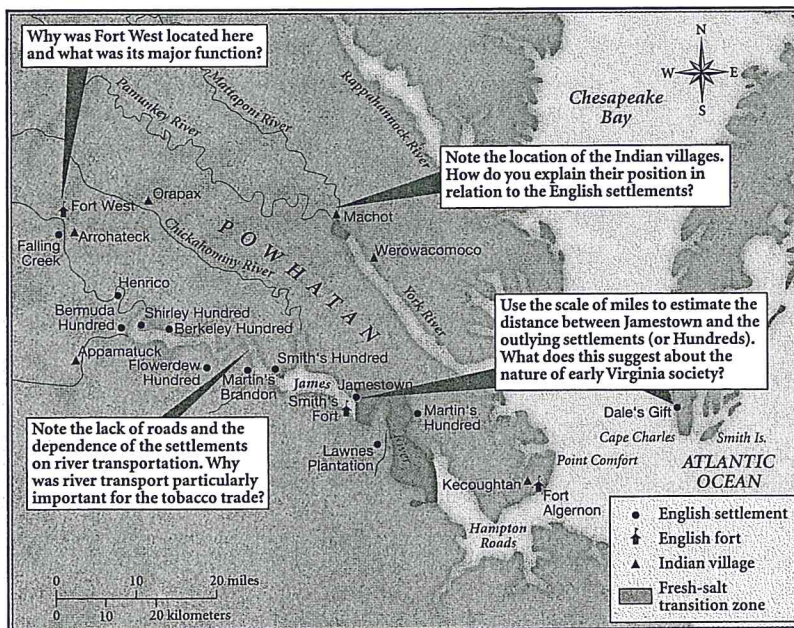
European demand for tobacco set off a forty-year economic boom in the Chesapeake. "All our riches for the present do consist in tobacco," a planter remarked in 1630. Exports rose from 3 million pounds in 1640 to 10 million pounds in 1660. After 1650, wealthy migrants from gentry or noble families established large estates along the coastal rivers. Coming primarily from southern England, where tenants and wage laborers farmed large manors, they copied that hierarchical system by buying English indentured servants and enslaved Africans to work their lands. At about the same time, the switch to sugar production in Barbados caused the price of land there to quadruple, driving small landowners out.

For rich and poor alike, life in the plantation colonies of North America and the Caribbean was harsh. The scarcity of towns deprived settlers of community (Map 2.4). Families were equally scarce because there were few women, and marriages often ended with the early death of a spouse. Pregnant women were especially vulnerable to malaria, spread by mosquitoes that flourished in tropical and subtropical climates. Many mothers died after bearing a first or second child, so orphaned children (along with unmarried young men)

formed a large segment of the society. Sixty percent of the children born in Middlesex County, Virginia, before 1680 lost one or both parents before they were thirteen. Death was pervasive. Although 15,000 English migrants arrived in Virginia between 1622 and 1640, the population rose only from 2,000 to 8,000. It was even harsher in the islands, where yellow fever epidemics killed indiscriminately. On Barbados, burials outnumbered baptisms in the second half of the seventeenth century by four to one.

Indentured Servitude Still, the prospect of owning land continued to lure settlers. By 1700, more than 100,000 English migrants had come to Virginia and Maryland and over 200,000 had migrated to the islands of the West Indies, principally to Barbados; the vast majority to both destinations traveled as indentured servants (Figure 2.2). Shipping registers from the English port of Bristol reveal the backgrounds of 5,000 servants embarking for the Chesapeake. Three-quarters were young men. They came to Bristol searching for work; once there, merchants persuaded them to sign contracts to labor in America. **Indentured servitude** contracts bound the men—and the quarter who were women—to work for a master for four or five years, after which they would be free to marry and work for themselves.

For merchants, servants were valuable cargo: their contracts fetched high prices from Chesapeake and West Indian planters. For the plantation owners, indentured servants were a bargain if they survived the



MAP 2.4

River Plantations in Virginia, c. 1640

The first migrants settled in widely dispersed plantations along the James River, a settlement pattern promoted by the tobacco economy. From their riverfront plantations wealthy planter-merchants could easily load heavy hogsheads of tobacco onto oceangoing ships and offload supplies that they then sold to smallholding planters. Consequently, few substantial towns or trading centers developed in the Chesapeake region.

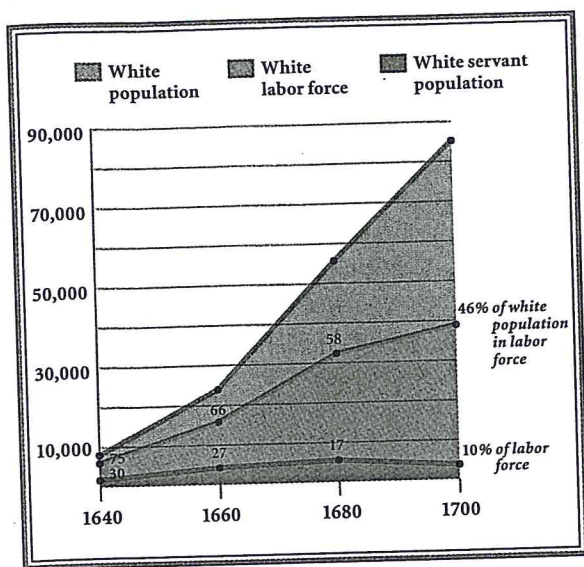


FIGURE 2.2
Chesapeake Whites: Workers, Dependents, and Indentured Servants, 1640–1700

The Chesapeake's white population grew tenfold in the years after 1640, and it also changed significantly in character. As more women migrated to Virginia and Maryland and bore children, the percentage of the population who worked in the fields daily fell dramatically, from 75 percent to 46 percent. The proportion of indentured servants in the labor force likewise declined, from 30 percent to 10 percent.

voyage and their first year in a harsh new disease environment, a process called “seasoning.” During the Chesapeake’s tobacco boom, a male servant could produce five times his purchase price in a single year. To maximize their gains, many masters ruthlessly exploited servants, forcing them to work long hours, beating them without cause, and withholding permission to marry. If servants ran away or became pregnant, masters went to court to increase the term of their service. Female servants were especially vulnerable to abuse. A Virginia law of 1692 stated that “dissolute masters have gotten their maids with child; and yet claim the benefit of their service.” Planters got rid of uncooperative servants by selling their contracts. In Virginia, an Englishman remarked in disgust that “servants were sold up and down like horses.”

Few indentured servants escaped poverty. In the Chesapeake, half the men died before completing the term of their contract, and another quarter remained landless. Only one-quarter achieved their quest for property and respectability. Female servants generally fared better. Because men had grown “very sensible of the Misfortune of Wanting Wives,” many propertied planters married female servants. Thus a few—very

fortunate—men and women escaped a life of landless poverty.

African Laborers The rigors of indentured servitude paled before the brutality that accompanied the large-scale shift to African slave labor. In Barbados and the other English islands, sugar production devoured laborers, and the supply of indentured servants quickly became inadequate to planters’ needs. By 1690, blacks outnumbered whites on Barbados nearly three to one, and white slave owners were developing a code of force and terror to keep sugar flowing and maintain control of the black majority that surrounded them. The first comprehensive slave legislation for the island, adopted in 1661, was called an “Act for the better ordering and governing of Negroes.”

In the Chesapeake, the shift to slave labor was more gradual. In 1619, John Rolfe noted that “a Dutch man of warre . . . sold us twenty Negars”—slaves originally shipped by the Portuguese from the port of Luanda in Angola. For a generation, the number of Africans remained small. About 400 Africans lived in the Chesapeake colonies in 1649, just 2 percent of the population. By 1670, that figure had reached 5 percent. Most Africans served their English masters for life. However, since English common law did not acknowledge chattel slavery, it was possible for some Africans to escape bondage. Some were freed as a result of Christian baptism; some purchased their freedom from their owners; some—like Elizabeth Key, whose story was related at the beginning of the chapter—won their freedom in the courts. Once free, some ambitious Africans became landowners and purchased slaves or the labor contracts of English servants for themselves.

Social mobility for Africans ended in the 1660s with the collapse of the tobacco boom and the increasing political power of the gentry. Tobacco had once sold for 30 pence a pound; now it fetched less than one-tenth of that. The “low price of Tobacco requires it should be made as cheap as possible,” declared Virginia planter-politician Nicholas Spencer, and “blacks can make it cheaper than whites.” As they imported more African workers, the English-born political elite grew more race-conscious. Increasingly, Spencer and other leading legislators distinguished English from African residents by color (white-black) rather than by religion (Christian-pagan). By 1671, the Virginia House of Burgesses had forbidden Africans to

COMPARE AND CONTRAST

How were the experiences of indentured servants and slaves in the Chesapeake and the Caribbean similar? In what ways were they different?

own guns or join the militia. It also barred them — “tho baptized and enjoying their own Freedom” — from owning English servants. Being black was increasingly a mark of inferior legal status, and slavery was fast becoming a permanent and hereditary condition. As an English clergyman observed, “These two words, Negro and Slave had by custom grown Homogeneous and convertible.”

Neo-European Colonies

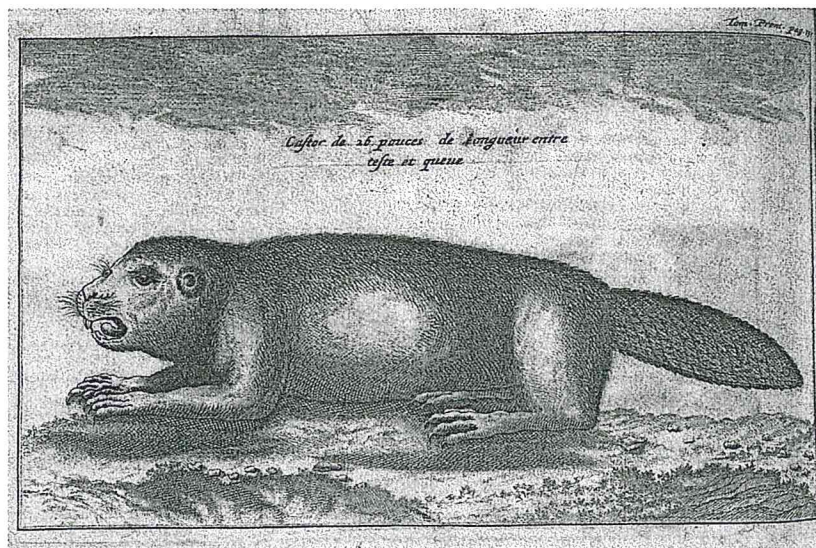
While Mesoamerica and the Andes emerged at the heart of a tribute-based empire in Latin America, and tropical and subtropical environments were transformed into plantation societies, a series of colonies that more closely replicated European patterns of economic and social organization developed in the temperate zone along North America’s Atlantic coast (America Compared, opposite page). Dutch, French, and English sailors probed the continent’s northern coastline, initially searching for a Northwest Passage through the continent to Asia. Gradually, they developed an interest in the region on its own terms. They traded for furs with coastal Native American populations, fished for cod on the Grand Banks off the coast of Newfoundland, and established freehold family farms and larger manors where they reproduced European patterns of agricultural life. Many migrants also came with aspirations to create godly communities, places of refuge where they could put religious ideals into practice. New France, New Netherland, and New England were the three pillars of neo-European colonization in the early seventeenth century.

New France

In the 1530s, Jacques Cartier ventured up the St. Lawrence River and claimed it for France. Cartier’s claim to the St. Lawrence languished for three-quarters of a century, but in 1608 Samuel de Champlain returned and founded the fur-trading post of Quebec. Trade with the Cree-speaking Montagnais; Algonquian-speaking Micmacs, Ottawas, and Ojibwas; and Iroquois-speaking Hurons gave the French access to furs — mink, otter, and beaver — that were in great demand in Europe. To secure plush beaver pelts from the Hurons, who controlled trade north of the Great Lakes, Champlain provided them with manufactured goods. Selling pelts, an Indian told a French priest, “makes kettles, hatchets, swords, knives, bread.” It also made guns, which Champlain sold to the Hurons.

The Hurons also became the first focus of French Catholic missionary activity. Hundreds of priests, most of them Jesuits, fanned out to live in Indian communities. They mastered Indian languages and came to understand, and sometimes respect, their values. Many Indian peoples initially welcomed the French “Black Robes” as spiritually powerful beings, but when prayers to the Christian god did not protect them from disease, the Indians grew skeptical. A Peoria chief charged that a priest’s “fables are good only in his own country; we have our own [beliefs], which do not make us die as his do.” When a drought struck, Indians blamed the missionaries. “If you cannot make rain, they speak of nothing less than making away with you,” lamented one Jesuit.

While New France became an expansive center of fur trading and missionary work, it languished as a



The Fur Trade

Luxuriant pelts like ermine and silver fox were always desirable, but the humble beaver dominated the early trade between Europeans and Indians in the Northeast. It had thick, coarse hair, but beneath that outer layer was soft “underfur.” Those fine hairs were covered in microscopic barbs that allowed them to mat into a dense mass. European hatmakers pressed this fur into felt so strong and pliable that even broad-brimmed hats would hold their shape. As such hats became fashionable in Europe and the colonies, beavers were hunted to near-extinction in North America. National Archives of Canada.

AMERICA COMPARED

The prospects for Europeans who traveled to tropical plantations like Barbados differed dramatically from those traveling to neo-European colonies like Massachusetts Bay. In the former, planters employed small armies of servants and slaves; in the latter, the first generation of colonists worked hard, often in cold climates and rocky soils, to eke out a living.

Plantation Colonies Versus Neo-Europes

Henry Whistler's Journal, 1655

This Island [Barbados] is one of the Richest Spots of ground in the world and fully inhabited. . . . The gentry here doth Hue [appear] far better than ours do in England: they have most of them 100 or 2 or 3 of slaves[,] apes who they command as they please. . . . This Island is inhabited with all sorts: with English, French, Dutch, Scots, Irish, Spaniards they being Jews: with Indians and miserable Negroes borne to perpetual slavery they and their seed: these Negroes they do allow as many wives as they will have, some will have 3 or 4, according as they find their body able: our English here doth think a negro child the first day it is born to be worth £5, they cost them nothing the bringing up, they go all ways naked: some planters will have 30 more or les about 4 or 5 years old: they sell them from one to the other as we do sheep. This Island is the Dunghill whereon England doth cast forth its rubbish. . . . A rogue in England will hardly make a cheater here: a Bawd brought over puts on a demure compartment, a whore if handsome makes a wife for some rich planter.

Source: *The Narrative of General Venables* (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1900), 145–146.

William Wood, *New England's Prospect*, 1634

But it may be objected that it is too cold a country for our English men, who have been accustomed to a warmer climate. To which it may be answered . . . , there is wood

discouraged migration. Louis XIV (r. 1643–1714) turned New France into a royal colony and subsidized the migration of indentured servants. French servants labored under contract for three years, received a salary, and could eventually lease a farm — far more generous terms than those for indentured servants in the English colonies.

Nonetheless, few people moved to New France, a cold and forbidding country “at the end of the world,” as one migrant put it. And some state policies

good store and better cheap to build warm houses and make good fires, which makes the winter less tedious. . . . [T]rue it is that some venturing too nakedly in extremity of cold, being more foolhardy than wise, have for a time lost the use of their feet, others the use of their fingers; but time and surgery afterwards recovered them. Some have had their overgrown beards so frozen together that they could not get their strong-water bottles into their mouths. . . . [W]hereas many do disparage the land, saying a man cannot live without labor, in that they more disparage and discredit themselves in giving the world occasion to take notice of their dronish disposition that would live off the sweat of another man's brows. . . . For all in New England must be workers of some kind. . . . And howsoever they are accounted poor, they are well contented and look not so much at abundance as at competency.

Source: William Wood, *New England's Prospect* (Boston: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1993), 28–29, 68.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. Henry Whistler was a soldier who briefly visited Barbados on a military expedition to the West Indies, while William Wood lived for four years in Massachusetts Bay. How might that difference influence the tone of these two descriptions?
2. What core values does each author ascribe to the colony he writes about? What kinds of people are most likely to end up in each of these two colonies?

discouraged migration. Louis XIV drafted tens of thousands of men into military service and barred Huguenots (French Calvinist Protestants) from migrating to New France, fearing they might win converts and take control of the colony. Moreover, the French legal system gave peasants strong rights to their village lands, whereas migrants to New France faced an oppressive, aristocracy- and church-dominated feudal system. In the village of Saint Ours in Quebec, for example, peasants paid 45 percent of their wheat crop