

Colonial America

- Who came to America and why did they come?
- How did the Slave Trade to English colonies develop?
- How wide spread was indentured servitude and forced transport of people from England?
- How religious were original settlers and what role did religion play in their coming here?

Who Came to America ?

- The initial population of the 13 colonies were almost entirely English and came from four distinct areas and cultures
 - Puritans : Originated in the East Anglia of England and settled the New England area. Eventually came to be referred to as “Yankees”. Religiously protestant and Calvinist and ethically Anglo Saxon
 - Cavaliers : Originated in the South of England, generally supported the Crown, and originally settled in the Virginia Tidewater area. Religiously Anglican and ethnically Britons whose ancestors came to the Island when there was still a land bridge.
 - Welch: Originated in central western England. Religiously they tended to be Quakers or Society of Friends and were ethnically Britons for the most part. They were severally persecuted and were non violent. Settled in Delaware Valley and Pennsylvania.
 - Borderlanders (referred to today as Scot-Irish): Originated from Scotland and Ireland and, to the extent they were religious, were generally Presbyterian. Tended to be tribal and warlike. Settled in the rural interior areas of the South and generally were/are rural.
- These groups differed in most respects culturally, religiously, technically, and politically and generally had adversarial relationships to the extent the interacted with each other

Why Did They Come ?

- The first point to understand is that most people who came here voluntarily from England came as indentured servants and were not free when they got here
 - According to ships logs during the colonial period about 2/3 of those arriving here were indentured (300K out of 450K)
 - Indentured Servants who came willingly were referred to as “free willers”
- Additionally a great many others didn’t come willingly
 - Street Urchins: Frequently sold by their parents with some being very young. Difficult to assess number but these were amongst the first arrivals
 - Vagrants, Petty Criminals, and Convicts: 50K to 80K sent during the colonial period. Transported in slave ships that would dock on River Thames to pick up their cargo
 - Irish: Taken from the Catholic regions of Ireland during and after the English Civil War(s) in 1650 but this continued for at least another 100 years.
 - Kidnap Victims: Generally adolescents estimated at well over 10,000 per year. Major form of organized crime in this period. Also where words “kidnapped” and “spirited away” came from.

Why Did They Come (cont.)

- England feared over population and sought to displace unwanted people
 - Agricultural production in England is limited
 - The Industrial Revolution would eventually create demand for more workers
- Role of Religion for those who came voluntarily
 - The Separatist (Pilgrims) left England to form a religious community
 - The Puritans largely had a combination of religious, political, and economic motives and many returned to England during the English Civil War when their political situation took a positive turn
 - Generally younger and more male populations in frontier areas tend to be less religious than the population of the lands they came from and this represents the colonies
 - Those who came willingly were predominantly economic migrants

Indentured Servitude

- The Indenture system existed in England at the time of colonization but mainly for household servants and for shorter periods of time
- A common period of indenture for those going to the colonies is frequently quoted at seven years but this varied by technical skills and physical abilities. The more valuable the servant, the shorter the term
- Time was commonly added to the term to transport family members or due to debt to the owner or as punishment for offenses.
- Indentured servants could be sold and were transferred as part of estates following estate law at the time.
- Initially the life expectancies in the colonies were so short that there was generally no real difference between permanent slavery and indenture. Indentured servants were chattel slaves who had a hope of becoming free if they survived long enough.
- As health and life spans improved many indentured servant survived their indenture and went on to live productive free lives.

Religion in Colonial America

- The level of Religious adherence is commonly portrayed as being much higher than it really was
 - At the time of the revolution it is estimated that about 17% of people in the colonies were religiously affiliated.
 - This varied by group and time. 1770 was probably a low point.
 - The borderlanders (Scot-Irish) who came last and were the largest and least religious group and strongly opposed both the Anglicans and Congregationalists
- People in the upper layers of society tended to be church affiliated
- State supported churches existed but weren't very successful
 - Congregationalists in New England were also linked to local government and educational system including Harvard.
 - Anglicans (became Episcopalians after the revolution) were state supported in Virginia but didn't service rural population very well
- The First Great Awakening revived protestant Christianity in the colonies and in England
 - George Whitefield was the most influential evangelists of the time period
 - This led to the birth of American Evangelicalism

The Puritans (aka Yankees)

- Of the four English ethno-religious cultural groupings, this one would become economically, politically, militarily, and culturally dominant
- Puritans sought to purify the Church of England and were far more numerous than the separatists who sought to form a new society
- Originated in East Anglia and were of Anglo-Saxon decent
 - History of being both religiously and politically active and the protestant reformation was enthusiastically welcomed there
 - The New England town names, the economy, and even the building methods trace very directly to East Anglia
 - Culture and concept of a common morale purpose was to a large degree a shared vision
- Immigration timeline
 - Between 1620 and 1640, 80,000 puritans left England going to Ireland, New England, the Caribbean Islands, and the Netherlands
 - The seventeen vessels that sailed to Massachusetts in 1630 were the first of about 200 ships altogether, each carrying about a hundred passengers (21,00 total)
 - Rapid movement of people continued through 1640 but then abruptly came to an end and, to a certain extent, reversed itself
 - Ten to twenty percent of the new population, and as many as 1/3 of the clergy, returned to England to join in the English Civil War

The Puritans (cont.)

- Puritans and the English Civil War
 - This was a series of wars in the 1650's that pitted Parliamentarians (Protestant Calvinists / Puritans) against Loyalists who were initially principally Cavaliers
 - The parliamentarians, led by Lord Cromwell, eventually overran Scotland and Ireland resulting in the near eradication of the Irish
 - The estimated population losses from these wars in England were 4%, Scotland 6%, and Ireland 41%.
- Demographics and Population Density
 - They came to America in families and had very few young unattached males
 - Relative to other groups who came here, they were older (same age demographic as England), had a larger percentage of females, and were significantly more affluent.
 - Few were indentured and they had a high literacy rate (2/3)
 - Their population doubled every generation for two centuries, representing a phenomenal birth rate of nine births per female that overcame a similarly high mortality rate.
 - Their numbers increased to 100,000 by 1700, to at least one million by 1800, and six million by 1900.
 - By the late 1700's they occupied most of British New England, eastern New Jersey and northern New York
 - In the nineteenth century, their descendants went to Maine, the Upper Midwest and areas of the Pacific Coast

Puritanism and Calvinism

- Calvinism was a major branch of the protestant revolution the stemmed from the teachings of John Calvin in Geneva
 - Held to a high view of God's sovereignty and a flat church structure
 - Most associated with the teaching of predestination which holds that God alone selects who will be "saved" and who will be lost and the belief in the total depravity of man
 - Arminianism, titled after Dutch theologian Jacobus Arminius, is the opposing position. This view held that Christ's death was full atonement as opposed to limited and placed a much higher degree of importance on man's free will and ability to respond to God
 - Both positions can be supported biblically and churches typically try to balance the two
- While the Puritans / Yankees tended to secularize rapidly and had generally abandoned Calvinist positions by around 1800, this had a enduring impact on their culture
 - Tended to view other groups as adversaries and inferiors
 - Sought to convert other cultures to conform to their cultural norms
 - Tendency towards Social activism - not willing to leave others alone
- Salem Witch Trials
 - Began in 1692 when a group of early teenage girls began having hysterical fits and blamed various people in the village for spiritually afflicting them through witchcraft
 - Nineteen people were eventually tried and put to death including fourteen women
 - When the acquisitions spread to esteemed ministers and the royal governor, the trials were brought to an end

The Yankee Character and Vision

- The characteristics and conflicts in Yankee culture were documented in enduring literature (frequently included in American literature classes)
 - Scarlet Letter, the Headless Horseman, and Solomon Kane
 - Author Nathaniel Hawthorne, whose grandfather was one of the Salem judges, wrote extensively of his native culture and was eventually banished from it.
- The Puritan or Yankee had from the beginning at least a vague form of a national and even global vision that remains very much present today:
 - *“Among the earliest settlers of the American wilderness, the Puritans of New England were animated by a powerful consciousness of who they were, what they had fled from, and the new world they were laboring to redeem and build for themselves and all mankind in North America. They were a people powered by an unmistakable sense of mission and of being the objects of a divine covenant with all its attendant blessings and curses. The Puritans were set apart to be, as John Winthrop famously and enduringly labeled them, a “City upon a hill” with the eyes of the world fixed upon them. God entered into a literal new covenant with a new chosen people, called out of bondage in Egypt for a particular task at a special moment in redemptive history, escaping from a modern Pharaoh and his army across a great sea. Their election was confirmed by signs and wonders, by attesting miracles of deliverance and safety and provision. They were unshakably certain of God’s calling. They fled from a corrupt Europe and from an England bound in spiritual decline and apostasy. Or, to change the biblical metaphor, they were the woman of the book of Revelation (12: 14-17) who fled the dragon and escaped into the wilderness. Author Richard Gamble – The Messianic Nation*
- The concept of a common “American” culture and especially of a common “White” culture is based almost entirely off of the “Yankee”

Cavalier Culture

- Ethnically Britons from the south of England (it took modern genetics to fully determine this) generally in London area and supported the crown.
- Religiously, to the extent they were religious, they were at least nominally high church Anglican with a traditional or Augustinian view of society
 - They were not highly evangelical or proselytizers
 - Resisted attempts by Puritans to spread their faith and culture southward
- Populated the Virginia tidewater area and represented the upper and lower economic layers of English society
 - Large percentage of unskilled laborers and indentured servants
 - Virginia also was the destination for a disproportional share of kidnap victims
 - 75% of immigrants were between 15 and 24 and only 1% were over 35 while
 - $\frac{3}{4}$ were male and younger and poorer migrants were rarely church affiliated
- Immigration timeline was the inverse of the Puritans
 - The population of the middle colonies increased rapidly from 1645 to 1665
 - During this time period, the population of Virginia increased three fold and Maryland eleven while New England only doubled
 - This was largely due to immigration as opposed to birth and death rates

Land Holding in Virginia

- The way in which land holding developed in Virginia had a significant effect on how the colony developed
 - One economic factor that did develop differently than England was land ownership
 - Initially large estates were granted by the crown but the tenant farmer or serf system didn't take root in Virginia of other colonies
 - This was in part due to differences in patterns of the way land was passed generationally within families and subdivided and also simply due to the vastness of the land itself.
 - Smaller free-hold estates over time became increasingly common
 - Rural areas increasingly became dominated by yeoman farmers who were largely self sufficient and not controlled by a land lord
 - Plantations that were commercial farming operations that produced goods for urban and export markets were also common but were generally in specific areas that allowed for rapid and efficient transport of product

Migration of Friends or Quakers

- From 1675 to 1715 a large number of Quakers, or Friends, and others who were sympathetic to them, referred to as friendly, migrated to the American colonies
 - Settled mainly in Delaware, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey (Salem)
 - Quakers and “Friendly's” made up a majority of the people in the Delaware Valley by the beginning of the eighteenth century.
 - The population increased rapidly with Benjamin Franklin estimating that between 60,000 and 70,000 Quakers lived in Pennsylvania alone
 - By 1760 English Quakers and Quaker sympathizers were a minority in the colonies they had founded and continued to decline demographically
 - Lower percentage of nuclear families compared to Puritans, economic from middle or lower levels of British society, indentured servitude was common
- Quakers were largely from the region of Wales
 - Many of the Welsh continued to speak Welsh and took pride in their ethnic origins, even as they were also strong adherents to the Society of Friends
 - For Quakers, this was a spiritual migration to escape persecution which had been recorded in their “*Book of Sufferings*” which was reviewed at monthly meetings
 - Disliked most aspects of British high society

Quaker Beliefs and Influences on History

- For being a small group they had a disproportionate influence on history and the development of American Evangelicalism
 - The Quakers did have a concept of civil libertarianism and believed in “*reciprocal liberty*” and were consistently opposed to slavery although there were Quaker slave owners.
 - Rejected most points of Calvinism – had a significantly different view of God from both the Puritans and the Anglicans
 - Their theology evolved rapidly through several distinct phases. The first phase was revolutionary and messianic and the third phase was more introspective.
 - The second phase, which aligned with the colonial period was transitional with elements of both.
 - The liberal or progressive elements of the second phase had a strong influence on the development of Evangelicalism in the Northeast and Upper Midwest
 - They did not profess and were hostile to formal creeds and never required subscription to a creed to be a member of their community
 - The Quakers held to nothing like the Puritans’ concept of being a separate and chosen people and generally lacked a sense of cultural or ethnic superiority
- While Quakers were accepting of other groups generally, other groups generally were not accepting of them

Borderlanders (aka Scott – Irish)

- The last and most numerous group of Immigrants from the British Isles came from Northern England, Ireland, and Scotland from a region generally referred to as the borderlands
 - other three groups were relatively small in terms of initial migrants and their populations grew from birthrate
 - borderland migrants came in unending waves and were a population of immigrants who then also had high birthrates upon arrival
 - The Borderland migration ran from 1718 to 1775 with peak periods in 1718, 1729, 1741, 1755, 1767 and 1774
 - Two-thirds of this traffic was concentrated between 1765 and 1775 and as much as one-third may have occurred in the four years preceding American Independence
 - age distribution was broad with 25% under 15 and 40% over 25. There were few elderly
 - The gender distribution was just under 1.5 to 1 biased towards men which was slightly more male than New England
- The motives of these immigrants were largely economic and personal
 - had no vision of a holy society or *“city on a hill”*
 - specific hardships they were escaping were high rents, low wages, taxes and short leases
 - In Northern Ireland, conditions were so bad that famine and starvation were often mentioned as a leading cause of migration
 - Land taken over by absentee owners displacing old warrior families

Borderlanders (cont.)

- Seen as barbarians by previous immigrants
 - Their attire and appearance was distinctive. The men were taller and leaner than the other groups and frequently looked “*weathered*”
 - The lack of modesty displayed by the young women was shocking to many Quakers
 - One writer described the Scott-Irish emigrants as “*the scum of two nations.*”
- Economics
 - Mainly skilled or semi-skilled craftsmen with many in textiles
- Although poor relatively few came in bondage
 - This was in part because Irish servants had little demand in America. They were thought to be violent, ungovernable and to pose a significant danger to their masters
 - Cost of passage was “minimized” making it highly dangerous during this time period
- Religion and beliefs
 - Few were actively religious (small percentage were Presbyterian, few Catholics)
 - poor economic and social status did not lead to a spirit of subordination which was expected of “*lower ranks*”
 - Many migrated inland and are very traceable to rural American cultures today.

African Culture in Colonial America

- Those brought here from Africa came from one of four or five African cultures but this generally didn't extend to the American colonies
 - Most were slaves in Africa frequently for a significant period of time before being transferred to the American colonies
 - Many others were brought to the American colonies from the British Caribbean islands
- Through the 1600's the African population was relatively small and isolated
 - Representative of the agricultural workforce in general
 - Some presence in coastal cities associated with shipping and related commerce
- By the early to mid 1700's the population was steadily growing larger and was distributed across all colonies
 - Apart from agriculture, the most common profession was "livery" which corresponded to logistics or transportation today including merchant seamen
 - The travel associated with this line of work created some cultural cohesion across larger areas or regions
- Over time there was considerable cultural exchange with other groups creating a degree of cultural commonalities
 - Greatest degree of interchange was with Borderlanders
 - Exchange extended to language and music

Indians on Eastern Seaboard

- Indian Wars during this period are frequently seen today as pitting European settlers against unified Indian tribes
 - In most cases they can better be seen as Europeans (and sometimes Africans) participating in Indian wars and Indians participating in European wars
- Northeast and Tidewater area
 - Huron and Algonquin sided with the French and frequently adopted Catholicism
 - Alonquin groups extended down into the Tidewater area of Virginia
 - The Iroquois were a coalition of five tribes in Upstate New York consisting of the Mohawk, Cayuga, Oneida, Onondaga, and Seneca that were consistently at war with the Huron and Algonquin and, by association, the French
 - By 1646, The Iroquois had decimated the French and their Indian allies including taking a large toll on the missionaries and clergy, but neither were destroyed
- Southern Tribes
 - The Cherokee were by far the largest group and extended throughout the South
 - The Cherokee and four other tribes; Choctaw, Chickasaw (break off from Choctaw), Creek, and Seminole, were referred to as the “five civilized tribes”
 - Conflict with Borderlanders in the interior for several generations
 - Also integrated fairly rapidly with other Southern cultures