

Chapter 4: American Life in the Seventeenth Century, 1607-1692

Theme: In the Chesapeake region, seventeenth-century colonial society was characterized by disease-shortened lives, weak family life, and a social hierarchy that included hardworking planters at the top and restless poor whites and black slaves at the bottom.

Theme: By contrast, early New England life was characterized by healthy, extended life spans, strong family life, closely-knit towns and churches, and a demanding economic and moral environment.

Summary: Life was hard in the seventeenth-century southern colonies. Disease drastically shortened life spans in the Chesapeake region, even for the young single men who made up the majority of settlers. Families were few and fragile, with men greatly outnumbering women, who were much in demand and seldom remained single for long.

The tobacco economy first thrived on the labor of white indentured servants, who hoped to work their way up to become wealthy landowners. But by the late seventeenth century, this hope was increasingly frustrated, and the discontents of the poor whites exploded in Bacon's Rebellion.

Beginning in the 1680s slaves were imported from West Africa by the tens of thousands. Slaves in the Deep South died rapidly of disease and overwork, but those in the Chesapeake tobacco region survived longer. Their numbers eventually increased by natural reproduction and they developed a distinctive African-American way of life.

By contrast with the South, New England's clean water and cool air contributed to a healthy way of life, which added ten years to the average English life span. The New England way of life centered on strong families and tightly knit towns and churches, which were relatively democratic and equal by seventeenth-century standards. By the late seventeenth century, however, social and religious tensions developed in these narrow communities, as the Salem witch hysteria dramatically illustrates.

Rocky soil forced many New Englanders to turn to fishing and merchant shipping for their livelihoods. Their difficult lives and stern religion made New Englanders tough, idealistic, purposeful, and resourceful. In later years they spread these same values across much of American society.

Seventeenth-century American society was still simple and agrarian. Would-be aristocrats who tried to recreate the social hierarchies of Europe were generally frustrated.

A. Thought Provokers: IN YOUR OWN WORDS, provide a response to each of the following questions that includes references to and discussion of specific evidence from the reading. Your answers may be typed or handwritten.

1. How did the factors of population, economics, disease, and climate shape the basic social conditions and ways of life of early Americans in both the South and New England?
2. How did the numbers and condition of women affect family life and society in New England, among southern whites, and among African-American slaves? Compare and contrast the typical family conditions and ways of life among various members of these three groups.
3. How did the Salem witch episode reflect the tensions and changes in seventeenth century New England life?

B. Now take the online practice test at:

http://college.hmco.com/history/us/bailey/american_pageant/11e/students/ace/

IDENTIFICATION

- _____ 1. Early Maryland and Virginia settlers had difficulty creating them and even more difficulty making them last
- _____ 2. Primary cause of death among tobacco-growing settlers
- _____ 3. Immigrants who received passage to America in exchange for a fixed term of labor
- _____ 4. Maryland and Virginia's system of granting land to anyone who would pay transatlantic passage for laborers
- _____ 5. Fate of many of Nathaniel Bacon's followers, though not of Bacon himself
- _____ 6. American colony that was home to the Newport slave market and many slave traders
- _____ 7. English company that lost its monopoly on the slave trade in 1698
- _____ 8. African-American dialect that blended English with Yoruba, Ibo, and Hausa
- _____ 9. Uprisings that occurred in New York City in 1712 and in South Carolina in 1739
- _____ 10. Wealthy extended clans like the Fitzhughs, Lees, and Washingtons that dominated politics in the most populous colony
- _____ 11. Approximate marriage age of most New England women
- _____ 12. The basic local political institution of New England, in which all freemen gathered to elect officials and debate local affairs
- _____ 13. Formula devised by Puritan ministers in 1662 to offer partial church membership to people who had not experienced conversion
- _____ 14. Judicial hearing that inflamed popular feelings, led to the deaths of twenty people, and weakened the Puritan clergy's prestige
- _____ 15. Primary occupation of most seventeenth-century Americans

Putting things in order

- _____ Legal lynching" of twenty accused witches occurs
- _____ Royal slave trade monopoly ends
- _____ First colonial college is founded
- _____ Landless whites in Virginia lose the right to vote
- _____ Major rebellion by African-Americans occurs in one of the middle colony
- _____ Southern slaves in revolt try but fail to replace the white indentured labor on southern plantations
- _____ Poor Virginia white revolt against governor and rich planters
- _____ First Africans arrive in Virginia

Matching People, Places, and Events

- _____ 1. Chesapeake
 - _____ 2. Indentured servants
 - _____ 3. Nathaniel Bacon
 - _____ 4. Governor Berkeley
 - _____ 5. Royal African Company
 - _____ 6. Middle passage
 - _____ 7. Ringshout
 - _____ 8. New York City slave revolt of 1712
 - _____ 9. Lees, Fitzhughs, and Washingtons
 - _____ 10. "New England conscience"
 - _____ 11. Harvard
 - _____ 12. William and Mary
 - _____ 13. Half-Way Covenant
 - _____ 14. Salem witch trials
 - _____ 15. Leisler's rebellion
- A. major middle-colonies' rebellion that caused thirty-three deaths
 - B. helped erase the earlier puritan distinction between the converted "elect" and other members of society
 - C. small New York revolt of 1689-1691 that reflected class antagonism between landlords and merchants
 - D. primary laborers in early southern colonies until the 1680
 - E. experience for which human beings were branded and chained, and which only 80% survived
 - F. some of the "FFVs" who controlled the House of Burgesses
 - G. west African religious rite, retained by African-Americans, in which participants responded to the shouts of a preacher
 - H. phenomena started by adolescent girls' accusation that ended with the deaths of twenty people
 - I. Virginia-Maryland bay area, site of the earliest colonial settlements
 - J. The legacy of puritan religion that inspired idealism and reform among later generations of Americans
 - K. Colonial Virginia official who crushed rebels and wreaked cruel revenge
 - L. Founded in 1693, the oldest college in the south
 - M. Organization whose loss of the slave trade monopoly in 1698 led to free-enterprise expansion of the business
 - N. Person who led poor former indentured servants and frontiersmen on a rampage against Indians and a colonial government
 - O. The oldest college in America, which reflected puritan commitment to and educated ministry

Matching Cause and Effect

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|--|---|
| <p>_____ 1. the severe shortage of females in southern colonies</p> <p>_____ 2. poor white males' anger at their inability to acquire land or start families</p> <p>_____ 3. planters' fears of indentured servants rebellion, coupled with rising wages in Europe</p> <p>_____ 4. the dramatic increase in colonial slave population after 1680</p> <p>_____ 5. the growing a proportion of female slaves in a Chesapeake region after 1720</p> <p>_____ 6. New Englanders introduction of livestock and intensive agriculture</p> <p>_____ 7. the healthier climate and more equal male-female ratio in new England</p> <p>_____ 8. the decline of religious devotion and in the numbers of conversions in New England</p> <p>_____ 9. unsettled social conditions in New England towns</p> <p>_____ 10. the rocky soil and harsh climate of New England</p> | <p>A. inspired passage of strict "slave codes"</p> <p>B. sparked bacon's rebellion</p> <p>C. produced large numbers of unattached lames and weak family structures</p> <p>D. thwarted success at agriculture and created the tough new England character</p> <p>E. inspired half-way covenant and jeremiad preaching</p> <p>F. reduced forests and damaged the soil</p> <p>G. produced high birthrates and stable family structure in new England</p> <p>H. fostered stronger slave families and growth of slave population through natural reproduction of children</p> <p>I. underlay the Salem witchcraft persecutions</p> <p>J. Caused southern planters to switch from indentured-servant labor to African slavery</p> |
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Answers:

Identification

1. Families
2. Disease
3. Indentured servants
4. Headright
5. Hanging
6. Rhode island
7. Royal African company
8. Gullah
9. Salve revolts
10. First families of Virginia
11. Early twenties
12. Town meeting
13. Half-way covenants
14. Salem witch trials
15. Farming

People places and events

1. I
2. D
3. N
4. K
5. M
6. E
7. G
8. A
9. F
10. J
11. O
12. L
13. B
14. H
15. C

In order

- 7
- 8

2

4

9

10

3

6

5

1

Cause and Effect

1. C

2. B

3. J

4. A

5. H

6. F

7. G

8. E

9. I

10. D

