Chapter 2
Transplantations and Borderlands

Learning Objectives

- Contrast patterns of settlement and expansion in the Chesapeake with those in New England.
- Analyze the reasons for and explain the outcomes of rebellion in the colonies of Virginia, Maryland, Massachusetts, and New York in the period 1660 to 1700.
- Describe and explain the differences between the institution of slavery in England’s Atlantic seaboard colonies and the Caribbean.
- Identify the region called the “middle grounds,” and describe how conditions there differed from conditions in the Atlantic seaboard colonies.

Chapter Overview

During the seventeenth century, two colonial systems existed in North America and in the Caribbean. Island and southwestern borderland provinces governed by Spain continued to flourish and provide an interesting counterpoint to colonies established by the British. Before 1660, most British provinces began as private ventures (with charters from the king), but the motives that brought them into being were as varied as the sociopolitical systems they developed. After 1660, proprietary colonies became the norm, and charters indicated a closer tie between the “owners” of the colony and the king, who granted them. As a result of this colonization effort, by the 1680s England had an unbroken string of provinces stretching from Canada to the Savannah River and holdings in the West Indies. As the colonies matured, their inhabitants began to exhibit a concern for control of local affairs and an independence of interests that eventually came to trouble the British Empire. It was a time when colonists began to sense that they were both English and American, a dual personality that was to lead to trouble and confusion on both sides of the Atlantic. The problem was that at the time, the American colonists were developing their own attitudes and institutions. England, fully aware of the potential of its colonies, began to tighten its control of its possessions.

Themes
The origins and objectives of England’s first settlements in the New World
• How and why English colonies—mainland and Caribbean—differed from one another in purpose and administration
• The problems that arose as colonies matured and expanded, and how colonists attempted to solve them
• How the Spanish colonial system functioned and thrived, and its impact on the British colonies
• The impact that events in England had on the development of colonies in British America

Lecture Strategies

Seventeenth-Century Diversity of Settlement
An important theme that might be introduced with this chapter is the diversity of the emerging southern society during the first century of settlement of North America. Since the knowledge of the early South that most students bring to the American history survey is limited to Virginia, it is important to introduce them to the full range of colonial development during this period—the proprietary regime and religious diversity of Maryland, the sugar economy and fragile social order of the English Caribbean, and the racial and ethnic heterogeneity and political volatility of rice-growing South Carolina. The central role of the Caribbean colonies deserves particular emphasis, not only because the British regarded the West Indies as their most valuable American possession, but also because of the key role of Barbadian immigrants in settling southern Carolina. Taken together, the West Indies and southern Carolina, with their embattled coastlines, black majorities, opulent wealth, and consistently high mortality rates, constitute an apt counterpoint to the colonial Chesapeake.

Revolts and Rebellions
Between 1660 and 1700, the American colonies were shaken by a series of “revolts,” of which Bacon’s Rebellion was only one. Compare and contrast the protests that took place in Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, and Virginia, paying special attention to the internal divisions that helped spark the outbursts. Have students discuss specific evidence in order to try to discover the source of these “eruptions” in colonial society.

Teaching Suggestions

Indentured Servitude and Unfree Labor
An approach that works especially well for stirring up interest in the early Chesapeake is to inform a roomful of students that, since the majority of them are likely late adolescents with few skills and little income, they have much in common with those boatloads of indentured servants who made up the majority of immigrants to Virginia and Maryland. (If men outnumber women in the class, the analogy is even more effective.) That opener helps to remind students that most early inhabitants of the Chesapeake were bound laborers, not free workers; even more important, identifying them with the immigrants can bring a certain energy and edge into any discussion of
the reasons for signing an indenture and moving to the New World. And since later in the seventeenth century the Chesapeake’s population still contained large numbers of young single men, many of them landless and all of them armed, the class can more easily appreciate the relationship between demography and political instability. You may also want to show how the African slave trade began to fill the demand for labor as the practice of indentured servitude became less common in the later seventeenth century. The idea of slaves and indentured servants uniting together in rebellion was a particularly terrifying one for elites. For a fine collection of original sources covering not only indentured servitude but other aspects of life in early Virginia, see Warren Billings, ed., *The Old Dominion*. This suggestion would work equally well with Chapter 3.

**The Creation of the Atlantic World**

You might encourage students to avoid thinking of the North American colonies in isolation. They existed in a network of commerce and cultural and social exchange with places all along the Atlantic rim, but especially with Europe. Europe and America were constantly affecting each others’ social and cultural development. For example, while mercantilist policy fostered the development of plantation economies throughout the American South, the commodities produced by those colonial economies, especially sugar and tobacco, revolutionized European habits of consumption. Political development is important in this context as well. For example, the disruption of the English Civil War prevented the English state from imposing on the colonies the kind of centralized control that existed in Spain’s American empire; similarly, the need of the Stuart monarchs to reward loyal supporters led to the creation of proprietary regimes in Maryland and the Carolinas—another deviation from direct royal control over the colonies.