

# ap us history chapter 2

**ap us history chapter 2** focuses on the early English colonies in North America, exploring the development, challenges, and characteristics that shaped the colonial experience in the 17th century. This chapter delves into the establishment of Jamestown, the role of the Virginia Company, and the emergence of tobacco as a cash crop, which significantly influenced the economic and social structures of the colonies. Additionally, it covers the development of the New England colonies, including the Puritan migration and the creation of self-governing communities. Understanding the political, religious, and economic motivations behind colonization provides essential context for the evolution of American society. This article will also examine the relationships between European settlers and Native American populations, highlighting cooperation and conflict. By analyzing these foundational events and themes, students can gain a comprehensive understanding crucial for success in the AP US History exam. Below is an outline of the main topics covered in this chapter.

- The Founding and Development of Jamestown
- Economic Foundations: Tobacco and Labor Systems
- The Puritan Migration and New England Colonies
- Relations with Native Americans
- Colonial Government and Society

## The Founding and Development of Jamestown

The establishment of Jamestown in 1607 marked the first permanent English settlement in North America. Sponsored by the Virginia Company, Jamestown was intended to generate profit for investors and expand English influence overseas. Early settlers faced numerous hardships, including disease, starvation, and conflicts with indigenous peoples. Despite these challenges, Jamestown survived, largely due to the leadership of Captain John Smith and the introduction of tobacco cultivation by John Rolfe. The colony's initial struggles and eventual adaptation illustrate the difficulties of early colonial ventures and the resilience required for survival in the New World.

## The Virginia Company and Charter

The Virginia Company was a joint-stock company granted a charter by King James I to establish

settlements in the Americas. This corporate model allowed investors to pool resources and share profits, incentivizing colonization. The charter granted settlers the same rights as Englishmen, which laid the foundation for future colonial political developments. The company's goals focused primarily on finding gold and a passage to Asia, but economic survival soon depended on agriculture and trade.

## **Challenges Faced by Early Settlers**

Early Jamestown settlers encountered severe difficulties, including harsh environmental conditions, lack of food, and inadequate preparation for manual labor. The "Starving Time" during the winter of 1609-1610 was particularly devastating, with many colonists perishing. Relations with local Powhatan tribes fluctuated between hostility and cooperation, impacting the colony's stability. These struggles underscored the necessity of establishing sustainable food sources and improving leadership and governance.

## **Economic Foundations: Tobacco and Labor Systems**

Tobacco became the cornerstone of the Virginia economy, transforming the colony into a profitable enterprise. John Rolfe's successful cultivation of a sweeter tobacco variety in 1612 created demand in Europe, encouraging plantation agriculture. This economic shift led to the expansion of landholdings and a growing need for labor, which in turn influenced the development of indentured servitude and African slavery in the colonies.

## **The Rise of Tobacco Cultivation**

The introduction of tobacco cultivation had profound effects on the social and economic structures of early colonies. Tobacco farming required extensive land and labor, promoting westward expansion and increasing tensions with Native American groups. The crop's profitability attracted settlers and investors, shaping Virginia's identity as a plantation society.

## **Indentured Servitude and African Slavery**

To meet labor demands, the colony initially relied on indentured servants—Europeans who worked for a set number of years in exchange for passage to America. However, as tobacco plantations grew, the use of enslaved Africans expanded, eventually becoming the dominant labor system. This shift had lasting implications for social hierarchies and race relations in colonial America.

# The Puritan Migration and New England Colonies

The Puritan migration of the 1630s brought a significant wave of settlers to New England, motivated by religious dissent and the desire to build a "city upon a hill." The Massachusetts Bay Colony became a model of religiously motivated community-building, characterized by a strong sense of mission and self-governance. The cultural, religious, and political foundations laid by the Puritans deeply influenced the development of New England society.

## Religious Motivations and the Great Migration

Puritans sought to purify the Church of England and escape religious persecution, leading to their migration to America. The Great Migration between 1629 and 1640 saw thousands settle in Massachusetts and surrounding areas, establishing towns with a focus on communal values and religious observance. This migration shaped the demographic and ideological landscape of New England.

## Governance and Community in New England

New England colonies developed town meetings and a system of self-government rooted in Puritan beliefs. Political participation was often limited to church members, creating a close link between religion and governance. Education and literacy were emphasized to promote religious instruction, contributing to the region's distinctive social character.

## Relations with Native Americans

Interactions between European settlers and Native American tribes were complex and varied across regions. Initial periods of cooperation often gave way to conflict as colonists expanded their settlements. These relationships influenced trade, cultural exchange, and military engagements, shaping the trajectory of colonial expansion.

## Early Cooperation and Trade

In the earliest years, settlers and Native Americans engaged in trade and occasional alliances. For instance, the Powhatan Confederacy initially assisted Jamestown colonists by providing food and guidance. Such cooperation was vital for colonial survival during the initial phases of settlement.

## Conflict and Displacement

As colonies expanded, competition for land and resources led to violent confrontations. Conflicts such as the

Powhatan Wars and King Philip's War reflected the increasing tensions and resistance by Native Americans to colonial encroachment. These wars resulted in significant loss of life and the displacement of native populations.

## **Colonial Government and Society**

The early English colonies developed diverse political institutions and social structures that reflected their economic needs and cultural values. These systems laid the groundwork for American political traditions and social hierarchies.

### **The House of Burgesses and Representative Government**

Established in 1619, the Virginia House of Burgesses was the first representative assembly in the English colonies. It allowed landowning males to participate in government, setting a precedent for colonial self-rule. Other colonies adopted similar legislative bodies, contributing to the development of democratic principles.

### **Social Hierarchies and Class Structure**

Colonial society was stratified, with wealthy planters and merchants at the top and indentured servants, enslaved Africans, and poor settlers at the bottom. Land ownership was a key determinant of status and political power. Religious leaders also held significant influence, especially in New England. These social dynamics influenced colonial politics, culture, and economic development.

1. Jamestown's founding and early challenges
2. Tobacco's impact on the economy and labor
3. Puritan migration and New England society
4. Native American relations: cooperation and conflict
5. Development of colonial government and social structure

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What were the primary motivations for English colonization in North America during the early 1600s?**

The primary motivations included economic opportunities such as the search for gold and other resources, the desire for land and agricultural prospects, religious freedom, and the expansion of the British Empire.

### **How did the Jamestown colony overcome early struggles to eventually succeed?**

Jamestown overcame early struggles through the leadership of Captain John Smith, the introduction of tobacco cultivation by John Rolfe, which became a profitable cash crop, and the establishment of more structured governance like the House of Burgesses.

### **What role did the Virginia House of Burgesses play in colonial America?**

The Virginia House of Burgesses, established in 1619, was the first representative legislative assembly in the American colonies, setting a precedent for self-government and democratic practices.

### **How did relations between English settlers and Native Americans evolve in the early colonial period?**

Relations were initially cooperative, with trade and assistance, but tensions grew due to competition over land and resources, leading to conflicts such as the Powhatan Wars.

### **What was the significance of the Mayflower Compact in 1620?**

The Mayflower Compact was a pioneering document of self-government and social contract, where the Pilgrims agreed to form a political body and abide by majority rule for the colony's good.

### **How did the Puritans' religious beliefs influence the governance of the Massachusetts Bay Colony?**

The Puritans established a theocratic government where church membership was required for voting and holding office, and laws were heavily influenced by their religious values.

### **What economic activities sustained the New England colonies in the 17th**

## century?

The New England colonies relied on a mix of subsistence farming, fishing, shipbuilding, and trade rather than large-scale plantation agriculture.

## What factors contributed to the development of indentured servitude in the Chesapeake region?

Labor shortages due to the demand for tobacco cultivation, the high cost of passage to America, and the availability of land after service contributed to the rise of indentured servitude.

## How did the introduction of African slavery impact the social and economic structures in the southern colonies?

African slavery became central to the plantation economy, creating a rigid social hierarchy and leading to long-term racial divisions and economic dependency on slave labor.

## Additional Resources

### 1. *American Colonies: The Settling of North America*

This book by Alan Taylor offers a comprehensive look at the early colonial period in North America. It covers the diverse groups of settlers, including the English, Spanish, French, and Dutch, and examines their interactions with Native American populations. The narrative provides insight into the economic, social, and political foundations that shaped the early colonies.

### 2. *A People's History of the United States*

Howard Zinn's classic work provides an alternative perspective on American history, focusing on the experiences of marginalized groups during the colonial period and beyond. Chapter 2's themes about early colonization and native relations are explored with a critical eye on power dynamics. This book is useful for understanding the broader social impacts of early colonial policies.

### 3. *The American Pageant*

A widely used AP US History textbook by David M. Kennedy and Lizabeth Cohen, this book covers the entirety of American history with clear explanations and engaging narratives. Chapter 2 focuses on the early English colonies, their development, and challenges. It includes vivid descriptions of cultural, economic, and political aspects of early America.

### 4. *Colonial America: A History*

This book by Thomas P. Slaughter provides an in-depth exploration of the colonial period, emphasizing the diversity of colonial experiences. It discusses the establishment of settlements, relations with Native Americans, and the beginnings of self-government. The book is well-suited for readers seeking detailed

historical context for Chapter 2 topics.

5. *Mayflower: A Story of Courage, Community, and War*

Nathaniel Philbrick's narrative focuses on the Pilgrims' journey, settlement at Plymouth, and their complex relationships with Native Americans. The book delves into themes of survival, cooperation, and conflict in early colonial history. It provides a humanizing perspective on one of the key groups studied in Chapter 2.

6. *American Slavery, American Freedom*

Edmund S. Morgan's influential book examines the paradox of freedom and slavery in early Virginia. It explores how the institution of slavery became intertwined with ideas of liberty and governance in the colonies. This work is important for understanding the economic and social foundations of early American society.

7. *The Puritan Dilemma: The Story of John Winthrop*

Laurence Bradford Dykstra's biography of John Winthrop sheds light on the Puritan leadership in Massachusetts Bay Colony. The book explores religious motivations, social order, and political challenges faced by early settlers. It gives readers a nuanced understanding of Puritan influence in early colonial history.

8. *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England*

William Cronon examines the environmental and cultural transformations that occurred as European settlers colonized New England. The book highlights the impact of colonization on native ecosystems and indigenous ways of life. It provides a unique angle on Chapter 2 by connecting ecological changes to historical developments.

9. *The Glorious Cause: The American Revolution, 1763-1789*

Robert Middlekauff's work primarily focuses on the Revolutionary era but includes essential background on colonial developments leading up to the revolution. The early chapters provide context on colonial society, conflicts, and governance structures established in the 17th and early 18th centuries. This book helps link early colonial history with the broader narrative of American independence.

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