

Week 2

The Southern Colonies: Seventeenth Century

Quiz 1

- There are twenty multiple choice questions
- Fifteen minutes should be more than enough
- If you don't know for sure—at least throw away the answers you know *can't* be right
- And consider that a later question may jog your memory about an earlier question

Regional Differences

- There are substantial regional differences almost from the beginning
- Sometimes driven by different primary motives
 - Virginia was primarily to get rich
 - Plymouth & Massachusetts Bay were to provide a religious haven

Regional Differences

- Regional differences based on who settled different colonies
 - New England: East Anglia
 - Coastal South: South & West
 - Pennsylvania: north of England
 - Backcountry: Scots-Irish

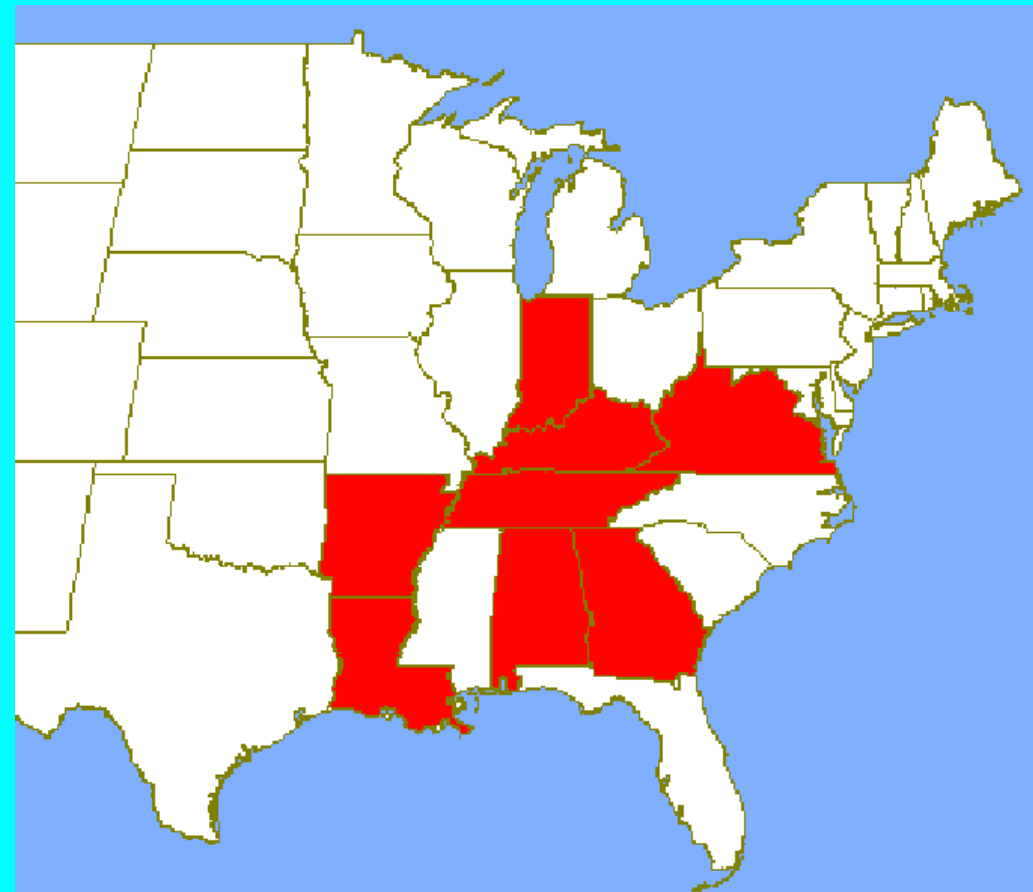


Regional Differences

- David Hackett Fischer's *Albion's Seed* (1989)
 - Discusses regional differences transplanted to American colonies
 - Cooking styles
 - Housing construction
 - Accents
 - Naming patterns of children
 - Differences in family structure
 - Patterns of violence
 - And many of these regional variations still have echoes in America today

Regional Differences

- My M.A. thesis was about the development of concealed weapon regulation in the South and Old Southwest
- The role of the Scots-Irish in the culture of honor violence



Differences Within Region, Too

- Even within a region, often significant differences because of different histories
 - North Carolina never as heavily slave as South Carolina or Virginia
 - South Carolina dominated by Barbadoes planters

English Colonization Attempts

- England under Elizabeth I made unsuccessful attempts to set up English colony in 1580s
 - Roanoke is one of the great mysteries
 - What happened to them?
 - “Croatoan” carved on a tree
 - Perhaps merged into a local Indian tribe
 - Perhaps killed by local Indians
 - Virginia Dare: first English person born in America

Jamestown

- Started in 1607, first successful English colony
 - “knights, gentlemen, merchants, and other adventurers”
 - Started the Virginia Company
 - Received a royal patent to settle on the Virginia coast
 - At least in part, a political move by England against their enemy, Spain

Jamestown

- The hopes were that Virginia would export valuable crops and gold to England
 - England was already scarce of big trees
 - Virginia was supposedly a place where farmers just waited for the crops to spring up
 - Gold in many parts of the Americas: maybe Virginia, too?

A Disaster From The Start

- Too many “gentlemen” used to giving orders, not working
- Not enough experienced farmers
- A malarial marsh
- The Algonquian tribe nearby was very powerful, and not friendly
- Some question if Catholic spies might have been involved in poisoning or sabotage

A Disaster From The Start

- Algonquian tribe reached an uneasy relationship with Jamestown
 - Trading corn for manufactured goods
 - What did the English have that the Indians wanted?
 - Steel tools
 - Knives
 - Guns (but it was a capital crime to sell them!)

Algonquian/English Relations

- Why didn't they just force the English out?
 - The Indians outnumbered the English
 - But English cannon made a big difference
 - Powhatan saw the English as a potential tool for enlarging power over other Indian tribes
 - It's good to have friends with cannons

This Was a Miserable Place To Be

- Colonists died rapidly of malaria and other diseases
- Document 3-1 in *Reading the American Past* is really quite heart-wrenching
- Women were in chronically short supply
 - They seemed to have died more quickly than the men
 - Fewer women immigrated
- No gold lying on the ground, and farming wasn't easy

Video

- National Geographic *The New World: Nightmare in Jamestown*

The Beginnings of Self-Government

- The Virginia Company ran everything directly at first
- But colonists became increasingly demanding of a role in government
- In 1619, a House of Burgesses becomes the first English colonial legislature

Virginia's Early Records

- The records of early Virginia are remarkably weak
 - Seems not to have been a group big on paperwork
 - In addition, many of the early records were used to start wood stoves in the early 20th century
- We know a lot more about the beginnings of the other colonies

Royal Government

- The Virginia Company was a business failure
- In 1622, the Indians attempted to slaughter the entire colony
- Fortunately, some friendly Indians gave warning that an attack was coming
- Still, almost 1/3 of the colony died in a few hours
- Survivors became much more hostile to the Indians, for some reason

Royal Government

- 1624: the Virginia Company charter revoked
- Virginia now a royal colony
 - Governor appointed by the king
 - Laws passed by House of Burgesses required royal approval
 - A more democratic government than in England: every free adult men in Virginia could vote
 - Apparently, including free black men
 - Major focus of early laws: church attendance

Tobacco: The Cash Crop

- Tobacco is what made Virginia and Maryland rich
 - Along the Chesapeake Bay, tobacco was easy to grow and ship
 - Starting in 1629, a major focus of the laws of Virginia
 - Limits on planting to keep up prices



Tobacco: The Cash Crop

- The local currency was pounds of tobacco
- A very labor intensive crop to cultivate—much more so than corn or wheat (James Breen's *Tobacco Culture*)
- So where's the labor?
 - It is not who you think, at least this early
 - There are blacks, and they *may* have been slaves
 - We really aren't sure

Slavery: A Core Problem of American History

- Core because slavery and American ideals of liberty were in conflict
 - "How is it that we hear the loudest yelps for liberty among the drivers of Negroes?" – Samuel Johnson
 - The conflict between slavery and limited government corrupted our legal system
 - The party of unlimited democracy built its base on slavery and white privilege

Slavery: A Core Problem of American History

- Core because slavery still has echoes today
 - The last American slave died in 1948
 - The system of racial oppression that came from it persisted
 - Racial discrepancies persist today. How much comes from slavery?

Race, Citizenship, & Slavery

- We don't know *exactly* what the status of the first blacks was in Virginia
- A Dutch ship in need of supplies sells a group of African slaves in 1619 at Jamestown
- They were slaves on the ship
- By the time they reached the dock, they *may* have been indentured servants
- Early records are completely silent

Race, Citizenship, & Slavery

- English law had no provision for slavery
- Indentured servants worked for several years to pay for transportation to New World
- First Africans may have been indentured servants—some become landowners themselves
- First case where a court orders enslavement for life is 1640: punishment for running away

Race, Citizenship, & Slavery

- Laws distinguishing blacks from whites start to appear in 1639 and 1640
 - Masters no longer required to arm black servants
- 1680: slaves no longer allowed to carry weapons
- 1723: free blacks only allowed one gun if member of the militia; lose right to vote
- 1738: no longer trusted even if member of militia

Race, Citizenship, & Slavery

- Not just a quirk of Virginia law
- Maryland also took a while to formally recognize slavery
 - Slavery not codified until mid-17th century
 - Laws against interracial marriage start in 1664
 - A black man, Mathias de Sousa, elected to Maryland legislature in 1642
- South Carolina still had free blacks voting in 1701, and Georgia until 1754

What Caused Slavery?

- Several possible explanations: none conclusive because no statement of purpose
 - English labor shortage
 - Migrations to New England from 1629 onward
 - English Civil War 1642-1649
 - Rebuilding London after Great Fire of 1666

What Caused Slavery?

- Bacon's Rebellion (1676)
 - Not a cause, but perhaps indicates what was already underway before 1676
 - Nathaniel Bacon led a rebellion of frontiersmen, both black and white, upset about Indian raids
 - Demanded royal governor Berkeley fight friendly Indians
 - Berkeley unwilling to do so
 - These Indians were allies of Virginia
 - A buffer between Virginia and other Indians

What Caused Slavery?

- Bacon's Rebellion (1676)
 - Bacon's Rebellion overthrows the royal government and wages war against Indians
 - And against the wealthy of Virginia
 - The beginnings of democracy in America?
 - Bacon dies of natural causes
 - Berkeley restores order with royal troops

What Caused Slavery?

- Bacon's Rebellion (1676)
 - Politically connected used power to get lots of land
 - Poor settlers had little land and little wealth
 - Rich dependent on the poor for protection
 - Gov. Berkeley complained that "six parts of seven at least are poor, indebted, discontented, and armed."

What Caused Slavery?

- Bacon's Rebellion (1676)
 - Was there a way to give poor whites a higher status without giving up wealth?
 - Edmund Morgan's *American Slavery, American Freedom* (1975) argues slavery reduced dependency on white workers
- Slavery already present before Bacon's Rebellion
 - But dramatically expands afterward

Slavery Was Not Just In The South

- There were slaves in every colony
- More common in the South because of labor-intensive crops (tobacco, rice, indigo)
- But slaves were present in the North
- Sometimes worked in industrial jobs or as domestic servants

The Conditions of Slavery

- Transportation was horrible
 - Slaves were chained below deck for many weeks while crossing the Atlantic
 - Awash in their own excrement and vomit
 - It was said that you could smell a slave ship before you saw it
 - Death rate for the sailors often as high or higher than the slaves ($\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{3}$ would die)
 - It paid well, because it was dangerous work
 - *Amazing Grace*, film about Wilberforce's work abolishing slavery

The Conditions of Slavery

- Transportation was horrible
 - Occasionally, slaves managed to get loose
 - Individuals might jump overboard to commit suicide
 - Sometimes, rebellions would take over a ship
 - Women were often brought above deck for exercise, fresh air, and rape

The Conditions of Slavery

- Some slaves brought directly to America
 - More typically, they would be “seasoned” in the West Indies
 - A few months to a year or two to become used to working conditions, learning some English
 - Become used to New World diseases
- Slave owners had tribal preferences
 - Some tribes had reputations for skills
 - Others had reputations for being hard to manage

The Conditions of Slavery

- Slaves born in Africa were generally harder to control
 - They had been free
 - People born as slaves were usually more accepting of their status
- Slaves often Muslim or Catholic
 - Many were POWs from sub-Saharan Africa or the Congo (a Catholic country)
 - Conversion to Protestantism not a big leap for either

The Conditions of Slavery

- A conscious decision to break the slave's culture
 - By absorbing white culture, more likely to identify with it
 - Wide range of African cultures meant that colonial culture & English only common bond

The Conditions of Slavery

- American slavery was actually mild compared to the British West Indies
 - Fewer deadly diseases
 - Working conditions generally less severe
 - In Jamaica, slave babies were generally drowned because it was cheaper to buy adults than to feed a baby
 - U.S. imported 9% of the trans-Atlantic slaves—but ended up with 1/3 of the black population of the Western Hemisphere

American Slave Law

- Latin America had slave codes at the start
 - Often relatively humane
 - Built on centuries of contact with Africa and slavery (European, Muslim, and African)
 - Limited master's authority
 - Required masters to sell slaves their freedom
 - Spanish courts bent over backward to give benefit of the doubt to slaves about price
 - In Brazil, Catholic Church financed self-purchase

American Slave Law

- British America had nowhere to start
 - Our laws were often quite harsh
 - Theoretically, a master only owned the slave's labor, not his body
 - In practice, it was difficult to get a conviction for mistreatment
 - Britain had no contact with Africans before the slave trade—easy to regard them as fundamentally different—less than human

American Slave Law

- Could Christians be held as slaves? Unclear
 - This discouraged masters from allowing evangelism to slaves
 - So colonial legislatures clarified that Christianity did not end one's slave status
- Laws prohibiting interracial marriage were invented in the 1660s
 - A radical transformation of Christian policy
 - Built around competition for scarce white women

American Slave Law

- These laws against interracial marriage were never a majority of American states
- Never consistent
 - Some states prohibited blacks from marrying other races
 - Some prohibited non-whites from marrying whites
- Reached their peak in the early 20th century
 - Why then?