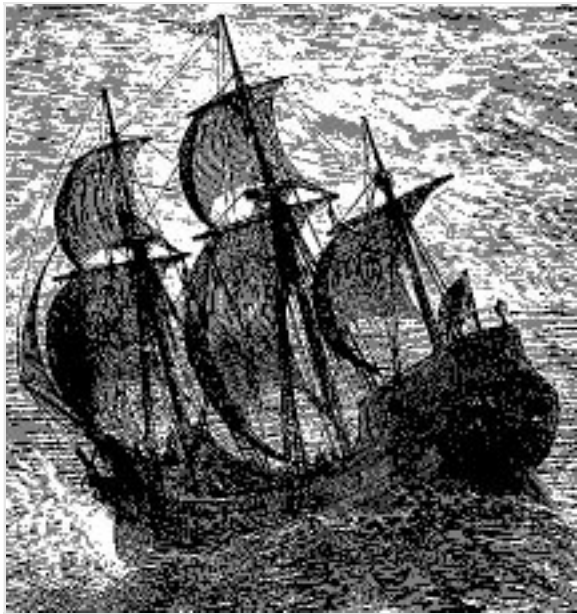


The Colonial Period

"Heaven and earth never agreed better to frame a place for man's habitation."

John Smith, founder of the colony of Virginia, 1607



Within the span of a hundred years, in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, a tide of emigration -one of the great folk wanderings of history-swept from Europe to America. This movement, impelled by powerful and diverse motivations, built a nation out of a wilderness and, by its nature, shaped the character and destiny of an uncharted continent.

Today, the United States is the product of two principal forces-the immigration of European peoples with their varied ideas, customs, and national characteristics and the impact of a new country which

modified these distinctly European cultural traits. Of necessity, colonial America was a projection of Europe. Across the Atlantic came successive groups of Englishmen, Frenchmen, Germans, Scots, Irishmen, Dutchmen, Swedes, and many others who attempted to transplant their habits and traditions to the new world. But, inevitably, the force of geographic conditions peculiar to America, the interplay of the varied national groups upon one another, and the sheer difficulty of maintaining old-world ways in a raw, new continent caused significant changes. These changes were gradual and at first scarcely visible. But the result was a new social pattern which, although it resembled European society in many ways, had a character that was distinctly American.

The first shiploads of immigrants bound for the territory which is now the United States crossed the Atlantic more than a hundred years after the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century explorations of North America. In the meantime, thriving Spanish colonies had been established in Mexico, the West Indies, and South America. These travelers to North America came in small, unmercifully overcrowded craft. During their six- to twelve-week voyage, they subsisted on meager rations. Many of the ships were lost in storms, many passengers died of disease, and infants rarely survived the journey. Sometimes tempests blew the vessels far off their course, and often calm brought interminable delay.

To the anxious travelers the sight of the American shore brought almost inexpressible relief. Said one chronicler, "The air at twelve leagues' distance smelt as sweet as a new-blown garden." The colonists' first glimpse of the new land was a vista of dense woods. The virgin forest with its profusion and variety of trees was a veritable treasure-house which extended over 1,300 miles from Maine in the north to Georgia in the south. Here was abundant fuel and lumber. Here was the raw material of houses and furniture, ships and

potash, dyes and naval stores.

"Heaven and earth," wrote John Smith in praise of Virginia, the colony he helped found, "never agreed better to frame a place for man's habitation." Of his colony, William Penn, the founder of Pennsylvania, said: "The air is sweet and clear, the heavens serene." As inviting as the climate were the native foods. The sea abounded in oysters and crabs, cod and lobster; and in the woods, there were turkeys "fat and incredible of weight," and quail, squirrels, pheasants, elk, geese, and so many deer that in places "venison is accounted a tiresome meat." Fruits, nuts, and berries grew wild everywhere, and it was soon discovered that more substantial fare like peas and beans and corn and pumpkins could be easily cultivated. Soon the newcomers found that grain would grow and that transplanted fruit trees flourished. And sheep, goats, swine, and cows thrived in the new land.

The new continent was remarkably endowed by nature, but trade with Europe was vital for the import of articles the settlers could not yet produce. Here the coastline served the well. The whole length of shore provided innumerable inlets and harbors, and only two areas - North Carolina and southern New Jersey - lacked harbors for ocean-going vessels. Majestic rivers - like the Kennebec in Maine, the Connecticut, New York's Hudson, Pennsylvania's Susquehanna, the Potomac in Virginia, and numerous others - formed links between the coastal plain and the ports, and thence with Europe. Of the many large North American east coast rivers, however, only Canada's St. Lawrence, held by the French, offered a water passage to the real interior of the continent. This lack of a waterway, together with the formidable barrier of the Appalachian Mountains, long discouraged movement beyond the coastal plains region. Only trappers and traders with light pack trains went beyond the seaboard. For a hundred years, in fact, the colonists built their settlements compactly along the eastern shore.



In New York's fertile Hudson River Valley, soil and climate favored diversified agriculture. On farms such as this one, grain crops, especially wheat, were abundant, and flour was one of the colony's important exports.

It was the shoreline and the rivers that first spread population north and south along the band of coast traversed by the arteries of travel. The several colonies were independent communities with their own

outlets to the sea. Their separateness, together with the distances between the settlements, prevented development of a centralized and unified government. Each colony instead became a separate entity, marked by a strong individuality which in the later history of the United States became the basis of the concept of "states rights." But despite this trend to individualism, even from the earliest days the problems of commerce, navigation, manufacturing, and currency cut across colonial boundaries and necessitated common regulations which, after independence from England was won, led inevitably to federation.

The coming of colonists in the seventeenth century was the result of careful planning and management, and of considerable expense and risk. Settlers had to be transported three thousand miles across the sea. They needed utensils, clothing, seed, tools, building materials, livestock, arms, ammunition. In contrast to the colonization policies of other countries and other periods, the emigration from England was not fostered by the government. Rather, the initiative was taken by unofficial groups or by individuals. Two colonies, Virginia and Massachusetts, were founded by chartered companies whose funds, provided by private investors, were used to equip, transport, and maintain the colonists. In the case of the New Haven (later a part of Connecticut) colony, well to-do emigrants themselves financed the transport and equipment of their families and servants. Other settlements - New Hampshire, Maine, Maryland, the Carolinas, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania - originally belonged to proprietors, members of the English gentry or nobility who, as landlords, advanced out of their own resources the funds for settling tenants and servants upon lands granted to them by the King in the same manner as they might be granted an estate at home. Charles I, for instance, granted to Cecil Calvert (Lord Baltimore) and his heirs the nearly seven million acres which were later to become the state of Maryland; the Carolinas and Pennsylvania were given as grants by Charles II. Technically, these proprietors and chartered companies were the King's tenants, but they made only symbolic payments for their lands. Lord Baltimore, for instance, gave the King two Indian arrowheads each year, and William Penn contributed two beaver skins annually.

Several colonies were simply offshoots of other settlements. Rhode Island and Connecticut were founded by people from Massachusetts, the mother-colony of all New England. Still another, Georgia, was established largely for benevolent reasons by James Edward Oglethorpe and a few other philanthropic Englishmen. Their plan was to release imprisoned debtors from English jails and send them to America to establish a colony which would serve as a bulwark against the Spaniards to the south. Founded in 1624 by the Dutch, the colony of New Netherlands came under British rule forty years later and was renamed New York.

The most impelling single motive which induced emigrants to leave their European homelands was the desire for greater economic opportunity. This urge was frequently reinforced by other significant considerations such as a yearning for religious freedom, a determination to escape political oppression, or the lure of adventure. Between 1620 and 1635, economic difficulties swept England, and overflowing

multitudes could not find work. Even the best artisans could earn little more than a bare living. Bad crops added to the distress. In addition, England's expanding woolen industry demanded an ever increasing supply of wool to keep the looms clacking, and sheep-raisers began to encroach on soil hitherto given over to tillage.

Concurrently, during the religious upheavals of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a body of men and women called Puritans sought to reform the Established Church of England from within. Essentially, their program called for the more complete protestantization of the national church, particularly insofar as church responsibility for individual conduct was concerned. Their reformist ideas threatened to divide the people and to undermine royal authority by destroying the unity of the state church. A radical sect known as Separatists believed the Established Church could never be reformed to their liking. During the reign of James I, a small group of these - humble country folk - left for Leyden, Holland, where they were allowed to practice their religion as they wished. Some years later, a part of this Leyden congregation decided to emigrate to the new world where, in 1620, they founded the "Pilgrim" colony of New Plymouth.

Soon after Charles I ascended the throne in 1625, Puritan leaders in England were subjected to what they viewed as increasing persecution. Several ministers, who were no longer allowed to preach, gathered their flocks about them and followed the Pilgrims to America. Unlike the earlier emigrants, however, this second group, which established Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1630, included many persons of substantial wealth and position. Within the next decade, a Puritan stamp had been placed upon a half dozen English colonies. But the Puritans were not the only colonists driven by religious motives. Dissatisfaction with the lot of the Quakers in England led William Penn to undertake the founding of Pennsylvania. Similar concern for English Catholics was a factor in Cecil Calvert's founding of Maryland. And many colonists in Pennsylvania and North Carolina were dissidents from Germany and Ireland who sought greater religious freedom as well as economic opportunity.

Political considerations, together with religious, influenced many to move to America. The attempted personal and arbitrary rule of England's Charles I gave impetus to the migration to the new world in the 1630's. And the subsequent revolt and triumph of Charles' opponents under Oliver Cromwell in the following decade led many cavaliers - "king's men" - to cast their lot in Virginia. In Germany, the oppressive policies of various petty princes, particularly with regard to religion, and devastation from a



The dotted section on this map indicates the extent of English colonization along the Atlantic Coast. Organized settlement had not yet spread very far in from the seaboard, and inland boundaries were not yet permanently established. As westward expansion progressed, these boundaries were to cause frequent disputes

long series of wars helped swell the movement to America in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

In many instances, men and women who had little active interest in a new life in America were induced to make the move by the skillful persuasion of promoters. William Penn publicized the opportunities awaiting newcomers to the Pennsylvania colony in a manner more than suggestive of modern advertising techniques. Ship captains, who received large rewards from the sale of service contracts of impecunious migrants, used every method from extravagant promises to out-and-out kidnapping to secure as many passengers as their vessels could transport. judges and prison authorities were encouraged to offer convicted persons an opportunity to migrate to America in lieu of a prison sentence.

Of the mass of colonists who crossed the ocean, relatively few could finance the cost of passage for themselves and their families and of making a start in the new land. For the earliest colonists, the expenses of transport and maintenance were provided by colonizing agencies such as the Virginia Company and the Massachusetts Bay Company In return, the settlers agreed to work a for the agency as contract laborers. But a colonist who came to the new world under such an arrangement soon discovered that, since he was expected to remain a servant or tenant, he would have been better off in England without adding the hardships and dangers of a wilderness frontier to his dependent lot.

This system soon proved a handicap to successful colonization. In consequence, there developed a new method of encouraging settlers to come to America. Companies, proprietors, and independent families entered into a negotiable contract with the prospective settler. In exchange for passage and maintenance, 'the emigrant was bound to labor for the contract-holder for a given period of time - usually from four to seven years. Free at the end of this term, he would receive freedom dues, sometimes including a small tract of land, usually fifty acres. The emigrants so involved were called "indentured servants." It has been estimated that fully one-half of the immigrants to the colonies south of New England came to America under this system. Usually they fulfilled their obligations under the contracts faithfully. A few, however, ran away from their employers at the first opportunity. They, too, were able to secure land easily and to set up homesteads either in the colony where they had originally settled or in a neighboring one.

No social or other stigma attached to the family which had its beginnings in America under this semibondage arrangement. In every colony, in fact, many of the leading personages were, either former indentured servants or their children. They, like all other colonists, were the most valuable assets of a country whose greatest need was population. Indeed, the colonies and all groups interested in their success prospered in direct ratio to the number of settlers who migrated. For land and other natural resources were practically unlimited, and progress was entirely dependent on the size of the population available to develop them.

Of the settlers who came to America in the first three quarters of the seventeenth century, the overwhelming majority was English. There was a sprinkling of Dutch, Swedes, and Germans in the middle region, a few French Huguenots in South Carolina and elsewhere, and here and there a scattering of Spaniards, Italians, and Portuguese. But these represented hardly ten per cent of the total population.

After 1680, England ceased to be the chief source of immigration, as great numbers came from Germany, Ireland, Scotland, Switzerland, and France for varied reasons. Thousands of Germans fled Europe to escape the path of war. A host of Scotch-Irish left northern Ireland to avoid the poverty induced by government and absentee landlord oppression. From Scotland and Switzerland came people also fleeing the specter of poverty. Immigration tended to move in waves, but over any period of years it was a steady stream. In 1690, the population amounted to about a quarter of a million. It doubled every twenty-five years until in 1775 it numbered more than two and a half million.

For the most part, non-English colonists adapted themselves to the culture of the original settlers. This did not, however, mean that all settlers transformed themselves into Englishmen abroad. True, they adopted the English language, law, customs, and habits of thought, but only as these had been modified by conditions in America. And in the process of the amalgamation of these later immigrants with the original English colonists, further cultural modifications were effected. The final result was a unique culture -a blend of English and -ropean continental characteristics conditioned by the environment of the new world.

Although a man and his family could shift from Massachusetts to Virginia, or from South Carolina to Pennsylvania, without making many basic readjustments, yet distinctions were marked between individual colonies. They were even more marked between groups of colonies.

The several settlements fell into three fairly well-defined sections. One of those was New England which became chiefly commercial and industrial, while in the south, a predominantly agrarian society was developing. Geography was the determining factor. A glaciated area, the New England region was strewn with boulders. Generally, the soil, except in rare spots in river valleys, was thin and poor, and the small area of level land, the short summers, and long winters made it inferior farming country. But the New Englanders soon found other profitable pursuits. They harnessed waterpower and established mills where they ground wheat and corn or sawed lumber for export. The coastal indentations made excellent harbors which promoted trade. Good stands of timber encouraged shipbuilding, and the sea was a source of great potential wealth. The cod fishery alone rapidly formed a basis for prosperity in Massachusetts.

Settling in villages and towns around the harbors, New Englanders quickly adopted an urban existence. Common pasture land and common woodlots served to satisfy the needs of townspeople who acquired small farms nearby. Many of these farmed in addition to carrying on some trade or business. Compactness

made possible the village school, the village church, the town meeting, and frequent communication, and all of these together had a tremendous influence on the nature of the developing civilization. Sharing similar hardships, cultivating the same kind of rocky soil, following simple trades and crafts, these New Englanders rapidly acquired characteristics which marked them as a people apart.

Actually these qualities had roots that reached back to the one hundred and two sick and sea-weary "Pilgrims" who traveled to Cape Cod from Leyden and Plymouth. Coming under the auspices of the London (Virginia) Company and thus destined for settlement in Virginia, their ship, the famous Mayflower, made its landfall far to the north. After some weeks of exploring, the colonists decided not to make the trip to Virginia but to remain where they were. They chose Plymouth harbor as a site for their colony, and though the rigors of the first winter were severe, the settlement survived.

Even while Plymouth struggled for existence, other settlements were planted nearby. The one which occupied the Massachusetts Bay region after 1630 played a particularly significant part in the development of New England and of the nation. It was founded by some twenty-five men who obtained a royal charter. Some of these, together with a group of settlers, came to America themselves, bringing the charter with them. They were determined to succeed, and though New England proved something less than a paradise and some of the colonists went home to nurse their disillusion, most set themselves to the stern business of making a living and constructing a society suitable to the strong-minded individuals they were. Within the first ten years, sixty-five learned preachers deeply versed in theology arrived, and the development of a theocracy in Massachusetts took place as a logical consequence of its leaders' deep conviction. In theory, the church and state were separate. Actually they were one, all institutions being subordinated to religion. Soon a system of government, theocratic and authoritarian, evolved. At town meetings, however, there was opportunity for discussion of public problems, and settlers thereby received a certain amount of experience in selfgovernment. And though the towns developed around the church organization, the whole population, by the very exigencies of frontier life, shared in civic obligations and in consultative meetings. Still, for years the clergy and conservative laymen attempted to maintain conformity.

They did not succeed, however, in binding the mind of every citizen or curbing the tongue of the inspired zealot. Such a rebel was Roger Williams, a minister of blameless life, a brilliant man learned in the law, who questioned both the right of taking the Indians' land and the wisdom of keeping church and state unified. For spreading his "new and dangerous opinion against the authority of the magistrates," he was sentenced by the general court to banishment. He found refuge among friendly Indians in Rhode Island and soon established a colony there based on the concepts that men might believe as they wished and that church and state would be forever separate.

But heretics in search of liberty of conscience were not the only ones who left Massachusetts. Even orthodox Puritans seeking better lands and opportunity made their way from the colony. News of the

fertility of the Connecticut River Valley, for instance, early attracted the interest of farmers having a difficult time with poor land. They were ready to brave the danger of the Indians for level ground and deep soil. Significantly, these groups, in setting up a government, extended the franchise and eliminated church membership as a prerequisite for voting. Concurrently, other Massachusetts settlers filtered into the region to the north, and soon New Hampshire and Maine were colonized by men and women seeking liberty and land.

While Massachusetts Bay was indirectly extending its influence, it was growing apace at home and expanding its commerce. From the middle of the century onward, it rapidly grew prosperous, and Boston became one of America's greatest ports. Oak timbers for ships' hulls, tall pines for spars and masts, and pitch for the seams came from the northeastern forests. And building their own ships, sailing them to ports all over the world carrying freight as they went, the shipmasters of Massachusetts Bay laid a foundation for a traffic which was to grow constantly in importance. By the end of the colonial period, one-third of all vessels under the British flag were American-built. Surplus food products, ship stores, and wooden ware swelled the exports. New England shippers soon discovered, too, that rum and slaves were profitable commodities.

Society in the middle colonies, the second great division, was far more varied, cosmopolitan, and tolerant than that in New England. Pennsylvania and its appendage, Delaware, owed their initial success to William Penn, an eminently practical Quaker, whose aim was to attract to the vast region granted him by King Charles II settlers of numerous faiths and varied nationalities. Also determined that the colony set an example of fair and honest dealings with the Indians, Penn entered into agreements with them which, scrupulously observed, maintained peace in the wilderness. The colony functioned smoothly and grew rapidly. Within a year after Penn's arrival, three thousand new citizens came to Pennsylvania. Heart of the colony was Philadelphia, a city soon to be known for its broad, tree-shaded streets, its substantial brick and stone houses, and its busy docks. By the end of the colonial period, 30,000 people, representing many languages, creeds, and trades, lived there. The Quakers, with their grave, deliberate ways, their philanthropy, and their talent for successful business enterprise made the city, by the middle of the eighteenth century, the thriving metropolis of colonial America.

Though the Quakers dominated in Philadelphia, elsewhere in Pennsylvania other strains were well represented. The Germans came from a war-ravaged land in large numbers, asking for the chance to earn their bread. They soon became the province's most skillful farmers. Important also in the colony's development was their knowledge of cottage industries - weaving, shoe-making, cabinet-making, and other crafts. Pennsylvania was also the principal gateway into the new world for a great migration of Scotch-Irish. They were vigorous frontiersmen, taking land where they wanted it and defending their rights with rifles and interminable texts from the Bible. Often lawless, they were an affliction to the godly

Quakers, but their very shortcomings made them a force of incalculable importance. Believing in representative government, religion, and learning, they were the spearhead of civilization as they pushed ever farther into the wilderness.

Mixed as were the people in Pennsylvania, it was in New York that the later polyglot nature of much of America was foreshadowed even as early as the mid-seventeenth century. By 1646, over a dozen languages could be heard along the Hudson and the population included Dutch, Flemings, Walloons, French, Danes, Norwegians, Swedes, English, Scotch, Irish, Germans, Poles, Bohemians, Portuguese, and Italians - the forerunners of millions of their compatriots in centuries to come. Most of them earned their living through trade and established a commercial civilization which anticipated the characteristics of succeeding generations.

The Dutch possessed New Netherland, later to be called New York, for forty years. But they were not a migrating people. There was land and to spare in Holland, and colonizing offered them neither political nor religious advantages which they did not already enjoy. In addition, the Dutch West India Company, which undertook to establish the new world settlement, found it difficult to find competent officials to keep the colony running smoothly. Then in 1664, with a revival of British interest in colonial activity, the Dutch settlement was taken over through conquest. Long after this, however, the Dutch continued to exercise an important social and economic influence. Their sharp-stepped gabled roofs became a permanent part of the landscape, and their merchants gave the city its characteristic commercial atmosphere. The habits bequeathed by the Dutch also gave New York a hospitality to the pleasures of everyday life quite different from the austere atmosphere of Puritan Boston. In New York, holidays were marked by feasting and merrymaking. And many Dutch customs -like the habit of calling on one's neighbors and sharing a drink with them on New Year's Day and the visit of jovial Saint Nicholas at Christmas time - became countrywide customs which have survived to the present day.

With the transfer from Dutch authority, an English administrator set about remodeling the legal structure of New York to fit English traditions. He did his work so gradually and with such wisdom and tact that he won the friendship and respect of Dutch and English alike. Town governments had the autonomy characteristics of New England towns and in a few years there was a reasonably workable fusion between residual Dutch law and customs and English procedures and practice.

By 1696, nearly 30,000 people lived in the province of New York. In the rich valleys of the Hudson, Mohawk, and other rivers, great estates flourished, and tenant farmers and small freehold farmers contributed to the agricultural development of the region. For most of the year, the grasslands and woods supplied feed for cattle, sheep, horses, and pigs; tobacco and flax grew with ease, and fruits, especially apples, were abundant. But great as was the value of farm products, the fur trade also contributed to the growth of New York and Albany as cities of consequence. For from Albany, the Hudson River was a

convenient waterway for shipping furs and northern farm products to the busy port of New York.

In direct contrast to New England and the middle colonies was the predominantly rural character of the southern settlements of Virginia, Maryland, the Carolinas, and Georgia. Jamestown, in Virginia, was the first colony to survive in the new world. Late in December 1606, a motley group of about a hundred men, sponsored by a London colonizing company, set out in search of a great adventure. They dreamed of quick riches from gold and precious stones. Homes in the wilderness were not their goal. Among them, Captain John Smith emerged as the dominant spirit, and despite quarrels, starvation, and the constant threat of Indian attacks, his will held the little colony together through the first years. In the earliest days, the promoting company, ever eager for quick returns, required the colonists to concentrate on producing for export naval stores, lumber, roots, and other products for sale in the London market, instead of permitting them to plant crops and otherwise provide for their own subsistence. After a few disastrous years, however, the company eased its requirements, distributed land to the colonists, and allowed them to devote most of their energies to private undertakings. Then, in 1612, a development occurred which ultimately revolutionized the economy, not only of Virginia, but of the whole contiguous region. This was the discovery of a method of curing Virginia tobacco which would make it palatable to European tastes. The first shipment of this tobacco reached London in 1614, and within a decade the plant gave every promise of becoming a steady and profitable source of revenue.

The cultivation of tobacco required fresh and fertile land, since soil on which it had been grown for three or four years became so exhausted that it produced only weak stalks. Farmers were obliged therefore to have sufficient acreage to insure new ground, and since it was necessary for sites to be near easy transport, planters quickly scattered up and down along the numerous Waterways. No towns dotted the region, and even Jamestown, the capital, had only a few houses. Planters quickly adapted themselves to a system of trade at long range, and London, Bristol, and other English ports were their market towns.

Most immigrants to Virginia came to improve their economic position. But religious as well as economic reasons led to the growth of Maryland, the neighboring colony. Here the Calvert family sought to establish a refuge for Catholics in the new land. They were also interested, however, in creating estates which would bring them profit. To that end, and to avoid trouble with the British government, they encouraged Protestants as well as Catholics to settle. In social structure and in government, the Calverts tried to make Maryland an aristocratic land in the ancient tradition, which they aspired to rule with all the prerogatives of kings. But the independence inevitable in a frontier society, whatever its technical structure, was not favorable to feudal trappings. In Maryland, as in the other colonies, the authorities could not circumvent the stubborn belief of the settlers in the guarantees of personal liberty established by English common law and the natural rights of subjects to participate in government through representative assemblies.

Maryland developed a civilization very similar to that of Virginia. Both colonies were devoted to

agriculture with a dominant tidewater class of great planters; both had a back country into which yeomen farmers steadily filtered; both suffered the handicaps of a one-crop system; and before the mid-eighteenth century, the culture of both was profoundly affected by Negro slavery. In both colonies, the wealthy planters took their social responsibilities seriously, serving as justices of the peace, colonels of the militia, and members of the legislative assemblies. But yeomen farmers sat in popular assemblies too and found their way into political office. Their outspoken independence of spirit served as a constant warning to the oligarchy of planters not to encroach too far upon the rights of free men.

By the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, the social structure in Maryland and Virginia had taken on the qualities it would retain-until the Civil War. The planters, supported by slave labor, held most of the political power and the best land. They built great houses, adopted an aristocratic manner of life, and maintained contact with the cultured world overseas. Next in the social-economic scale were the farmers who found their hope for prosperity in the fresh soil of the back country. Least prosperous were the small farmers who struggled for existence in competition with slave-owning planters. In neither Virginia nor Maryland did a large trading class develop, for the planters themselves traded directly with London.

It was the Carolinas, with Charleston as the leading port, which developed as the trading center of the south. Here the settlers quickly learned to combine agriculture and commerce, and the colony owed much of its prosperity to the marketplace. Dense forests also provided revenue, and tar and rosin from the long-leaf pine were among the best ship stores in the world. Not bound to a single crop as was Virginia, the Carolinas produced and exported rice, indigo, and naval stores. By 1750, 100,000 or more people lived in the two colonies of North and South Carolina.

In the south is everywhere else in the colonies - from the mountains of Vermont to the ragged forest clearings of the Mohawk River in New York, down along the eastern fringes of the Alleghenies and into the Shenandoah Valley in Virginia-growth of the back country, the frontier, became a significant development. Men seeking greater freedom of conscience than could be found in the original tidewater settlements had early pushed beyond their borders. Those who could not secure fertile land along the coast or who had exhausted the lands which they held found the hills farther west a fruitful place of refuge. Soon the interior was dotted with successful farms, worked by men economically as well as spiritually independent of the older regions. Humble farmers were not the only ones who found the hinterland attractive. Peter Jefferson, an enterprising surveyor and father of Thomas Jefferson, third President of the United States, settled in the hill country, buying 400 acres of land for a bowl of punch.

Although there was a sprinkling of large landowners among those who found their way into the foothills, most of those who left the settled colonies in the east were small, independent pioneers. Living on the edge of the Indian country, their cabins were their fortresses, and they relied for protection on their own sharp

eyes and trusty muskets. By necessity, they became a sturdy and self-reliant people. They cleared tracts in the wilderness, burned the brush, and cultivated corn and wheat among the stumps. The men dressed in hunting shirts and deerskin leggings, the women in homespun petticoats. Their food was "hog and hominy" and roast venison, wild turkey, or partridge and fish from a neighboring stream. They had their own boisterous amusements - great barbecues where oxen were roasted whole, house-warmings for newly married couples, dancing, drinking, shooting matches, quilting bees. Already discernible were lines of cleavage between the old and the new, the east and west, the settled regions of the Atlantic seaboard and the inland frontier. These differences at times were great and dramatic. Nevertheless, each region strongly influenced the other, for despite physical separation, there was a constant interplay of forces. As pioneers moved westward, they carried forward something of the older civilization and established in fresh soil traditions which were a part of their common heritage. Many western pilgrims returned to tell their stories and excite the imaginations of the stay-at-homes. Men from the western country made their voices heard in political debate, combating the inertia of custom and convention. Even more important was the fact that anyone in an established colony could easily find, a new home on the frontier. This was a powerful factor in preventing authorities in the older communities from successfully obstructing progress and change. Thus, dominant tidewater figures were forced, time after time, to liberalize political policies, land-grant requirements, and religious practices, on popular demand, which was always supported by a direct or implied threat of a mass exodus to the frontier. Complacency could have small quarter in the vigorous society which an expanding country generated. The movement into the foothills was a movement of tremendous import for the future history of the whole of America.

Of equal significance for the future were the foundations of American education and culture established in the colonial period. Harvard College was founded in 1636 in Massachusetts. Near the end of the century, the College of William and Mary was established in Virginia, and a few years later, Connecticut legislation provided for the establishment of Yale University. But the most noteworthy feature of America's educational history was the growth of a public school system. To New England goes much of the credit for this contribution. There the settlers acted together as a single public body, bringing to bear upon the school the concentrated resources of the community and, in 1647, Massachusetts Bay legislation - followed shortly by all the New England colonies except Rhode Island - provided for compulsory elementary education.

In the south, the farms and plantations were so widely separated that community schools like those in the more compact settlements were impossible. Planters sometimes joined with their nearest neighbors and hired tutors to teach all the children within reach. Often, children were sent to England for schooling. In the more thickly settled areas, a few neighborhood schools provided instruction but, in general, the individual planter was obliged to assume the cost and responsibility of hiring tutors. In poorer families, the parents themselves undertook to give their children the rudiments of learning.

In the middle colonies, the educational situation was varied. Too busy with material progress to pay much attention to cultural matters, New York lagged far behind both New England and the other middle colonies. Schools were poor, and well-to-do citizens were obliged to hire tutors for their children. For a large proportion of the children there was no adequate public-school system at all. Only spasmodic efforts were made by the royal government to provide public facilities, and not until the mideighteenth century were the College of New Jersey at Princeton, King's College (now Columbia University), and Queen's College (Rutgers) established.

One of the most enterprising of the colonies in the educational sphere was Pennsylvania. The first school, begun in 1683, taught reading, writing, and the keeping of accounts. Thereafter, in some fashion, every Quaker community provided for the elementary teaching of its children. More advanced training - in classical languages, history, literature - was offered at the Friends Public School, which still exists in Philadelphia as the William Penn Charter School. The school was free to the poor, but parents who could were required to pay tuition for their children. In Philadelphia, numerous private schools with no religious affiliation taught languages, mathematics, and natural science, and there were night schools for adults. Nor was the education of women entirely overlooked, for private teachers instructed the daughters of prosperous Philadelphians in French, music, dancing, painting, singing, grammar, and sometimes even bookkeeping.

The advanced intellectual and cultural development of Pennsylvania reflected, in large measure, the vigorous personalities of two men. One of these was James Logan, secretary of the colony, at whose fine library young Benjamin Franklin found the latest scientific works. In 1745, Logan erected a building for his collection and bequeathed it and his books to the city. There is no doubt, however, that Franklin himself contributed more than any other single citizen to the stimulation of intellectual activity in Philadelphia. He was instrumental in creating institutions which made a permanent cultural contribution, not only to Philadelphia, but to all the colonies. He formed, for example, a club known as the Junto, which was the embryo of the American Philosophical Society. As a result of his endeavors, a public academy was founded which developed later into the University of Pennsylvania. His efforts in behalf of learning resulted also in an effective subscription library which he called "the mother of all the North American subscription libraries."

The desire for learning did not stop at the borders of established communities. For, on the frontiers, the hardy Scotch-Irish, though living in primitive cabins, refused to fall into the slough of ignorance. Convinced devotees of scholarship, they made great efforts to attract learned ministers to their settlements and believed implicitly that laymen likewise should cultivate all their mental talents.

In the south, planters depended very largely on books for their contact with the world of cultivation. Books from England on all subjects - history, Greek and Latin classics, science, and law - were exchanged from

plantation to plantation. In Charlestown, a provincial library was established in 1700. Music, painting, and the theater, too, found favor there. Indeed, actors long regarded Charlestown with special affection, for they were certain of a more cordial welcome there than in other colonial cities.

In New England, the first immigrants brought along their little libraries and continued to import books from London. The Puritans, to be sure, had an inordinate appetite for religious writings, but they did not confine their reading to such works. By the 1680's, Boston booksellers were doing a thriving business in works of classical literature, history, politics, philosophy, science, sermons, theology, and belles-lettres.

Cambridge, Massachusetts, early boasted a printing press, and in 1704, Boston's first successful newspaper was launched. Several others soon entered the field, not only in New England but in other regions. In New York, for instance, there occurred one of the most important events in the development of the American press. This was the case of Peter Zenger, whose New York Weekly Journal, begun in 1733, was the mouthpiece of opposition to the government. When, after two years of publication, the colonial governor could tolerate Zenger's satirical barbs no longer, he had him thrown into prison on a charge of libel. Zenger edited his paper from jail during the nine-month trial which excited intense interest throughout the colonies. Andrew Hamilton, a great lawyer, defended him, arguing that the charges printed by Zenger were true and hence not libelous in the real sense of the term. The jury returned a verdict of not guilty, and Zenger went free. The consequences were far-reaching, not only for colonial America, but for the America of the future. The decision was a landmark in the establishment of the principle of freedom of the press.

Literary production in the colonies was largely confined to New England. Here attention was concentrated principally on religious subjects. Sermons were the most numerous products of the press. A famous "hell and brimstone" minister, the Reverend Cotton Mather was alone the author of about 400 works, and his masterpiece, *Magnalia Christi Americana*, was so large a work that it had to be printed in London. In this folio, the pageant of New England's

history is displayed as it appeared to the prejudiced eyes of its most prolific and pedantic writer. The most popular single work was the Reverend Michael Wigglesworth's long poem, *The Day of Doom*, which described the Last judgment in terrifying and sulphurous terms. Everybody read it and everybody owned a copy of the fearful epic.

In all phases of colonial development, a striking feature was the lack of controlling influence on the part of the English government. During their formative period, the colonies were, to a large degree, free to develop as their inclinations or force of circumstances dictated. The English government, as such, had taken no direct part in founding any of the several colonies except Georgia, and only gradually did it assume any part in their political direction. The fact that the King had transferred his immediate

sovereignty over the new-world settlements to stock companies and proprietors did not, of course, mean that the colonists in America would necessarily be free or partially free of outside control. Under the terms of the Virginia and Massachusetts Bay charters, for example, complete governmental authority was vested in the companies involved, and it was expected that these companies would be resident in England. Inhabitants of America, then, would have no more voice in their government than if the King himself had retained absolute rule.

In one way or another, however exclusive rule from the outside was broken down. The first step in this direction was a decision on the part of the London (Virginia) Company to permit Virginia colonists representation in the government. Instructions issued by the Company to its appointed governor in 1619 provided that free inhabitants of the plantations should elect representatives to join with the governor and an appointive "Council" in passing ordinances for the welfare of the colony.

This event proved one of the most far reaching in its effects of any occurring in the colonial period. From that time onward, it was generally accepted that the colonists had, a right to participate in their own government. In most instances, the King, in making future grants, provided in the charter that freemen of the colony involved should have a voice in legislation affecting them. Thus, charters awarded to Cecil Calvert of Maryland, William Penn of Pennsylvania, the proprietors of the Carolinas, and the proprietors of New Jersey specified that legislation should be with "the consent of the freemen." In only two cases was the self-government provision omitted. These were New York, which was granted to Charles H's brother, the Duke of York, later to become King James II, and Georgia, which was granted to a group of "Trustees." In both instances, however, the exception was short-lived, for the colonists demanded legislative representation so insistently that the authorities soon found it expedient to yield.

At first the right of colonists to representation in the legislative branch of the government was of limited importance. Ultimately, however, it served as a stepping-stone to the establishment of almost complete domination by the settlers. This was achieved through elective assemblies, which first seized and then utilized, to the maximum, control over financial matters. In one colony after another, the principle was established that taxes could not be levied, or collected revenue spent -even to pay the salary of the governor or other appointive officers -without the consent of the elected representatives. Unless the governor and other colonial officials agreed to act in accordance with the will of the popular assembly, the assembly failed to appropriate money for this or that vital function. Thus there were instances of independent-minded governors who were voted either no salary at all, or a salary of one penny. In the face of this threat, governors and other appointive officials rapidly tended to become pliable to the will of the colonists.

In New England for many years there was even more complete self-government than in other colonies. If the Pilgrims had settled in Virginia, they would have been under the authority of the London (Virginia)

Company. However, in their own colony of New Plymouth, they were beyond any governmental jurisdiction. They decided consequently to set up their own political organization. Aboard the Mayflower, they adopted an instrument for government called the "Mayflower Compact," according to which they undertook to "combine ourselves together into a civil body politic for our better ordering and preservation . . . and by virtue hereof do enact, constitute, and frame such just and equal laws, ordinances, acts, constitutions, and offices ... as shall be thought most meet and convenient for the general good of the colony Although there was no legal basis for the Pilgrims thus to establish on their own initiative a system of self-government the action was not contested and, under the compact, the Plymouth settlers were able for many years to conduct their own affairs without any outside direction or interference.

A similar situation developed in Massachusetts, where the Massachusetts Bay Company had been given the right to govern. The company moved bodily to America with its charter, and thus full authority rested in the hands of persons residing in the colony. At first the dozen or so original members of the company who had come to America attempted to rule autocratically. But soon the other colonists demanded a voice in public affairs and indicated that a refusal to grant this voice would lead to a mass migration to some other area. In the face of this threat the company members yielded, and control of the government passed to elected representatives. Subsequent New England colonies -New Haven, Rhode Island, and Connecticut - also succeeded in becoming self-governing. They did so simply by taking the position that they were beyond any government authority and then setting up their own political system modeled after that of the Pilgrims of New Plymouth.

The large degree of self-government which the colonies exercised did not go entirely unchallenged by British authorities. Court action was taken against the Massachusetts charter; in 1684, it was annulled. Then all the New England colonies were brought under royal control with complete authority vested in an appointive governor. The colonists strenuously objected to this turn of events and, after the Revolution of 1688 in England which resulted in the overthrow of James II, they drove out the royal governor. Rhode Island and Connecticut, which now included the colony of New Haven, were able to re-establish on a permanent basis their virtually independent position. Massachusetts, however, was soon again brought back under royal authority, but this time the people were given a share in the government. As in the case of other colonies, this "share" was gradually extended until it became virtual dominance, effective use being made here as elsewhere of control over finances. Still, governors were continually instructed to force adherence to policies which conformed to overall English interests. At the same time, the English Privy Council exercised a right of review of colonial legislation. The colonists, however, proved very adept at getting around these restraints whenever they affected their basic interests.

In the same way, the colonists found it generally possible to evade British attempts to regulate their external relations, particularly commercial relations, when it seemed in their interest to do so. Beginning

in 1651, the English government from time to time passed laws regulating certain aspects of the commercial and general economic life of the colonies. Some of these were beneficial to America, but most favored England at America's expense. Generally, the colonists ignored those that were most detrimental. The British occasionally aroused themselves and tried to secure better enforcement, but efforts along these lines were invariably short-lived, the authorities quickly falling back into a policy of "salutary neglect."

The large measure of political independence enjoyed by the colonies naturally resulted in their growing away from Britain, in their becoming increasingly "American" rather than "English." And this tendency was strongly reinforced by the blending of other national groups and cultures which was simultaneously taking place. How this process operated and the manner in which it laid the foundations of a new nation was vividly described in 1782 by that shrewd French husbandman, J. Hector St. John Crèvecoeur. "What then is the American, this new man?" he asked in his Letters from an American Farmer. "He is either an European, or the descendant of an European, hence that strange mixture of blood, which you find in no other country.... I could point out to you a family whose grandfather was an Englishman, whose wife was Dutch, whose son married a French woman, and whose present four sons have now four wives of different nations. He is an American, who, leaving behind him all his ancient prejudices and manners, receives new ones from the new mode of life he has embraced, the new government he obeys, and the new rank he holds"